

Topic 9.9: Continuity and Change in a Globalized World

Standards Table

Theme	Learning Objective	Key Concepts
Argumentation	Explain the extent to which science and technology brought change (1900–present)	KC-6.1, KC-6.3

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate how science and technology reshaped the modern world
- Analyze both change and continuity across multiple themes
- Use documents to construct a complex historical argument
- Synthesize evidence across Unit 9

Background Reading

The period from 1900 to the present has been defined by rapid and transformative advances in science and technology. Innovations in communication, transportation, medicine, and agriculture reshaped the ways in which societies interacted, produced goods, and sustained populations. Technologies such as radio, television, and eventually the internet allowed information to circulate instantly across vast distances, reducing the constraints of geography and facilitating unprecedented levels of global interaction. At the same time, advances in transportation, including air travel and containerized shipping, accelerated the movement of people and goods, contributing to economic globalization and cultural exchange.

Scientific advancements also fundamentally altered human survival and population patterns. Medical innovations such as vaccines and antibiotics significantly reduced mortality rates and increased life expectancy, while the Green Revolution introduced new agricultural technologies that dramatically increased food production. These developments supported rapid population growth and urbanization, particularly in developing regions. However, access to these technologies was uneven, often reinforcing existing inequalities between developed and developing societies.

Despite these profound changes, important continuities persisted. Economic disparities remained a defining feature of the global system, as technological benefits were not distributed equally. Similarly, global institutions and systems of governance, while expanded and formalized, continued to reflect power imbalances between nations. Cultural globalization created shared experiences through media and consumer goods, yet

local traditions adapted, resisted, or persisted alongside global influences. As a result, the modern era is best understood not as a period of complete transformation, but as one of significant change alongside enduring continuity.

Primary Sources

Document 4: Global Communication Technologies (Late 20th Century)

The rapid development of communication technologies in the 20th century fundamentally transformed global interactions. Radio and television first allowed information to be transmitted across national borders in real time, while the later development of the internet created a truly global network of communication. Individuals, governments, and businesses could now exchange information instantaneously, reducing the barriers of distance that had historically limited interaction.

These technologies facilitated economic globalization by allowing companies to coordinate production across multiple regions and enabled cultural exchange through the global circulation of media, music, and entertainment. Political movements also benefited from these technologies, as activists could organize and spread ideas beyond their local contexts.

However, access to communication technologies remained uneven. Many developing regions lacked the infrastructure necessary to fully participate in this transformation, creating a “digital divide” that reinforced existing inequalities. As a result, communication technologies simultaneously expanded global connectivity and highlighted persistent disparities in access and opportunity.

Questions

1. Identify ONE technological development described in the document.
2. Explain ONE way communication technologies changed global interactions.
3. Explain ONE limitation or inequality created by these technologies.
4. Analyze the point of view of the author regarding technological change.
5. Explain how this document supports an argument about both change and continuity.

Document 5: Green Revolution Agricultural Transformation (Late 20th Century)

The introduction of high-yield crop varieties, chemical fertilizers, and advanced irrigation systems during the Green Revolution significantly increased agricultural productivity in many parts of the world. Countries such as India and Mexico experienced dramatic

increases in food production, reducing the risk of famine and supporting rapidly growing populations. These technological innovations represented a major shift in the relationship between humans and the environment, as agriculture became increasingly dependent on scientific knowledge and industrial inputs.

The Green Revolution also contributed to broader economic and social changes. Increased agricultural output supported urbanization and industrialization by freeing labor from subsistence farming. Governments and international organizations promoted these technologies as a means of achieving economic development and stability.

However, the benefits of the Green Revolution were unevenly distributed. Regions lacking access to capital, infrastructure, or education were unable to fully adopt these technologies. In some cases, reliance on chemical inputs led to environmental degradation, including soil depletion and water pollution. Thus, while the Green Revolution represented a major technological success, it also reinforced inequalities and introduced new environmental challenges.

Questions

1. Identify ONE technological advancement described in the document.
2. Explain ONE way this advancement changed agricultural production.
3. Explain ONE limitation of the Green Revolution.
4. Analyze the purpose of the document.
5. Explain how this document could be used to support a CCOT argument.

Document 6: Medical Innovation and Global Health (Late 20th Century)

Advances in medical science, including the development of vaccines and antibiotics, dramatically improved global health outcomes during the 20th century. Diseases that once caused widespread mortality, such as smallpox and bacterial infections, became preventable or treatable. These developments contributed to a significant increase in life expectancy and a decline in mortality rates, particularly in developed regions.

The impact of these innovations extended beyond individual health. Lower mortality rates contributed to rapid population growth, especially in developing countries, placing new demands on economic systems and resources. Public health campaigns, supported by international organizations, sought to expand access to medical care and improve sanitation.

Despite these advances, global health outcomes remained uneven. Diseases associated with poverty, such as malaria and tuberculosis, continued to affect large populations. Access to medical technologies depended heavily on economic resources and infrastructure, meaning that many regions did not fully benefit from these innovations. Thus, medical progress highlights both the transformative power of science and the persistence of inequality.

Questions

1. Identify ONE scientific advancement described in the document.
2. Explain ONE way medical innovations affected population patterns.
3. Explain ONE limitation of these advancements.
4. Analyze the author's perspective on technological progress.
5. Explain how this document relates to global inequality.

Document 7: Global Consumer Culture and Identity (Late 20th Century)

The expansion of global markets and communication technologies contributed to the rise of a global consumer culture in the late 20th century. Multinational corporations distributed products such as food, clothing, and entertainment across national boundaries, creating shared experiences among diverse populations. Media and advertising promoted similar lifestyles and values, influencing how individuals understood identity and consumption.

This process was closely linked to technological advancements, as communication networks allowed cultural products to circulate rapidly. Music, film, and fashion trends could spread across continents, shaping global tastes and preferences. In many cases, this led to the standardization of cultural experiences, a process described by sociologists as cultural homogenization.

However, global consumer culture did not simply replace local traditions. Instead, many societies adapted global influences to fit their own cultural contexts, creating hybrid forms of expression. At the same time, some groups resisted these changes, seeking to preserve local identities and traditions. As a result, cultural globalization reflects both convergence and diversity.

Questions

1. Identify ONE cultural change described in the document.
2. Explain ONE effect of global consumer culture.
3. Explain ONE concern raised in the document.

4. Analyze the point of view of the author.
5. Explain how this document supports both change and continuity.

DBQ Assignment

Prompt

Evaluate the extent to which science and technology brought change in the period from 1900 to the present.

Student Requirements

- Thesis with clear evaluation of extent
- Use **all 7 documents**
- Include **outside evidence**
- Source **at least 3 documents (HIPP)**
- Demonstrate **complexity (change + continuity)**