Entering a New Era

1992-Present

• The 1992 presidential campaign was a three-way race. Not since 1912 had a third candidate played such a major role in a presidential election.

Bill Clinton

• Attacked Bush for being out-of-touch and poorly managing the economy
• Campaigned as a New Democrat, more moderate on some issues, especially taxes
• His wife, Hillary, was elected Senator from New York in 2000, served as Secretary of State from 2009-2013, and won the Democratic nomination for President in 2016

Clinton’s Women Troubles

• Clinton was plagued by accusations of marital infidelity, sexual harassment, and even sexual assault; he and his wife went on 60 Minutes to deny the accusations
• Hillary Clinton offended many tradition-oriented women with dismissive comments

Economic Issues Dominate

• Clinton advisor James Carville coined an unofficial motto for the campaign: It’s the Economy, Stupid! Essentially, Clinton deflected questions about his character by stressing pocket-book issues

H. Ross Perot

• Texas billionaire, never ran for political office before
• Ran as an independent fed up with both political parties
• Previously famous for launching a rescue mission to save employees from Iran
• Led the public opinion polls for a brief time, but his erratic campaign faltered

George H. W. Bush

• Incumbent President running for a second term, his approval rating approached 90% during the Persian Gulf War
• Promoted his success in managing the end of the Cold War
• Argued that the Republican Party would better arrest a decline in traditional American values
• Attacked Clinton as untrustworthy and poorly suited for executive office (marijuana use, draft avoidance, etc.)

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Presidential Election Outcome

• The new president was buoyed by the fact that Democratic majorities existed in both the House and Senate. For the first time in more than a decade, the executive and legislative branches would be in the hands of the same political party.

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Senate</th>
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• In dealing with the economy, Clinton tried to follow a middle path. He wanted to end the lingering recession by raising spending or cutting taxes, but also wanted to reduce the deficit by cutting spending or raising taxes.

Newt Gingrich

• Born in Harrisburg Hospital in 1943 to teenage parents who quickly separated, Newt spent his early life in Hummelstown before his mother and step-father moved the family to Georgia.
• He became a university history professor and was elected to Congress in 1978.
• His rise to leadership was hastened by his role in forcing Democratic Speaker Jim Wright to resign for ethical lapses (though he had ethical controversies of his own).

Contract with America

• Promised:
  – All laws would apply equally to members of Congress
  – An independent firm would audit Congress
  – Reduce House committees and staff by 1/3
  – Require committee meetings to be open to the public
  – Require a 3/5 vote to increase taxes
  – Balance the federal budget
  – Cut taxes for small businesses, families, and seniors
  – Impose Congressional term limits
  – Reform social security and welfare
There was talk of a new era in American politics in which Congress, not the President, would set the nation’s course. The Republicans demanded that the budget be balanced in seven years and proposed many cuts in social services.

Many of the bills approved by the House never became law, however, because the Senate rejected some and others were vetoed.

At the end of 1995, Clinton and Gingrich dashed over the balancing of the budget. Their failure to compromise led to the temporary government shutdown, disrupting services to millions of Americans.

This battle marked the start of another Clinton comeback. Many American blamed Republicans for the shutdown and began to regard them as uncompromising and extreme.

In August 1996, Congress and Clinton agreed on a sweeping reform of the welfare system that affected 12.8 million people. The new law eliminated federal guarantees of cash assistance and gave states authority to run their own welfare programs with block grants of federal money.

It also established a life-time limit of five years of aid per family and required most adults to work within two years of receiving aid.

When Republicans took control of Congress in 1995, Clinton’s chances for reelection seemed slim. In the months that followed, Clinton worked to show that he was not a “tax-and-spend liberal.”

His Republican opponent was Bob Dole, the Senate Majority Leader and a respected member of Congress for 35 years. Dole (R-Kansas) was a disabled WWII veteran and 1976 Republican Vice Presidential nominee. His wife, Elizabeth, held several cabinet positions and was later elected to the Senate from North Carolina.

Ross Perot again entered the race, this time as the nominee of the newly created Reform Party.
• As the election approached, Clinton maneuvered several popular bills, including one raising the minimum wage through Congress. The economy had become strong, which worked in his favor.

• On election day, Clinton won 49 percent of the popular vote and 379 electoral votes. Dole won 41 percent of the popular vote and 159 electoral votes. Perot won 8 percent of the popular vote and 0 electoral votes.

• Charges of scandal in Clinton’s first term, which Dole had emphasized in the 1996 campaign, continued into the new administration. In what came to be known as the Whitewater Affair, Clinton was accused of having taken part in fraudulent loans and land deals years earlier and of using his influence as governor to block the investigation.

• Attorney General Janet Reno appointed a special prosecutor to investigate. Consequently, some of Clinton’s friends were convicted of various crimes. No evidence was found to link the President to those crimes.

• Another charge against Clinton was that he accepted illegal contributions in exchange for political favors. A Senate committee found violations of campaign laws by members of both parties, but no link to the President.

• The year 1998 began with good news: the government had achieved its first surplus since 1969.

• Later that year, however, a scandal erupted that led to the second impeachment of a President in history.

• The crisis arose when Ken Starr, the special prosecutor who had been investigating the Whitewater affair, investigated the relationship between Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, a White House intern.
• Under oath in a separate harassment lawsuit, Clinton denied an affair occurred. He denied it again to a grand jury in August. Eventually, Clinton admitted to having misled the country with those lies.

• This led to a bitterly partisan debate in the House of Representatives and throughout the country. While most Americans criticized Clinton’s actions, a majority believed he should not be impeached.

• On December 19, the House voted to impeach Clinton on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice. On February 12, 1999, though, the Senate voted to acquit the President.

• Clinton’s support was bolstered by an unprecedented economic boom that constituted the longest period of expansion in American history. While the economy continued to grow, both unemployment and inflation remained low.

• The mixture of a strong economy and a scandalous presidency promised a close election in 2000. The Democrats’ candidate, Al Gore, lacked the kind of personality that allowed Clinton to rise above scandals.

• Republicans spoke of returning morality and respect to the White House. Their nominee was Texas Governor George W. Bush.

• On election night the votes in several states were too close to call. One undecided state, Florida, would determine the outcome. The close result then triggered a state law that required a recount, and for 36 days both sides argued over how to proceed fairly.

• Democrats didn’t trust the results because the state’s governor was Bush’s brother. Republicans didn’t like that Democrats only wanted to recount in areas where they had an advantage.

• Florida Fiasco
  What’s sufficient proof of a vote?
  Can you second guess a valid vote?
Eventually, the Supreme Court discontinued all recounts and secured the presidency for Bush. Oddly, Gore had won the popular vote but lost in the Electoral College.

The new president preferred to delegate more responsibility to advisors and staff. He also gave his Vice President, Dick Cheney, an unprecedented role in setting policy.

In domestic policy, he succeeded in getting a major tax cut (the largest in history) and a major education reform bill.

Russia

- The USSR collapsed, and many former republics asserted their independence. Democratic reforms seemed promising, but the economic struggles disappointed many Russians. A bloody war in the break-away region of Chechnya further weakened support for Boris Yeltsin, the President of Russia, who then resigned in 1999. Vladimir Putin became acting president and has run the country ever since. Russia cooperated with the US initially, especially on nuclear proliferation, but has since become more antagonistic.

Eastern Europe

- Countries in the former Soviet bloc instituted democratic and capitalistic reforms. Many of them actually joined NATO, displeasing Russia.

Five Presidents Have Lost the Popular Vote

But for the Electoral College, Andrew Jackson would have won in 1824, Samuel Tilden in 1876, Grover Cleveland in 1888, Al Gore in 2000, and Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Supporters of NCLB included many prominent Democrats as well as Republicans. Many endorsed the idea that schools be held accountable for their educational outcomes through standardized testing, but the law may have created unrealistic expectations and overly burdened many struggling districts.

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Russia
Africa - Somalia
• Famine and civil war in Somalia invited UN intervention. US troops were sent to help in 1992 but were attacked by warlords, leading to a rapid withdrawal. Somalia remains one of the most troubled regions in the world today.

Africa - Rwanda
• Ethnic strife erupted into violence in 1994, with the Hutu government committing genocide against the Tutsi minority. Some 800,000 were massacred. The US did not intervene.

Africa - South Africa
• South Africa abandoned apartheid after the US and other nations imposed economic sanctions. Black Africans, who were 85% of the country’s population, won the right to vote in 1994 and elected Nelson Mandela as President. This peaceful transition of power surprised many.

China
• China’s economy began to grow rapidly in the 1990s, even though the Communist Party maintained its strict control of the country. Economic interests pushed China and the US to reduce tensions over Taiwan and to coordinate some responses to North Korea.

Yugoslavia
• Yugoslavia disintegrated, but the Republic of Serbia determined to keep territories in other former Yugoslav republics with Serb populations under their control. Forces under Slobodan Milosevic carried out ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, precipitating an American bombing campaign in 1995. The US then hosted peace talks in Dayton, OH. A similar episode occurred in Kosovo in 1999.

Northern Ireland
• This British territory in the north of Ireland witnessed much violence in the preceding decades, as sectarian gangs, including the IRA and UDF, fought for control.
• In 1996, former Senator George Mitchell helped broker a peace agreement between Catholic and Protestant political parties in Northern Ireland. This process was called the Good Friday Accord.

Milosevic
• Lost power in 2000, then arrested and put on trial but died in prison before the trial was concluded.

Israel
• In 1993, PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed a peace agreement in Washington, D.C. The situation has deteriorated since then, and peace still seems like a distant possibility.
• In the 1990s, most Americans believed the USA was immune to the kind of violence that wracked other parts of the world. That opinion changed radically when terrorists struck at targets in New York and just outside Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001.

• Using hijacked airplanes as weapons, the terrorists crashed into New York’s World Trade Center and the Pentagon, while a fourth plane crashed in a field near Pittsburgh.

• A total of 2,666 passengers and crew lost their lives. Another 180 people in the Pentagon were killed, and an estimated 2,800 died in the WTC.

• Law-enforcement agencies immediately began an investigation as countries around the world pledged to support efforts to track down those responsible. Within days, officials named Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian, as the prime suspect.

• He led a network of Muslim extremists known as Al Qaeda, and was believed to be hiding in Afghanistan.
• After the **Soviets** withdrew from **Afghanistan** in 1989, the **civil war** there continued. In 1996 a group of **Islamic fundamentalists**, called the **Taliban**, seized **Kabul**, the capital.

• Their leaders sought to create their version of a pure **Islamic state** and banned such things as **television** and **Western music**. Taliban law was especially restrictive of women. They had to cover completely in public, could not work outside the home, or attend school after age eight. These laws were enforced by special morality police who could cane violators in public. Both boys and girls in school were limited to religious studies.

• **International Outrage**

The Taliban also suppressed historically and culturally significant monuments they deemed offensive, most notably by destroying the ancient Bamiyan Buddha statues.

• They also provided **sanctuary** for **Osama bin Laden**, who established **terrorist training camps** in the countryside. The US demanded that the **Taliban** shut down those camps and turn over **bin Laden**, and other **terrorists**.

• Those demands were refused, so the **USA** along with **Great Britain** launched a **bombing campaign** known as **“Operation Enduring Freedom.”**

• **After just two months**, **US** and **rebels Afghan forces** defeated the **Taliban**, ending their rule. Though **bin Laden** was not found, defeating them was the first victory in the war on terrorism.

• **The president also moved quickly to combat terrorism at home.** Less than a month after 9/11 he created the Office of **Homeland Security** to be headed by **PA** **Governor Tom Ridge**.

• **Around this time the country faced a wave of mysterious attacks using anthrax**, in letters mailed to the **media**, and **government officials**. These attacks opened American’s eyes to the dangers of **biological warfare**.

• **Congress then elevated this Office and renamed it the Department of Homeland Security.** It merged 22 existing agencies, including **Customs Service**, **Immigration Service** (including **Border Patrol, Coast Guard**, and **Secret Service**).
• The most obvious effects of the department’s efforts could be found at airports across the country.

• The president warned hostile nations to stop developing weapons of mass destruction and declared Iraq, Iran, North Korea to be part of an “Axis of Evil.”

• The president turned his attention to Iraq where Saddam Hussein continued to brutally oppress his own people and refused to cooperate with UN inspectors sent to monitor his weapons.

• Bush reminded people of this and publicly linked Iraq to terrorists. In October 2002, Congress passed a resolution authorizing the president to use force against Iraq.

• The US, Britain, Poland, and other countries sent troops to the Persian Gulf region. The war, dubbed “Operation Iraqi Freedom” started on March 19, 2003.

• Within three weeks, American troops were in Baghdad.

• On May 1, the president declared that major combat operations had ended.

• Saddam Hussein was finally captured in December.

• Sadly, the occupation would prove more difficult than the war.
The Latin motto of the United States is **E Pluribus unum**, meaning **From Many, One**. That motto reflects the patterns of the nation’s **past**, and the possibilities for its **future**. Creating **unity** out of **diversity** remains one of the nation’s greatest challenges.

As the 21st Century began, about **30%** of the nation’s people were either **African American**, **Latino**, **Asian American**, or **Native American**. Changes to **immigration** contributed to this growing diversity.

The **Immigration Act** of 1965 eliminated a bias that favored **European** immigrants.

Another law in 1986 sought to reduce **illegal immigration** by forbidding **employers** to hire **illegal aliens**, though it also legalized those who had been living in the country since **1982**.

A third law in 1990 increased **quotas** by **40%** and erased **restrictions** that had denied entrance to many people in the past.

In 2000, **minorities** accounted for **56%** percent of the total population of the nation’s **100 largest** cities.

That same year, **Latinos** surpassed **African Americans** as the country’s largest minority.

Minorities also represented the majority of the people in **California**, **New Mexico**, and **Hawaii**. **Texas** also nearly joined the ranks of **minority-majority** states.

**Impact of Immigration**

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<tr>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Fear that immigrant workers accept lower wages, taking jobs away from native-born Americans and reducing pay for others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Fear that immigrants require expensive public services; about 22% of immigrants benefit from public welfare, compared to 18% of the native-born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Concerns that too many immigrants resist assimilating to the dominant American culture (language, politics, etc.)</td>
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5/24/2017
Another heated debate concerned affirmative action. Some argued that giving special treatment to some groups was unfair to everyone else. Claims of reverse discrimination led to lawsuits and ballot initiatives that steadily weakened the programs.

The population of the United States is now older than ever before. Advances in medical care increased the average life expectancy from 47 to 77 years during the 1990s. The percentage of Americans over age 65 tripled from 1900 to 2000.

This “graying” has important effects. The Social Security System, for example, faces difficulties because the number of retirees, receiving benefits from the program is rising faster than the number of workers paying taxes into it. This is also posing problems for the nation’s medical system.

The United States enjoyed the greatest period of economic expansion in its history during the 1990s, thanks in large part to the technological boom in 2001, however, businesses sharply cut their spending on technology. This is also posing problems for the nation’s Social Security System.

In the last several decades, the invention of more ways to store, retrieve, and transmit information has created a new era in communications known as the Information Age. The centerpiece of this age is the computer. The internet has revolutionized many areas of American life.

In the resulting recession many companies failed. In this “New Economy,” the demand for workers with advanced degrees grew, but fewer positions exist for unskilled workers. Education has never been as important to success as it is now.

The new technologies left their marks on Americans’ daily lives. Many people kept in touch with friends through e-mail more than through letters, or telephone calls. They took cell phones or hand-held computers along with them every day. They used the internet, to shop, to look for jobs, or to find everything they needed to know.

European Union

| Origins   | Traced to 1957 effort by six nations to coordinate their economic policies |
| Purpose/ Effect | The EU now coordinates many political policies as well as economic policies, leading critics to complain that unelected bureaucrats are assuming too much power over member nations; in 2016, Britain voted to leave the EU |

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

| Origins   | In 1992, the US, Canada, and Mexico concluded a treaty to gradually remove trade restrictions among them, hoping to stimulate economic growth and closer cooperation |
| Purpose/ Effect | Foreign investment has increased and many prices have fallen, but critics complain that US companies have moved too many jobs to Mexico; in 2017, President Trump announced plans to renegotiate the treaty |
Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) / World Trade Organization (WTO)

**Origins**
Many nations agreed in 1948 to reduce tariffs and expand trade; 1994 amendments established the WTO

**Purpose/Effect**
This organization has more power to negotiate new trade agreements, resolve trade disputes, and enforce earlier agreements

• **Multinational corporations** benefit **consumers** and **workers**, around the world by providing **new products** and **jobs**, and by introducing advanced **technologies** and **production** methods.

• On the other hand, these powerful **businesses** sometimes skirt the **law** by using their **economic clout** to unduly influence **politicians** or by devising dishonest ways to keep **profits** growing.