



GRADE 8 LOUISIANA SOCIAL STUDIES

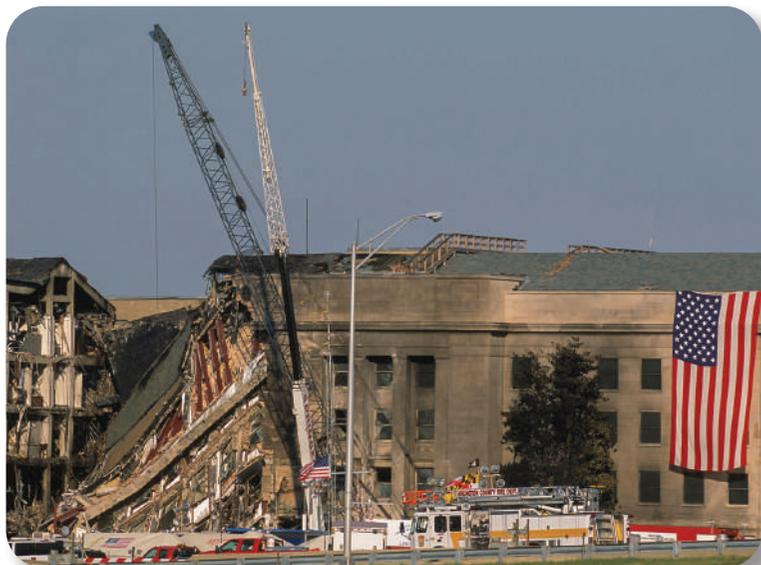
The Modern Era

Student Volume

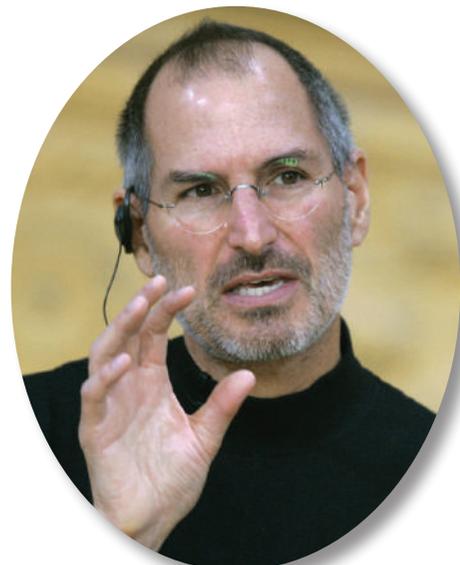
Social media



September 11, 2001



Steve Jobs



Hurricane Katrina



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The Modern Era

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1 New Message

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The Modern Era

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Chapter 1

Domestic Issues of the Modern Era

The Framing Question

What are the most pressing questions facing the United States in the years ahead?

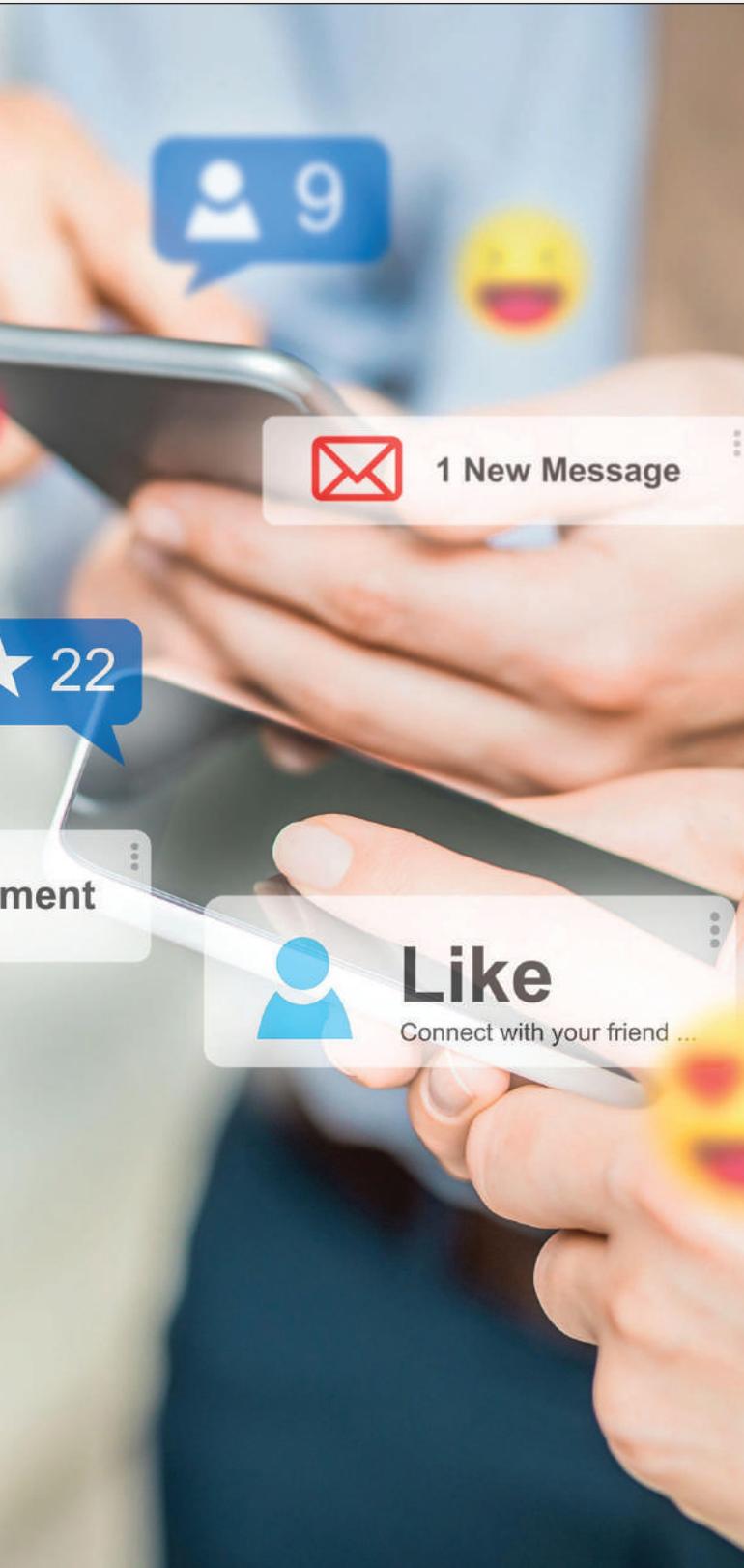


Challenges Ahead and Powerful Voices

In the opening years of the 2000s, many Americans enjoyed a level of material wealth undreamed of in earlier ages. But the nation also faced political, economic, and environmental challenges. During this time, new technology, including smartphones and social media, emerged. Technology has been one of many factors that has greatly shaped modern life.



Social media and smartphones have changed the way people communicate.



President Bill Clinton

The final president to be elected in the twentieth century was Bill Clinton. He became the forty-second president of the United States and served from 1993 to 2001. Clinton was a graduate of Yale Law School and had been governor of Arkansas. He was a leader of the **centrist wing** of the Democratic Party. During his eight years in office, President Clinton raised taxes on the wealthiest 1 percent and cut taxes on some small businesses. He also signed into law an agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The aim of this trade agreement was to encourage more trade between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Many tariffs, or taxes, imposed on imports among the three nations were largely eliminated.

Vocabulary

“**centrist wing**” (phrase) a part of a political party or an organization that holds moderate views

With the Cold War over, Clinton was able to cut military spending and reduce

federal spending. During his years as president, the economy boomed, though the earnings of many low-wage workers remained flat. In Clinton's first year in office, his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, headed a team to review health care in the United States.

In 1994, Republicans won control of both houses of Congress in the midterm elections. Led by House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, the Republicans began an agenda they called the "Contract with America." The agenda called for lower taxes, smaller government, and welfare reform. Clinton was reelected in 1996, but the "Republican Revolution" was strong. In fact, it was one of the factors that led Clinton to declare in his 1996 State of the Union address: "The era of big government is over."

In 1996, President Clinton signed a Republican-crafted welfare bill. The bill created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and included a work or job training requirement.

President Clinton was impeached during his second term for lying to a grand jury and for obstruction of justice. Though impeached by the House of Representatives, Clinton was not convicted by the Senate, and he remained in office.



Bill Clinton was elected the forty-second president of the United States (1993–2001) after serving as governor of Arkansas. Al Gore served two terms as vice president.

Think Twice



Why was it considered possible to cut military spending at the end of the Cold War?



Party Politics

Party politics in the 2000s became sharply divided. From 2000 to 2016, Republicans and Democrats both held the presidency at different times. The Republican Party found particular strength among conservative

voters in rural areas across much of the South and Midwest. The Democratic Party found support among moderate and liberal voters in urban areas of Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and West Coast states. A practice referred to as **gerrymandering**, in which a state legislature draws the boundaries of voting districts in ways intended to give one political party an unfair advantage, increased **partisanship**. It also reduced political compromise.

Vocabulary

gerrymandering, n. the practice of manipulating the boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favor one party or class

partisanship, n. the state of choosing one political party, cause, or person over others due to personal affiliation, regardless of other factors

Typically, labels such as *conservative* and *liberal* do not adequately reveal the reasons why people are drawn to a certain political party. In many cases, people focus on the specific needs and difficulties within their households and immediate communities. President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, in an attempt to appeal to all Americans, somewhat successfully portrayed themselves as “New Democrats” who were more moderate in their political approach.



During a Cinco de Mayo parade in New York City, dancers participate in a Chinelos dance, which dates to Mexico’s colonial period and is a hybrid of Indigenous and Spanish styles.

A trend that began decades earlier continued as the states of the Northeast and Upper Midwest lost population to the states of the South and West. The outflow of Americans from rural to urban areas also continued. By 2016, about 55 percent of Americans lived in suburbs, 31 percent in urban areas, and roughly 20 percent in rural areas.

The nation’s rich ethnic diversity, long a component of the American population, continued. In 2016, more than forty million people—or roughly 13 percent of the total U.S. population—were immigrants. More than half of those immigrants were from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Roughly 20 percent were from India and other parts of Asia. About 11 percent were from Europe.

In 2016, the U.S. population of more than 323 million accounted for about 4.3 percent of the world's total population of roughly 7.4 billion people.



Find Out the Facts

Research the origins of gerrymandering and some of its effects on congressional districts throughout the country. Then, research how your own district may have been impacted by the practice.



Writers' Corner

Write a short report based on your research on gerrymandering.



The Economy at Home

Political discussion and debate about income inequality in the United States continued in the opening years of the twenty-first century. The top 10 percent of income earners' share of the nation's wealth continued to grow. Meanwhile, those of lower-and middle-income earners remained largely the same or decreased. This economic trend was made worse by the economic recession that began in 2007. You will read more about the recession later in this chapter.

Discussion of the causes of the "hollowing out of the middle class" occupied the focus of scholars, politicians, and ordinary citizens. As compared to the low-paid service sector, one in four Americans worked in relatively high-paid manufacturing in 1970. By 2016, only about 10 percent did. Economists point to changes such as technological advancements (including automation) and the decline of unions as reasons for the rise of the growing economic divide in the United States. Child poverty also remained a challenge. In 2016, more than one in six children in the United States lived in poverty.



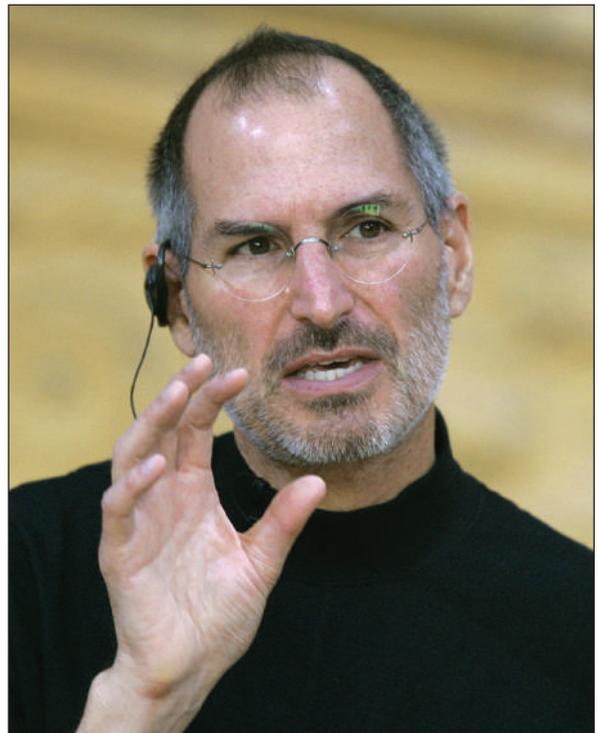
Advancements in a New Millennium

By the second decade of the new century, smartphones, computers, the Internet, and social media transformed everyday life for many Americans. In 2000, half of American families owned a personal computer; more than a decade later, three-quarters did.

A "smartphone revolution" took off in 2007. Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. introduced the first iPhone. Screen time on phones, tablets, and computers altered the way people communicated

with friends, consumed entertainment, and conducted business. Owning a smartphone became a necessity for more and more people.

Social media giants came to dominate the communications market, among them Facebook (founded in 2004); Twitter, now X (2006); Instagram (2010); Snapchat (2011); and TikTok (2016). Concerned parents and others warned of the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, racist memes, and **confirmation bias** on the Internet. In contrast, some groups have voiced concerns that efforts to combat these problems will lead to increased censorship and have a negative effect on public discourse. Researchers also sought to understand the ways in which “screen time” was reconfiguring human relations shaping young minds, and affecting self-esteem.



Vocabulary

“**confirmation bias**” (phrase), the tendency to look for information or to interpret information in a way that is consistent with a person’s existing beliefs



Think Twice

What are the positive and negative impacts of social media?

Bill Gates and Steve Jobs were leaders in the digital technology revolution.



President George W. Bush

President George W. Bush took office as the forty-third president of the United States in January 2001 and served until 2009. Bush, a Republican, received half a million fewer popular votes than his Democratic opponent, former vice president Al Gore. But Bush triumphed in the Electoral College. After a month-long court battle, the United States Supreme Court, in a seven-to-two decision, stopped a recount in Florida. This meant that Bush won the state. He received 537 more votes than Gore (out of six million cast in the Sunshine State). With Florida's twenty-five electoral votes in hand, he won the election. When the dust had settled, George W. Bush received 271 electoral votes to Al Gore's 266.

George W. Bush is the son of George H. W. Bush, the nation's forty-first president. He attended Yale and Harvard Universities before starting an oil and gas exploration firm. He later became an owner of the Texas Rangers Major League Baseball team. In his run for the presidency, Bush presented himself as a "compassionate conservative." As president, he pursued a conservative

political agenda. His administration cut taxes, relaxed environmental standards for industry, and opened new areas to oil and gas drilling in Alaska. Bush appointed conservatives John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. He also appointed Colin Powell, the son of Jamaican immigrants, as secretary of state. Powell was followed by Condoleezza Rice, who was the first African American woman to serve as secretary of state.

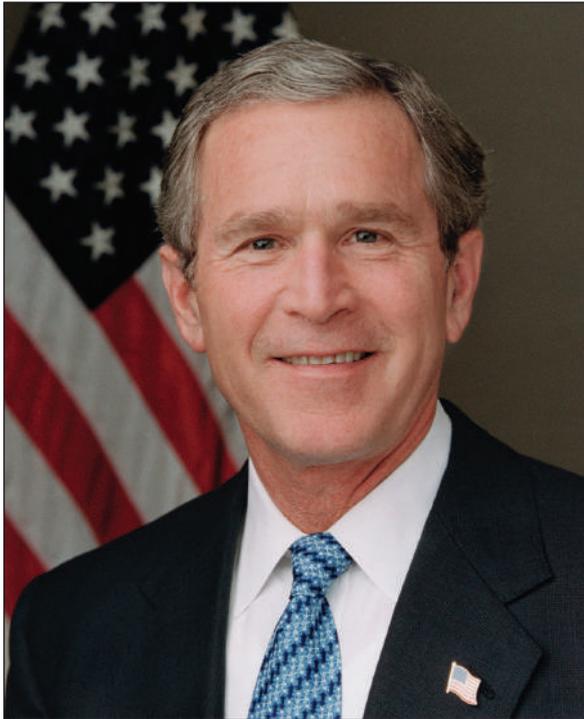
President Bush successfully supported legislation that expanded the federal government's funding for prescription drugs for elderly Americans. In his second term, he sought to award contracts to private companies for a portion of Social Security rather than running it as a purely public program. But this effort to privatize Social Security was unsuccessful. In education, President Bush supported the No Child Left Behind Act, a program that sought to improve student achievement in school.

President Bush won reelection in 2004 with 51 percent of the vote. His Democratic Party opponent was John Kerry of Massachusetts.

Find Out the Facts



Find out more about the court battle that followed the 2000 presidential election.



George W. Bush was the forty-third president of the United States (2001–9) and previously governor of Texas.



Nancy Pelosi became the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives in 2007.

Bush defeated Kerry in the Electoral College, with 286 votes to Kerry's 252. Republicans also increased their seats in the House and Senate. In the 2006 midterm elections, however, Democrats won control of both houses of Congress. In 2007, Nancy Pelosi, a Democratic representative from California, became the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House of Representatives.



Natural Disasters

Some commentators blamed Republicans' 2006 losses in Congress in part on the Bush administration's handling of the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina. The August 2005 hurricane devastated the city of New Orleans and surrounding areas. Winds reached speeds of 140 miles per hour (225 kmh). The storm was the costliest hurricane to ever hit the United States, both economically and in loss of life. It caused at least \$108 billion in damage and was responsible for 1,392 deaths. At least 80 percent of New Orleans was underwater during the storm. Much of this was due to the failure of levees that divide New Orleans from Lake Pontchartrain.

Local relief agencies had a difficult time responding to the needs of New Orleans during Katrina. Tens of thousands of people either could not evacuate or ignored the order to do so. Many were eventually rescued from rooftops, especially in the city's Ninth Ward. As many as 25,000 people took shelter inside the New Orleans Convention Center. Roughly 30,000 sought refuge inside the Louisiana Superdome.

The federal government did not establish a presence in New Orleans until September 2 when National Guard troops began to distribute food and water. Evacuation of residents also continued into September, with fewer than 10,000 residents still in the city by September 6, 2005. Many residents never returned. The population of New Orleans decreased by 29 percent between the fall of 2005 and 2011. Those who left relocated to other parts of the

New Orleans Before and After Hurricane Katrina, 2005



Hurricane Katrina flooded roughly 80 percent of the city of New Orleans. The darkened areas of the bottom image were the places that were flooded.

Hurricanes Katrina Rita



Hurricane Rita made landfall in 2005, just weeks after Hurricane Katrina.

country, with Texas taking in more new residents than any other state.

While not as strong as Katrina, Hurricane Rita also caused devastation. With sustained winds of 115 miles per hour (185 kmh), the storm caused much of its damage to Cameron Parish in southwestern Louisiana. Both Katrina and Rita—along with Wilma, a third Category 5 hurricane—made 2005 the most active hurricane season in U.S. history at the time. Twenty-seven named storms formed, the most in one season. This was due in part to rising sea temperatures, combined with

warmer ocean currents, which allowed storms to intensify more quickly.

Think Twice

What impact do you think the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina had on the people of New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana?



The Great Recession

From 2007 to 2009, the American economy was hit by the Great Recession. It was, at the time, the worst financial

crisis the nation had faced since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was brought on by the bursting of a multitrillion-dollar “housing bubble.”

The “housing bubble,” in turn, was the result of many factors, among them financial miscalculations, misdeeds, and fraud. **Mortgages**, housing loans in which the bank can **repossess** a property for lack of payment, were considered safe and secure. But a change in federal banking laws had removed barriers between commercial and investment banking.

Vocabulary

mortgage, n. a loan for the purchase of a house or building, which can be forfeited in case of nonpayment

repossess, v. to take possession of something due to lack of payment

By 2006, that change had triggered a frenzy of activity in the mortgage market. Banks lent money unwisely and made risky investments. Some mortgage lenders engaged in fraudulent behavior. Ordinary Americans borrowed money at low



Chase was one of the banks that received economic assistance during the Great Recession.

interest rates and were unable to afford their payments when interest rates rose. In 2006, housing prices began to fall. And by late 2007, with the housing bubble having burst, the trillion-dollar mortgage market collapsed.

Republicans traditionally favor minimal or modest federal government involvement in economic matters. But the collapse was threatening other parts of the economy. Ben Bernanke, the chair of the Federal Reserve—a system of banks under federal supervision that works to stabilize the U.S. financial system—described the situation as a looming “global financial meltdown.” Republicans as well as Democrats in Congress joined with the Bush administration to undertake swift, massive federal intervention in the economy. Congress passed the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP), and the U.S. Treasury Department and Federal Reserve poured hundreds of billions of dollars—through direct cash injections as well as loans—into the nation’s banks and financial institutions. Without the federal government’s swift action to bail out the banks and financial institutions, they would almost certainly have collapsed. Millions of people lost their jobs at the peak of the Great Recession, which hurt

the lower and middle classes much more than the wealthy overall. Unemployment reached 10 percent. The economy slowly recovered over the next several years. Banks and financial institutions often paid back the money the federal government had given to them. Many Americans, however, were angry. Despite their unwise and sometimes fraudulent practices, the banks had been bailed out because they were “too big to fail,” meaning their collapse might have led to the broader economy’s collapse. Individuals did not receive the same support.

Find Out the Facts



Research the impacts of the Great Recession on various parts of the American economy.



President Barack Obama

Barack Obama was elected the forty-fourth president of the United States in 2008. The son of a Kenyan father and a white mother from Kansas, he is the first African American president in U.S. history. From the age of thirteen, the future president was raised in large part by his

maternal grandparents in Hawaii. At the time, his mother had gone to Indonesia to conduct research for her PhD.

Obama graduated from Columbia University and then attended Harvard Law School. He worked for a time as a **community organizer** in Chicago and later taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago. After serving three terms in the Illinois legislature, he was elected to the U.S. Senate from the state of Illinois. In 2004, Obama rose to national prominence when he gave the keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention. The speech was inspiring. It began with the words:

“Tonight, there is not a liberal America and a conservative America; there is the United States of America. There is not a Black America and a white America and a Latino America and Asian America; there’s the United States of America.”

Vocabulary

community organizer, n. a person whose job is to coordinate efforts and campaigning carried out by local residents to promote the interests of their community

Coming into the 2008 election, voters were mostly concerned with the state of the economy, as the recession had already begun. Other domestic issues that affected their decisions included energy, health care, and education. In the 2008 presidential primary, Obama defeated Senator Hillary Clinton of New York. He went on to win the general election over his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain of Arizona, and his running mate, Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska. McCain was a politician and war hero



Barack Obama was the forty-fourth president of the United States (2009–17).

who had spent five years in a prisoner of war camp during the Vietnam War. With the support of a broad cross section of the American people, especially college students and African Americans, Obama won with 52.9 percent of the popular vote. He defeated McCain in the Electoral College by 364 votes to 174.

During his first year in office, President Obama appointed liberal Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court. In his second year, he appointed liberal Elena Kagan, a former dean of Harvard Law School, to the court.



Find Out the Facts

Learn more about the lives of John G. Roberts Jr., Samuel A. Alito Jr., Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan.



Response to Recession

President Obama took over as the nation's chief executive amid the economic tumult of the Great Recession. In the opening months of his presidency, the economic downturn continued to hammer the economy. Unemployment continued to

rise, and the stock market continued to fall. The Obama administration poured hundreds of billions of dollars into the relief program TARP. It cut taxes, extended unemployment benefits, and funded jobs in education and infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges. It also invested in green energy, or energy that is produced from renewable resources, such as solar and wind. The Federal Reserve also acted to boost the economy by lowering interest rates and by pumping some \$600 billion into the economy.

As part of its efforts, the Obama administration extended \$10 billion in loans to automakers Chrysler and General Motors to save those companies and the jobs of their employees. The loans worked. As the recession eased, the automotive giants were able to repay the federal government. The massive federal spending helped speed the economy's recovery, but it also added an enormous sum to the national debt.

In 2010, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was passed. Named for its chief sponsors, Democratic representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts and Democratic senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut, the



The Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) provided funding for a variety of infrastructure projects.

act established federal banking controls and created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The aim of the CFPB was to protect consumers from future mortgage and credit card fraud, all in an effort to ensure that another mortgage meltdown would not happen in the future.

Think Twice



Why do you think one of the responses to the recession was to lower interest rates?



The Affordable Care Act

In March 2010, Democrats were in control of both houses of Congress. They enacted a comprehensive health care law called the Affordable Care Act (or the ACA, nicknamed “Obamacare”). No Republicans in Congress voted for the new law. The ACA required most employers to offer **medical insurance** to their employees. It also required adults who had no medical coverage either to buy insurance or to

Think Twice



How was it helpful to people to require insurance companies to pay to cover preexisting medical conditions?

Vocabulary

medical insurance, n. insurance that covers an individual’s expenses related to health care

pay a fine. It offered **subsidies** for low-income earners to help them buy medical coverage. The new law required insurers to cover **preexisting medical conditions**. It also expanded Medicaid coverage for the poor and allowed young

Vocabulary

subsidy, n. financial assistance given by a government to a person, group, or company

“preexisting medical condition” (phrase), a health problem that existed before the date that new health coverage starts

people to stay on their parents’ medical insurance until the age of twenty-six. Those who supported the ACA considered it a bold move toward ensuring that every American had access to health care. Those who rejected the ACA saw it as another example of government overreach and excessive regulation, or as an insufficient reform compared to a single-payer system in which government would pay everyone’s health bills. In June 2012, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5–4 decision that the Affordable Care Act is constitutional under the Congress’s taxing power.

PRIMARY SOURCE: PRESIDENT BUSH ON HURRICANE KATRINA (2005)

I'm speaking to you from the city of New Orleans—nearly empty, still partly under water, and waiting for life and hope to return. Eastward from Lake Pontchartrain, across the Mississippi coast, to Alabama into Florida, millions of lives were changed in a day by a cruel and wasteful storm.

In the aftermath, we have seen fellow citizens left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones, and grieving for the dead, and looking for meaning in a tragedy that seems so blind and random. . . .

These days of sorrow and outrage have also been marked by acts of courage and kindness that make all Americans proud. Coast Guard and other personnel rescued tens of thousands of people from flooded neighborhoods. Religious congregations and families have welcomed strangers as brothers and sisters and neighbors. . . .

Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost much, and suffered much, and given to the limit of their power, we are seeing that same spirit—a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away, and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before. . . .

In the life of this nation, we have often been reminded that nature is an awesome force, and that all life is fragile. We're the heirs of men and women who lived through those first terrible winters at Jamestown and Plymouth, who rebuilt Chicago after a great fire, and San Francisco after a great earthquake, who reclaimed the prairie from the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Every time, the people of this land have come back from fire, flood, and storm to build anew—and to build better than what we had before. Americans have never left our destiny to the whims of nature—and we will not start now.

Source: Bush, George W. "President Discusses Hurricane Relief in Address to the Nation." Sept. 15, 2005. George W. Bush White House Archives.

PRIMARY SOURCE: PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS (2009)

That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred [al-Qaeda]. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many—and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet. . . .

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends—honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism—these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history.

What is demanded, then, is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility—a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world; duties that we do not grudgingly accept, but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence—the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny. This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed, why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall; and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served in a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

Source: Obama, Barack. First Inaugural Address. January 21, 2009. U.S. National Archives.

Chapter 2

Foreign Issues of the Modern Era



From Peace to War

The period immediately following the Cold War with the Soviet Union was one of extremes for the United States.

The last decade of the twentieth century saw one of the longest periods of peace in the country's history. Just one decade later, on September 11, 2001, terrorists launched on the United States one of the deadliest attacks in its history. As a result, peace treaties were signed, diplomatic missions were launched, and the leaders of the United States joined with leaders from around the world to take on some of the planet's biggest challenges.

On September 11, 2001, two planes were deliberately crashed into the north and south towers of the World Trade Center complex in New York City. Within two hours, both 110-story towers collapsed.

The Framing Question

Which conflicts that occurred at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first affected the United States most significantly?







Post–Cold War Conflicts

After tensions cooled with Russia, the United States was the world’s only superpower. Nevertheless, the presidents serving in the 1990s and the early 2000s faced significant foreign policy challenges.

In 1990 to 1991, under President George H. W. Bush’s leadership, the United States led a United Nations military force in the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi control. In the summer of 1990, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had invaded the oil-rich country of Kuwait. It was a move intended to seize control of Kuwait’s extensive oil fields and strengthen Hussein’s power in the Middle East.

The Middle East



The Gulf War was fought in Iraq, Kuwait, and surrounding areas.

In January 1991, President Bush, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, and General Norman Schwarzkopf led a response. The brief war against Iraqi forces was called Operation Desert Storm. American-led UN forces employed “smart bombs” for the first time. These bombs used laser guidance systems to strike precise targets. The bombs and a massive air and ground campaign drove Saddam Hussein’s army from Kuwait. The Gulf War resulted in few American casualties, but many Iraqi soldiers died.

After President Clinton was elected, he undertook armed humanitarian interventions. In Somalia in October 1993, President Clinton ordered an attack against Somali warlords. The aim was to restore stability in Somalia. This was part of an initiative code-named Operation Restore Hope. Nineteen Americans were killed in the Battle of Mogadishu (Somalia’s capital city) in an incident remembered by the phrase “Black Hawk down.” Because of this, American citizens no longer supported such interventions.

When **genocidal** violence broke out in Rwanda, a country in central Africa, the United States did not intervene. Violence caused by ethnic divisions had been present in Rwanda since its independence

Vocabulary

genocidal, adj. referring to the deliberate and systematic extermination or attempted extermination of an entire group of people based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or other characteristics

in 1962. The violence had erupted into a civil war in 1990 between the Hutu people, who composed about 85 percent of the population, and the Tutsi. In 1994, members of the Hutu majority slaughtered about eight hundred thousand people, most of whom were Tutsi. Roughly two million more people became refugees. Believing he would not have support from the American people, President Clinton did not order American forces into the region.

In another part of the world, three ethnic groups—Bosnian Muslims, Serbs, and Croats—and the Yugoslav army were involved in a civil war. In 1995, Clinton limited American intervention in this region, known as the Balkans, to air strikes. The strikes were effective. The United States was able to facilitate a framework for peace. The Dayton Accords in 1995 ended hostilities in the region around Bosnia and Herzegovina. Western countries, backed by the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), helped negotiate a cease-fire in Dayton, Ohio.

In the 1990s and 2000s, militant Islamist extremists targeted the United States, whose military presence in Muslim countries angered them. In 1993, Islamists drove a truck bomb into the parking garage underneath the World Trade Center in New York City. They detonated the bomb. Their goal was to collapse the Twin Towers, which symbolized America's economic power and prosperity. The explosion killed six people, but the towers remained standing. This 1993 attack would prove to be a precursor to later attacks planned by Osama bin Laden and his group, al-Qaeda, which is Arabic for "The Base."

In 1998, Islamist terrorists bombed the United States **embassies** in Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa. The attacks killed about 250 people, including twelve Americans. President Clinton ordered bombing attacks against suspected Islamist terrorist training camps in the Middle East as a response. In October 2000, members of al-Qaeda blew a hole in the side of the USS *Cole* off the coast of Yemen. The attack killed seventeen U.S. Navy sailors.



During the conflict in the Balkans, hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes.

Vocabulary

embassy, n. the official building in a foreign country in which an ambassador and staff work

Think Twice



What might have happened, both domestically and internationally, if the United States had intervened in Rwanda?



A memorial honors the more than 200 victims of the 1998 attack on the American embassy in Kenya.



September 11, 2001

President George W. Bush's time in office would be chiefly shaped by the terrorist attack on the nation that took place on September 11, 2001. That Tuesday morning, nineteen extremist Islamic terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes filled with passengers. They crashed two of the planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, collapsing both buildings. The third plane tore a giant hole in one side of the nation's military headquarters, the Pentagon, outside Washington, D.C. The fourth plane was likely headed for the White House or the U.S. Capitol building. Instead, it crashed in a field in rural Pennsylvania after passengers aboard the plane heroically rushed the



This plaque at the United States Capitol honors the passengers who took control of one of the hijacked airplanes on September 11, 2001, and crashed it into a field.

terrorists in an attempt to retake control of the aircraft. All told, nearly three thousand people died in the attacks. The attack on September 11 stunned and united the nation, much as Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor had on December 7, 1941.

U.S. intelligence agencies soon identified those responsible for the attack. They were members of al-Qaeda, the militant extremist Islamist network led by Osama bin Laden. The group's leaders sought to establish an Islamist **caliphate**, a government ruled by extremists. These extremists opposed religious freedom and democracy.

Vocabulary

caliphate, n. historically, the rule or reign of a caliph or chief Muslim ruler

In response to the September 11 attack, President Bush declared a "war against terrorism." He focused the U.S. military on the fight against Islamist terrorism in the Middle East. The United States, he said, would capture Osama bin Laden and other leaders of al-Qaeda "dead or alive." At the same time that President Bush mobilized the nation for war, he underscored that the United States' enemy was the terrorists, not the peaceful followers of Islam.

The president delivered a speech one week after the September 11 attack, in which he said, “The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don’t represent peace; they represent evil and war.”

The president continued this theme on September 20, 2001, in a joint address to Congress:

The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many

Muslim friends. It is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.

With this distinction in mind, President Bush took swift action. He initiated U.S. military bombing of the mountains in Afghanistan. Terrorists were believed to be hiding there. At the same time, an



In the attack on the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, on September 11, 2001, 125 people lost their lives.

American-led force was able to temporarily oust the Taliban, an Islamist extremist group, from its control of the government of Afghanistan. They were aided in this effort by the Afghan Northern Alliance, but U.S. forces were unable to locate Osama bin Laden for many years. Defeating the forces of terrorism proved challenging. The foreign affairs of the United States were significantly **reconfigured** in the wake of the September 11 attack. In response, the United States undertook years of warfare in the Middle East. It also began domestic **surveillance** programs intended to thwart future attacks.

Vocabulary

reconfigure, v. to rearrange or change the structure of something

surveillance, n. close observation



Find Out the Facts

Find out more about the events and impact of September 11.



Writers' Corner

Using your research on September 11, imagine you are a journalist who has been assigned to write an account of what you witnessed firsthand on that day.



The Iraq War, 2003

In 2003, President Bush undertook a war against Iraq and its leader, Saddam Hussein. He and U.S. intelligence agencies claimed that the country possessed nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Hussein had used chemical and biological weapons in the past. President Bush wanted to make sure that he did not do so again.

The Iraq War began with aerial and missile bombardments of targets in Baghdad. Those attacks were followed by a ground invasion of Iraq by 140,000 U.S. troops, 45,000 British troops, and a small contingent of forces from other nations. Iraqi forces were soon routed, and Hussein was overthrown. After the war, no weapons of mass destruction were ever found.

President Bush and his advisers claimed that U.S. forces would be celebrated as liberators and welcomed by the Iraqi people. That, however, was not what happened. With Saddam Hussein out of power, American forces found themselves battling insurgent factions within Iraq. By 2006, three years after the initial U.S. invasion, some 2,300 U.S. service personnel had died in the ongoing conflict.

In 2008, the United States began returning control of provinces to the Iraqi government. The Iraq War was largely concluded by late 2011. It had cost American taxpayers more than \$2 trillion.



Think Twice

Why may U.S. forces not have been celebrated as liberators in Iraq?



Homeland Security

In October 2001, Congress passed the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act, commonly known as the Patriot Act. President Bush signed the act into law. It expanded the federal government's surveillance power so that future attacks might be discovered before they were carried out. It authorized the government to detain or deport immigrants suspected of being associated with terrorism. And it authorized "warrantless wiretaps," including the collection of records of cell phone calls. Traditionally, law enforcement in the United States had needed a **warrant**—a statement signed by a judge—to

Vocabulary

warrant, n. a document from a judge that authorizes law enforcement officials to search, make an arrest, or seize items

authorize wiretapping of suspected criminals. But the Patriot Act allowed the government to collect information about all communications in the United States without a warrant. Critics of the law said that it undermined the American people's freedom. Supporters insisted that the act was a needed step in the fight against terrorism.

In 2002, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It is a cabinet-level agency that combines some twenty federal agencies. In 2004, the position of director of national intelligence was



Airport security was strengthened after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

created to oversee the nation’s intelligence agencies. These included the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Congress also granted the FBI and CIA greater authority to share information with each other. President Bush asserted that in a world confronting stateless terrorism, the United States needed to be willing to embrace a policy of **preemptive attack** when necessary.



Find Out the Facts

Research the arguments for and against a policy of preemptive attack.



The Economy on the World Stage

Along with technological advancements and the decline of unions, economists point to **globalization** (including the **offshoring** of American manufacturing jobs) as a reason for the increasing economic divide in the United States. As United States manufacturing jobs moved overseas, manufacturing in China and in other countries grew rapidly. United States consumers purchased hundreds of billions of dollars of goods from Chinese

Vocabulary

“preemptive attack” (phrase), an attack on others to prevent them from attacking first

globalization, n. the growth of a worldwide economy that includes free trade and the use of inexpensive labor markets in other countries

offshoring, n. the policy of moving some jobs or functions of a company overseas to places where labor is less expensive

factories every year in the opening decades of the 2000s. U.S.–China trade relations had, by some measures, proved useful to both countries.

American consumers benefited from lower-cost, Chinese-made products. People in China benefited as well. China’s trade with the United States—and with other countries—grew China’s economy. (China allows some elements of a market



A textile factory in China

economy under Chinese Communist Party oversight.) In 1981, some 85 percent of people in China lived in extreme poverty, but by recent years, that figure had fallen to an astonishing 1.7 percent.



Think Twice

What impact might ongoing automation, globalization, and offshoring have had on jobs in America?



U.S. Foreign Policy Under President Barack Obama

President Obama took office in the midst of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While a presidential candidate, Obama had criticized President Bush's foreign policy during his campaign. But once in office, President Obama continued the deployment of U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. The country was faced with continued terrorist threats, so President Obama continued the nation's policies on domestic government surveillance.

President Obama made the use of **drones** a cornerstone of the United States' efforts against terrorism. During his presidency, he signed off on 540 drone strikes against

Vocabulary

drone, n. an aircraft that is controlled remotely instead of manned by people

terrorist targets in Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, and elsewhere. By one estimate, these strikes killed 3,800 people, many of whom were bystanders.

During his second term, President Obama ordered counterattacks against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The militant extremist Islamist force was brutally seizing areas in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere. On May 2, 2011, the president also ordered a secret mission by helicopter in Abbottabad, Pakistan. U.S. Navy SEALs shot and killed Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the September 11, 2001, attack.

Think Twice

What were the likely responses to the drone attacks during the Obama administration?



Environmental Challenges

In the early nineteenth century, the world population reached one billion. By 2023, it had reached eight billion.

As the population of the world increases, providing basic human needs such as water, clean air, healthy food, and shelter can become more challenging.

In addition to a rising world population, environmental challenges such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, and saltwater intrusion require intervention. Solutions include new technologies along with nature-based approaches, such as the restoration of natural environments. Often, these environmental challenges impact national and global political decisions.

In parts of Europe, beaches are being restored so that coastlines can more easily defend against storms and tides. In parts of the world where saltwater intrusion has had a harmful impact on available drinking water, hydrologists have developed new technologies to protect groundwater.

At home in Louisiana, the state has taken action to protect the environment. As a result of sea levels rising and the loss of shoreline, Louisiana created a plan to counteract the impact.

The state government launched the Coastal Master Plan in 2007 to focus on

a number of projects for purposes of environmental protection and restoration. Some restoration work has involved rebuilding barrier islands to protect the mainland from storms, creating oyster reefs to slow the rate of erosion, and repairing and recreating wetlands.

We are all connected to the planet we live on and therefore to one another. Planet Earth provides us with our basic needs. It's important that we work together to care for it and protect it.

Find Out the Facts



Research more about Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan.



Cote Blanche Bay in Louisiana has artificial islands that were created to help protect the mainland.

PRIMARY SOURCE: PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON 9/11

Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. . . .

America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.

Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. And we responded with the best of America—with the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could. . . .

Our first priority is to get help to those who have been injured, and to take every precaution to protect our citizens at home and around the world from further attacks.

The functions of our government continue without interruption. . . . Our financial institutions remain strong, and the American economy will be open for business, as well.

The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them. . . .

America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism. Tonight, I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened. . . .

This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

Source: Bush, George W. Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation. Sept. 11, 2001. U.S. National Archives.

Glossary

C

caliphate, n. historically, the rule or reign of a caliph or chief Muslim ruler (25)

“centrist wing” (phrase) a part of a political party or an organization that holds moderate views (3)

community organizer, n. a person whose job is to coordinate efforts and campaigning carried out by local residents to promote the interests of their community (14)

“confirmation bias” (phrase) the tendency to look for information or to interpret information in a way that is consistent with a person’s existing beliefs (7)

D

drone, n. an aircraft that is controlled remotely instead of manned by people (30)

E

embassy, n. the official building in a foreign country in which an ambassador and staff work (24)

G

genocidal, adj. referring to the deliberate and systematic extermination or attempted extermination of an entire group of people based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or other characteristics (23)

gerrymandering, n. the practice of manipulating the boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favor one party or class (5)

globalization, n. the growth of a worldwide economy that includes free trade and the use of inexpensive labor markets in other countries (29)

M

medical insurance, n. insurance that covers an individual’s expenses related to health care (16)

mortgage, n. a loan for the purchase of a house or building, which can be forfeited in case of nonpayment (12)

O

offshoring, n. the policy of moving some jobs or functions of a company overseas to places where labor is less expensive (29)

P

partisanship, n. the state of choosing one political party, cause, or person over others due to personal affiliation, regardless of other factors (5)

“preemptive attack” (phrase) an attack on others to prevent them from attacking first (29)

“preexisting medical condition”

(phrase) a health problem that existed before the date that new health coverage starts **(17)**

R

reconfigure, v. to rearrange or change the structure of something **(27)**

repossess, v. to take possession of something due to lack of payment **(12)**

S

subsidy, n. financial assistance given by a government to a person, group, or company **(17)**

surveillance, n. close observation **(27)**

W

warrant, n. a document from a judge that authorizes law enforcement officials to search, make an arrest, or seize items **(28)**

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