

Period 9: 1980-Present

AP US History ■ Period 9

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Period 9: 1980-Present

What we will cover

- 1 Reagan and the Conservative Turn
- 2 The End of the Cold War
- 3 A Changing Economy
- 4 Migration and a Changing Population
- 5 Challenges of the Twenty-First Century
- 6 Causation in Period 9

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Reagan and the Conservative Turn

Period 9: 1980-Present

└ 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.

Period 9: 1980-Present

└ Reagan and the Conservative Turn

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.

Period 9: 1980-Present

└ Reagan and the Conservative Turn

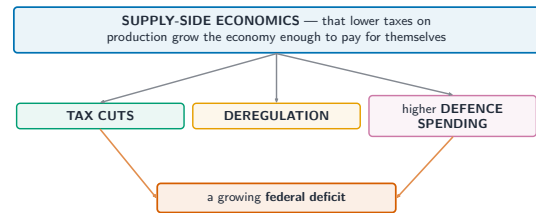
Reagan and the Conservative Turn, continued

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

- **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.
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- Appeals to **social conservatism** 社会保守主义, on religion, family, and law and order.

Three policies, one claim, one tension, in detail



Reduced federal spending on domestic programmes, though **defence spending** 国防开支 rose sharply and deficits grew.

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.

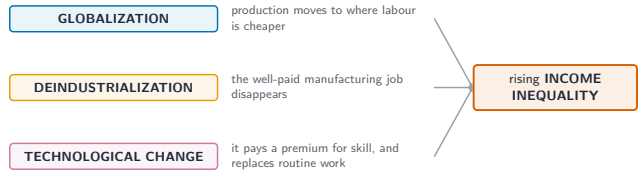
A Changing Economy, continued

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



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

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Migration and a Changing Population

Migration and a Changing Population

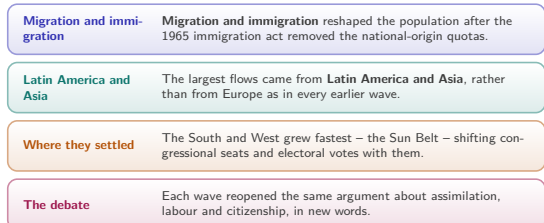
The consequences are the examinable part: population growth in the South and West, the growth of multi-ethnic cities, ongoing debate over **immigration policy** 移民政策 and border enforcement, and continuing arguments about **citizenship** 公民身份 and national identity – the same argument the course has traced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

Where migration came from after 1980



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



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

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Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

Period 9: 1980-Present
Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

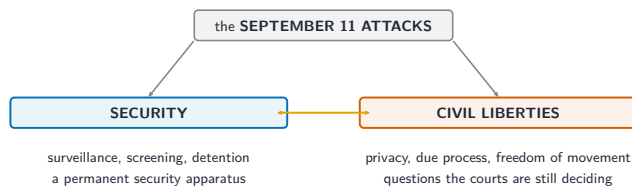
Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

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.

Period 9: 1980-Present
Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

The arrow between the pans is the argument



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

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Causation in Period 9

Period 9: 1980-Present
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.

Period 9: 1980-Present
Causation in Period 9

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.

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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