Period 9: 1980-Present

AP US History ▪ Period 9

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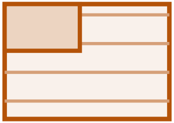

What we will cover

1

Reagan and the Conservative Turn

Reagan and the Conservative Turn

Period 9 runs from 1980 to the present. It is short in topics but wide in scope, and the exam treats it as the culmination of arguments running through the whole course: the size of government, the country's global role, and who counts as a full member of the nation.

- **Tax cuts and deregulation** 减税与放松管制, on the argument that reducing the burden on business would raise growth – often called **supply-side economics** 供给学派经济学.
- Reduced federal spending on domestic programmes, though **defence spending** 国防开支 rose sharply and deficits grew.
- Appeals to **social conservatism** 社会保守主义, on religion, family, and law and order.

The conservative turn

The conservative movement	The **conservative movement** joined free-market economics, a stronger military, and religious traditionalism into one coalition.
Ronald Reagan	**Ronald Reagan**'s election in 1980 carried it into office: tax cuts, deregulation, and a sharp military build-up.
What it argued	That government had grown beyond its competence – so the remedy was to shrink it, and let markets and families do more.
What persisted	Federal spending did not fall. The deficit grew, and entitlement programmes survived – which is the tension in any evaluation of the era.

Name the three strands and say which one a given policy came from. Treating conservatism as one thing is what flattens an answer.

Reagan and the Conservative Turn, continued

> The result was a lasting shift in the terms of debate: after 1980 both parties argued within narrower limits about the federal government's economic role than at any time since the New Deal.

Three policies, one claim, one tension

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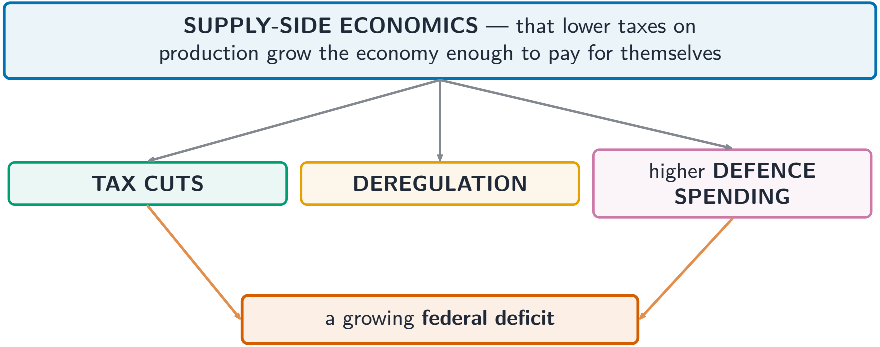
Three policies, one claim, one tension, in detail



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2 The End of the Cold War

The End of the Cold War

Renewed military build-up, negotiation, and above all internal weakness in the Soviet Union brought the Cold War to an end. The Soviet system collapsed between 1989 and 1991.

The consequences framed the decades that followed: the United States became the sole superpower, with unresolved questions about **when and where to intervene** 何时何地干预, and about what commitments made sense once containment no longer organised policy.

3 A Changing Economy

A Changing Economy

The economy after 1980 was reshaped by three forces:

- **Globalization** 全球化 – trade agreements, integrated supply chains, and competition that moved manufacturing abroad.
- **Deindustrialization** 去工业化 – the loss of manufacturing employment in older industrial regions and the growth of service work.
- **Technological change** 技术变革 – computing and then the internet, which transformed productivity, work, and communication.

A Changing Economy, continued

Together these raised aggregate wealth while widening **income inequality** 收入不平等 and reducing security for workers whose industries declined – the economic argument that has dominated politics since.

a container terminal

Three overlapping forces, one result

GLOBALIZATION — production moves to where labour is cheaper

DEINDUSTRIALIZATION — the well-paid manufacturing job disappears

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE — it pays a premium for skill, and replaces routine work

→ rising **INCOME INEQUALITY**

> The three overlap, so the argument is about **weight**: name which force your evidence actually supports, rather than listing all three

4

Migration and a Changing Population

Migration and a Changing Population

The consequences are the examinable part: population growth in the South and West, the growth of multi-ethnic cities, ongoing debate over **immigration policy** 移民政策 and border enforcement, and continuing arguments about **citizenship** 公民身份 and national identity – the same argument the course has traced since Reconstruction.

Where migration came from after 1980

migration increasingly from **LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA** → a more **diverse population**, concentrated in particular regions → **IMMIGRATION POLICY** returns to national politics → debate over what **CITIZENSHIP** requires and includes

> The question is old and the **source** of migration is what changed – which is the continuity-and-change move this period asks for

Where the new Americans came from

Migration and immigration	**Migration and immigration** reshaped the population after the 1965 immigration act removed the national-origin quotas.
Latin America and Asia	The largest flows came from **Latin America and Asia**, rather than from Europe as in every earlier wave.
Where they settled	The South and West grew fastest – the Sun Belt – shifting congressional seats and electoral votes with them.
The debate	Each wave reopened the same argument about assimilation, labour and citizenship, in new words.

Compare this wave with the 1890s one: different origins, the same political questions. That comparison is a standard essay.

5 Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

The period's later topics group around a small number of developments:

- The **September 11 attacks** 九一一袭击 and the response – military intervention abroad, a new security apparatus, and renewed debate over the balance between **security and civil liberties** 安全与公民自由.
- Economic crisis in 2008 and the argument over government's role in stabilising the economy.
- **Political polarisation** 政治极化, amplified by changes in media and communication.
- Debate over **climate and energy** 气候与能源 policy.

The arrow between the pans is the argument

surveillance, screening, detention
a permanent security apparatus

privacy, due process, freedom of movement
questions the courts are still deciding

> The arrow is the argument: each gain on one side is claimed **at the cost** of the other, and the exam wants that trade named, not a preference

6 Causation in Period 9

Causation in Period 9

> The period's reasoning skill is causation, and the most useful move is to link a recent development back to an earlier one: deindustrialisation to the market revolution's regional specialisation, immigration debates to the nativism of the 1850s and 1920s, and arguments over federal power to the New Deal.

Worked example – what kind of change, and where it stalled

2026 long essay: *“Evaluate the extent to which women’s participation in public life in the United States changed”* over the twentieth century.

- **Scoring:** *“Women’s participation in public life changed substantially across the twentieth century – suffrage, wartime employment and the women’s movement opened political and professional roles – although occupational segregation and unequal pay meant it expanded faster in law than in economic power.”*
- For a long-span prompt, say *what kind* of change and *where it stalled*.

That contrast – law against economic power – is what turns a century of examples into one argument.

Exam tips

- Define supply-side economics as an argument (cut taxes to raise growth), and note the deficits that followed – both belong in an evaluation.
- The Cold War's end matters for what it opened: sole-superpower status and unresolved questions about intervention.
- Keep globalization, deindustrialization, and technological change as three distinct causes, not one blur.
- For immigration after 1965, name the shift in origins and the political argument it produced.
- After 2001, the examinable tension is security against civil liberties – the same tension as the Red Scare and the First World War.
- Long-span prompts reward connecting periods. Link a recent development to an earlier one and say what continued.

7 Recap

Period 9 – key takeaways

1 Supply-side

cut taxes to raise growth – and the deficits followed

2 Cold War ends

sole superpower; unresolved intervention

3 Economy

globalization, deindustrialization, technology – three causes

4 After 2001

security against civil liberties

Check yourself

1. What is the supply-side argument?
2. Name three distinct post-1970 economic causes.
3. What tension is examinable after 2001?
4. What do long-span prompts reward?

Answers: cut taxes to raise growth ▪ globalization, deindustrialization, technology ▪ security vs civil liberties ▪ connecting periods