Post WWII Medical, Scientific and Technological Advances

Directions: Read the list of advances made after WWII. Then rank each as to its importance to society, 1 being the most important to 10 being the least. Answer the reflection question on the back.

____ Polio Vaccine

1952- Poliomyelitis has been around since ancient times. There is still no cure for the disease. But at the peak of its devastation in the United States, Dr. Jonas Salk introduced a way to prevent it.

This infectious viral disease attacks the nerve cells and sometimes the central nervous system, often causing muscle wasting and paralysis and even death.

____ Interstate Highway System

1954- President Eisenhower signs the Federal-Aid Highway Act. This begins a massive construction project to build high speed highways all across the United States.

____ DNA Discovered

1953- James Watson, Francis Crick, and Maurice Wilkins jointly received the 1962 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for their 1953 determination of the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA).

DNA is located in the nuclei of cells, which make up the body. Consequently, DNA can be considered as one of the building blocks of the body.

____ Hydrogen Bomb

1952- The first thermonuclear bomb was exploded by the United States, the second in 1953 by Russia (then the USSR). Great Britain, France, and China have also exploded thermonuclear bombs.

The H Bomb weapon derives a large portion of its energy from the nuclear fusion of hydrogen isotopes.

____ First Organ Transplant

1951- The kidney was the first organ to be transplanted. This technology, has paved the way for other breakthroughs for more transplants.

____ Rocket Technology

1957- Rocket technology began prior to WWII. However it was during the 1950s that this new technology enables man to launch objects into space.

More on the back.
Computer

1950- Engineering Research Associates of Minneapolis built the ERA 1101, the first commercially produced computer; the company’s first customer was the U.S. Navy.

Transistor

1947- First commercially produced transistor. Transistors are devices that control the movement of electrons, and consequently, electricity. They work something like a water faucet -- not only do they start and stop the flow of a current, but they also control the amount of the current. It allows electronic device to be built that are much smaller.

Pace Maker

1958- Engineer Earl Bakken of Minneapolis, Minnesota, produced the first wearable external pacemaker for a patient. Pacemaker is a device that keeps the heart in a regular rate and rhythm.

Sputnik

1957- First satellite. The Soviet Union launched the first man-made object into orbit. This opened up the way for further exploration of space.

Reflection: Look at your number one ranking. Explain why you felt this was the most important advancement of the post WWII era.