Teenagers
the 1950s
“You don’t know anything about kids.”

James Dean as Jim Stark in “Rebel Without a Cause”
Deviants of traditional conservative norms
America in the ‘50s

- Post-WWII “Happy Daze”
  - Economically prosperous
  - Suburbia stability
- “Teenagers” emerge for first time
  - Wanted recognition and validation
- Automobile gave teens freedom and independence
Boys’ Fashion

• “Ivy” – Proper, dress pant, tie, sweater set
• “Greaser” – Jeans, flannels, leather jackets
• Popular hair: the ducktail
• Influences: Elvis, James Dean, & other sources of media
Girls’ Fashion

- Dresses
- Long skirts
- Bobby socks
- Plaid
- Influences: magazines & other media
Rock n’ Roll

- Elvis, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis
- Anthem to alienated culture
- Recognition they searched for
Elvis Presley

- Reaction: hysteria, screeching, wailing
- Hated by parents
- Was said to “impair moral of minors”
Eliminating social boundaries

- Sexual and racial boundaries
  - Little Richard

- Power to “subvert old racial barriers”

- Mixed black and white culture for first time
  - Dancing together on American Bandstand

- Parents’ Reaction:
  - “Menace to morals”
  - “Satan’s music”
  - “Hitler mass meetings”

Baptist Pastor Sees Evil in Rock ‘n’ Roll
Teens attempt to forge identity causes clash with parents

Set precedents of their own

Cleared way for future generations of more liberated and independent thinking teens

Challenge norms and change history