

# Then: Radio and Television

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## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about two other technologies that increased the speed of our communication: the radio and television. While writing and print technology increased how we stored and spread our ideas in written form, radio and television helped distribute our ideas in audio and video form. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Radio and Television



## BEFORE YOU START

How did radio and television change how we think about what is happening in the world around us?

## 1. Radio and Television

In the 20th century, the world experienced another major transformation in how people delivered and received information: the invention of the radio. Morse code had given us a tool to transmit a series of signals that could then be decoded into words by the receiver, but Guglielmo Marconi's invention of the radio in the early 1900s meant that actual words and voices could be transmitted from one place to another over airwaves (Raboy, 2016).

Radio brought voices and music directly into people's homes and businesses. It was a new way for Americans to stay connected to one another—they could listen to the same speeches, singers, news reports, and religious broadcasts. Radio also provided a new venue for advertising the growing number of products that were available for purchase in the years before and after World War II.

Around the same time as Marconi's invention, many other innovators were making progress matching voices to moving images. Inventor John Logie Baird created a prototype of a mechanical television in 1926 (Edwards, 2016) and Philo Farnsworth successfully transmitted a signal with an electronic television in 1927 (Eschner, 2017). By the 1950s, new technologies made modern televisions possible, and they were found in more and more American households.

These new technologies allowed people to communicate with millions of Americans all at once. Politicians, journalists, and entertainers were able to reach people directly in their homes. Next, we'll see examples of how these powerful communication technologies transformed politics and changed the way we share political ideas.

The United States saw wave after wave of new communication technology toward the end of the 20th century. Satellites, personal computers, and the internet each had a major impact on society. Every new invention was a response to a problem—innovators needed to find faster, more reliable ways to get messages from point A to point B and continually came up with new ideas for doing so.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about another communications revolution after print technology. Audio and visual technology, like the **radio and television**, allowed for information to be broadcast in real time.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.

## REFERENCES

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