In the 50s

Many things that we now take for granted must have seemed like science fiction back in the 1950s. Of course, some items in a classroom of that era have always been around, and probably always will be. Most likely, there will always be tables or desks for students and a desk for the teacher.

In that respect, a classroom of the 1950s was not very different from a classroom of the 1850s. Some of the desks used in the 1950s still had inkwells left over from the quill-and-ink days of the 19th century.

The classrooms of the 1950s were crowded. In fact, classes were often as large as two classes in today’s schools. This required the use of new kinds of teaching tools and technology.

One of the tools that teachers began to use was something called a filmstrip projector. It was used to show information on a large screen. The filmstrips were like photographic slides, except that instead of slides getting jammed, the filmstrip could be moved forward smoothly and simply. Sometimes, schools even had a television set. We may take this for granted now but, in the 1950s, many families did not own TV sets.

Clothing was also very different then. Girls rarely wore pants, and jeans were an infrequent sight in school, as were T-shirts. Girls wore dresses or skirts and blouses and boys wore buttoned shirts with pants. Any sneakers were likely to be made of rubber and canvas. They certainly did not have the high-impact plastic and padding of today’s sneakers!

Of course, sneakers then did not have the price tag of today’s sneakers—neither did anything else. Soft drinks were a nickel and gas was twenty-nine cents a gallon. You could go to the local malt shop or burger palace and get a hot dog, fries, and a soda for less than a dollar!