

Glossary

Abortion An operation to remove a foetus from a mother's womb, so preventing childbirth.

Alternative society A different kind of society proposed by hippies and others in the sixties. It was to be founded on the principles of love, freedom and complete equality of the races and sexes. It was also known as the counterculture.

Black Power A movement begun among black Americans to build up black confidence and pursue black interests through united action, rather than seeking help from whites.

Boom baby Anyone born during the baby boom of the late forties, who became a teenager in the sixties.

Boutique French word for shop. The term was used in the sixties to describe the new clothing shops catering for youth fashions.

Civil rights Rights which belong to everyone in a free society, such as the right to vote and the right to a fair trial. The civil rights movement in the United States aimed to win these rights for black citizens.

Cold war A state of fierce rivalry between nations, stopping short of full-scale war, especially between the USA and the Soviet bloc after the Second World War.

Commune A small group of people living together and sharing their goods and possessions.

Communism A political theory aiming to establish a society where the major enterprises such as factories, mines, farms and shops are owned by all citizens rather than a class of wealthy people. In practice, Communist societies have tended to create powerful state authorities which control those enterprises.

Conservative A word to describe people who wish to hold on to established customs

and values, and are cautious about any change.

Contraceptive A device used to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. The contraceptive sheath, or condom, had long been available for men, but the contraceptive pill for women only became available in the sixties.

Drop out To refuse to take part in ordinary society, for example by refusing to get a job or to complete a university course, or by avoiding military service.

The Establishment A grouping of important people and institutions which hold the power in society. Figures include big businessmen, professional politicians, church authorities and army leaders. Overall, their views tend to be conservative.

Feminism The movement aiming to win full rights and respect for women in society, and to celebrate the special qualities of the female sex.

Freak out To become highly excited, for example, while dancing at a rock concert. Hippies believed that people should behave without inhibitions, even hysterically if they felt like it, and they did not mind being called 'freaks'.

Global village A term used by Canadian writer Marshall McLuhan to describe the modern world, reduced to a single community by international communications systems.

Hippy A member of a Californian commune. It was later used to describe anyone who dropped out, wore long hair or casual clothes, and favoured the ideas of the alternative society.

Homosexual Someone sexually attracted to members of the same sex; particularly a man who is attracted to other men. Women attracted to women are more often called lesbians.

LSD Lysergic acid diethylamide, a drug which is used in order to experience hallucinations.

Marijuana A drug derived from the hemp plant. It was taken to experience a feeling of well-being known as a 'high', which rarely included hallucinations.

Mod Short for 'modernist', a term for the fashion-conscious working teenagers who emerged in Britain in the early 1960s.

Op art Short for 'optical' art, a form of abstract art based on techniques designed to deceive the eye.

Permissiveness A view of life which holds that people should be allowed to do as they please, with as little interference as possible.

Pirate radio A radio station making broadcasts without authorization from the government.

Pop art A form of art glorifying modern mass-produced images, such as comic-strip cartoons and soup-tin labels.

Psychedelia The distortion of everyday perception of reality through hallucinations and mystical states.

Satire A form of humour ridiculing prominent people, ideas and institutions, especially the Establishment.

Segregation The separation of people according to race, as practised in the southern United States during the early sixties.

Technocracy A system in which society is controlled by scientists and technical experts.

Unisex clothing Clothes designed to be worn by people of either sex, whether male or female.

Further Reading

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General background

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