Essential Question:

The postwar era witnessed tremendous economic growth and rising social contentment and conformity. Yet in the midst of such increasing affluence and comfortable domesticity, social critics expressed a growing sense of unease with American culture in the 1950s.

Assess the validity of the above statement and explain how the decade of the 1950s laid the groundwork for the social and political turbulence of the 1960s.

Directions: Choose ONE person from your group to do the typing on this doc. Using your group’s assigned documents, fill in the chart below. Be sure to cite your document in parentheses. When you are done, read over the entire chart and then write group thesis statement at the bottom.

1. EVIDENCE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH/ INCREASING AFFLUENCE

Group A: economic progress in suburbs led to more comfort and public decency (doc 4) as middle class Americans escape city life

Group B: Big emphasis on new factories and mass producing new material goods with the use of technology. New products cause people to buy more stuff. Consumerism = money. (Doc. 13)

Group C: (Doc 18, 16) The rise in media and mass entertainment to the public, showed the increasing consumerism and a larger audience willing to view media. Increasing consumption of media showed how people felt the need to show off their wealth and the prosperity of the era.

Group D: Growth of mass entertainment and media (Doc 23)

Group E: Document 24- increased educational opportunities, people recognize that education was one of the major bastions of society
Group F: Huge economic boom, more products and guns resulted in an influential overseas market.

2. EVIDENCE OF SOCIAL CONTENTMENT & CONFORMITY

Group A: the ffpresident believed as a fnation we needed a set of core values as well as sacrificing individually for the sake of the nation (doc a)

Group B:

Group C: (doc 15) In schools, everyone it was taught that they needed to conform to the expected. Everybody needed to have groups of friends. Everyone needed to adjust to the group and act like the majority.

Group D: Illogical actions of cute kids who refused to become adults was a very nearly uniform world view that television executive Sprague Vonier once termed the "urban outlook" (Document 23) Any suggestion of anything that isn't the accepted norm/status quo is met with a cold response, such as educational methods (document 21)

Document 23 can also be seen as a form of conformity, because of the way the mass media is creating the idealized lifestyle (urban outlook) and the viewpoint is getting across to everyone, where they develop an idea of how some thing should be, and follow those lines.

Group E: segregation still continued even after ruling by the SCOTUS. (Document 27) whites wanted blacks to give up their cultures and 'assimilate'

Group F: Rising crimes represent the discontent over conformity (Doment 29)

3. EVIDENCE THAT SOCIAL CRITICTS EXPRESSED A GROWING SENSE OF
UNEASE WITH AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE 1950S

Group A: people realized that the majority of the public were all doing the same thing (doc 2) also, pressuring children to all believe the same thing, and this is contributing to increase of teenage crime (doc 3) Old schools, lack of police force, general lack of sanitation was highly evident among city dwellers (doc 4) prosperity creates a false sense of easiness as well as a distorted worth of values, and materialism is becoming a status symbol (doc 6) the US was focused more on materialism than becoming knowledgable and literate (doc 7) the US was living lavish lives while foreigners were using US resources, such as college and education, to further them selves.

Group B: Young people were the worst critics of conformity in the 1950’s. They thought that they were so above everyone else and that they could do whatever they wanted to do (Doc. 12). Teenagers didn't feel like they had to conform to the last. They escaped the conformity by retreating to available outlets of society, such as drugs and alcohol. Many wanted an escape from the tight conformity and the world that their parents wanted them to live in (Doc. 11).

Group C:(19) There was an increase in teenage offenses related to alcohol and teenage delinquencies. This showed teenage uneasiness and unwillingness to conform with the expected ideals of their family and suburbia.

Group D: failure in space program compared to Soviets with the accident involving a rocket (Doc 20)- shows weakness of US- Soviets are winning!

Group E: doc. 25 Dubois says that democracy is 'dead' in America - people are voting for Eisenhower who he claims doesn't have any platform
Document 26- evidence of growing segregation

Group F: There were gamblers and rebels and criminals we're embellishing against the American Culture (Document 29)

Group A: shows that people in the 1950s were not content with "treadmill" of "rat race" type of life, they were not happy with conformity (doc 2)- looking for other alternatives. Beware of conformity, total involvement inhibits the independent spirit. (Doc 9)

Group B: We need to be aware of conformity and realize that we also have a hydrogen bomb that can destroy the entire world. We have the responsibility to protect our world from destruction and take whatever action we need to do so. (Doc. 14)

Group C: (Doc 15) Stress placed by conformity caused teenagers to be more likely to rebel against their parent's conservative ideals. (Doc 19) Also, the increase in crimes amongst the teenage generation showed how the young generation was more open to change.

Group D: Corporations gained a lot of importance, economy was fueled by a top few. The majority of Americans not benefitting from this caused social division (Doc 22)

The rise of mass media helped to facilitate the movement of information, such as strikes and war coverage, lead to a wider understanding of the people to the events transporting around them. The end of the Vietnam war for example was influenced by the availability of mass media that rose in the 50s. (Doc 22)

Group E: (document 24) - people went to the government for civil rights issues
THESIS STATEMENT:

Group A: Due to the increasing affluence and wealth present in the 1950s, the new generation had less to worry about in the home, therefore they could move their focus to social and political changes.

Group C: Even though the 1950s were a time of increased prosperity, the immense stress placed around conformity and growing disillusionment with the government would eventually led to a rising opposition movement in the sixties which rebelled against the social norms.

Group D: Due to the rise of the mass media, leading the widespread publicity of events, along with the increase in suburbanization and the disillusionment of the federal government by the American people, that accompanied it set the groundwork for social and political turbulence in the following decades.

Group E: Although the conformity and suburbanization lead to the dissolutionment of social critics in the 1960s, political and racial turbulence contributed more to the rising discontent.

Group F: Most Americans enjoyed the extravagance of the growing economy, but certain minority groups weren't able to experience the prosperity, thus leading to discontent and turbulence in th1960s.
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Thesis statements:

**Group A:**

**Group B:** While the

**Group C:** Although the 1950’s was a period of widespread prosperity and consumerism, the underlying stress of conformity felt by teenagers along with growing discontent with the government led to the civil turbulence in the 1960’s.