

APUSH KEY CONCEPTS

Period 9: 1980-present

Key Concept 9.1: A newly ascendant conservative movement achieved several political and policy goals during the 1980s and continued to strongly influence public discourse in the following decades.

I. Conservative beliefs regarding the need for traditional social values and a reduced role for government advanced in U.S. politics after 1980.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus on Exam Questions)

- **POL-1.0:** Explain how and why political ideas, beliefs, institutions, party systems, and alignments have developed and changed.
- **POL-2.0:** Explain how popular movements, reform efforts, and activist groups have sought to change American society and institutions.
- **POL-3.0:** Explain how different beliefs about the federal government's role in U.S. social and economic life have affected political debates and policies.
- **WXT-2.0:** Explain how patterns of exchange, markets, and private enterprise have developed, and analyze ways that governments have responded to economic issues.

A. Ronald Reagan's victory in the presidential election of 1980 represented an important milestone, allowing conservatives to enact significant tax cuts and continue the deregulation of many industries.

B. Conservatives argued that liberal programs were counterproductive in fighting poverty and stimulating economic growth. Some of their efforts to reduce the size and scope of government met with inertia and liberal opposition, as many programs remained popular with voters.

C. Policy debates continued over free-trade agreements, the scope of the government social safety net, and calls to reform the U.S. financial system.

Key Concept 9.2: Moving into the 21st century, the nation experienced significant technological, economic, and demographic changes.

I. New developments in science and technology enhanced the economy and transformed society, while manufacturing decreased.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus on Exam Questions)

- **WXT-1.0:** Explain how different labor systems developed in North America and the United States, and explain their effects on workers' lives and U.S. society.
- **WXT-2.0:** Explain how patterns of exchange, markets, and private enterprise have developed, and analyze ways that governments have responded to economic issues.
- **WXT-3.0:** Analyze how technological innovation has affected economic development and society.

A. Economic productivity increased as improvements in digital communications enabled increased American participation in worldwide economic opportunities.

B. Technological innovations in computing, digital mobile technology, and the Internet transformed daily life, increased access to information, and led to new social behaviors and networks.

C. Employment increased in service sectors and decreased in manufacturing, and union membership declined.

D. Real wages stagnated for the working and middle class amid growing economic inequality.

II. The U.S. population continued to undergo demographic shifts that had significant cultural and political consequences.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus on Exam Questions)

- **NAT-4.0:** Analyze relationships among different regional, social, ethnic, and racial groups, and explain how these groups' experiences have related to U.S. national identity.
- **CUL-3.0:** Explain how ideas about women's rights and gender roles have affected society and politics.
- **MIG-1.0:** Explain the causes of migration to colonial North America and, later, the United States, and analyze immigration's effects on U.S. society.
- **MIG-2.0:** Analyze causes of internal migration and patterns of settlement in what would become the United States, and explain how migration has affected American life.

A. After 1980, the political, economic, and cultural influence of the American South and West continued to increase as population shifted to those areas.

B. International migration from Latin America and Asia increased dramatically.

C. The new immigrants affected U.S. culture in many ways and supplied the economy with an important labor force.

D. Intense political and cultural debates continued over issues such as immigration policy, diversity, gender roles, and family structures.

Key Concept 9.3: The end of the Cold War and new challenges to U.S. leadership forced the nation to redefine its foreign policy and role in the world.

I. The Reagan administration promoted an interventionist foreign policy that continued in later administrations, even after the end of the Cold War.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus on Exam Questions)

- **WOR-2.0:** Analyze the reasons for, and results of, U.S. diplomatic, economic, and military initiatives in North America and overseas.

A. Reagan asserted U.S. opposition to communism through speeches, diplomatic efforts, limited military interventions, and a buildup of nuclear and conventional weapons.

B. Increased U.S. military spending, Reagan's diplomatic initiatives, and political changes and economic problems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were all important in ending the Cold War.

C. The end of the Cold War led to new diplomatic relationships but also new U.S. military and peacekeeping interventions, as well as continued debates over the appropriate use of American power in the world.

II. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. foreign policy efforts focused on fighting terrorism around the world.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus on Exam Questions)

- **NAT-2.0:** Explain how interpretations of the Constitution and debates over rights, liberties, and definitions of citizenship have affected American values, politics, and society.
- **NAT-3.0:** Analyze how ideas about national identity changed in response to U.S. involvement in international conflicts and the growth of the United States.
- **GEO-1.0:** Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of various communities, and analyze how competition for and debates over natural resources have affected both interactions among different groups and the development of government policies.
- **WOR-2.0:** Analyze the reasons for, and results of, U.S. diplomatic, economic, and military initiatives in North America and overseas.

A. In the wake of attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States launched military efforts against terrorism and lengthy, controversial conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

B. The war on terrorism sought to improve security within the United States but also raised questions about the protection of civil liberties and human rights.

C. Conflicts in the Middle East and concerns about climate change led to debates over U.S. dependence on fossil fuels and the impact of economic consumption on the environment.

D. Despite economic and foreign policy challenges, the United States continued as the world's leading superpower in the 21st century.