


How has life in Britain changed since 1948?

Learning Objective:

To find out about some of the main events of the 1960s and to investigate what life was like in Britain during this period.

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How do you
think life in Britain
changed from the 1950s
to the 1960s?

Think, pair, share your ideas.

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What ideas did you come up with?

Ideas:



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This decade is often called the 'Swinging Sixties'. What do you think this means?



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Britain was an exciting place to be for young people in the 1960s. There were lots of changes in popular culture, such as changes in fashion, music and art, which were very different to the culture of the previous generation. Lots of older people didn't like these changes and thought that all the new trends were too loud, bright, immodest and indecent.

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During the sixties, London became the fashion capital of the world. Designers, such as Mary Quant, made the mini skirt popular for the first time. New colours, patterns and fabrics were being used to make clothes young, fresh and exciting. Before the 1960s, it had been mainly women who were interested in fashion, but after the influence of the 1950s, fashion became as important for men and it was for women.

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But it was music that really gave the 1960s the reputation for being 'swinging'. Pop music exploded with energy during this period. Bands and singers from both Britain and America, such as the Rolling Stones, The Beach Boys, Jimi Hendrix, Dusty Springfield and Cliff Richard, introduced new sounds and styles to the young people of Britain.



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But there was one British band from Liverpool who really changed the face of pop music forever...
The Beatles.

The Beatles (consisting of Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr) recorded their first single 'Love Me Do' in 1962 and within a year had become the most popular band in Britain.

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The popularity of The Beatles soon spread around the rest of the world. 'Beatlemania' was a phenomenon unlike any other that had been seen before. Wherever The Beatles went, mass hysteria followed them.



Watch this video to get a taste of what Beatlemania was like...



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Life was very exciting for young people during the sixties, but what do you think life would have been like for ordinary families?

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By the 1960s, Britain had nearly recovered from the effects of World War II. Lots of new houses had been built and for the first time, most of these houses had electricity. The majority of homes had televisions and new programmes like Coronation Street and Dr Who started. In 1967, the first colour TV sets were introduced.



William
Hartnell,
the first Dr
Who

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Most children's parents were married in the 1960s. It was still quite unusual to have parents who were not married or who were divorced.

It was normal for the father to go to work and the mother to stay at home to look after the family. Some women did start to work too but it was still very unusual for a woman to be a mother and have a career. The average wage in the 1960s was around £14 a week, or £728 a year.



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It was during the 1960s that supermarkets became a popular way of shopping. Before this, people had to go to lots of different shops and were served by the shopkeeper. Supermarkets allowed people to help themselves off the shelves and pay for everything at the end of their shopping trip.



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Racism had been a continual problem in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1965, the Race Relations Act attempted to stop racial discrimination in public places. People around the world were trying to make sure that people of all colours had equal rights.



In America, Martin Luther King became a famous leader in the fight for American civil rights. The world was shocked when he was shot dead in 1968. This highlighted how some people were still against equal rights for black people.

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