

## ***Contemporary America 1970 to the Present***

### **OVERVIEW--REVIEW**

The era from the 1970's to the present, for our purposes, will be identified as Modern America. Throughout the world enormous strides in technology changed the lives of all. In this era, United States foreign policy shifts to more open relationships with communist China and the Soviet Union. As the Cold War ended the focus turned to combating terrorism and conflicts in the Middle East. On the domestic front, this period ushered in a conservative movement to address the growth in federal power. This often led to a conflict in the direction the U.S. should take as a nation.

Directions: Use the content from the Citizen Bee website to help answer the following questions.

### **People**

Bill Clinton

- 1) Why was Bill Clinton motivated to serve his country?
- 2) Describe the state of the nation with regards to domestic and foreign policy during Bill Clinton's presidency.

Hillary Clinton

- 1) Describe the many positions that Hillary Clinton has held.
- 2) Why was Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential nomination significant?

Bill Gates

- 1) How did Bill Gates amass his fortune and then use it to help others?

Billy Graham

- 1) What cause did Billy Graham champion during the Cold War?
- 2) Describe the nature of the relationship Billy Graham has had with many U.S. Presidents.

Robert Johnson and Oprah Winfrey

- 1) What is similar with regards to the work and accomplishments of Robert Johnson and Oprah Winfrey?

Estee Lauder

- 1) Why was Estee Lauder's cosmetic company a success?

Richard Nixon

- 1) Explain key features of Richard Nixon's foreign policy.
- 2) Why did President Nixon decide to resign?

Barack Obama

- 1) What jobs did Barack Obama hold that helped prepare him for his role as president?
- 2) Why was Barack Obama's election to the presidency significant?

Sandra Day O'Connor

- 1) Describe a hurdle that Sandra Day O'Connor faced early in her legal career.
- 2) Why was Sandra Day O'Connor's appointment to the Supreme Court historic?

Ronald Reagan

- 1) Provide two examples of how Ronald Reagan's foreign policy towards the USSR was different than previous presidents.

Phyllis Schlafly

- 1) How did Phyllis Schlafly campaign against what she believed was radical feminism?

Lionel Sosa

- 2) How about--What accomplishments led Lionel Sosa to be named one of the 25 Most Influential Hispanics in America by *Time* magazine in 2005?

Sonia Sotomayor

- 1) How did Sonia Sotomayor's childhood influence her life?
- 2) Why was her appointment to the Supreme Court important?

Sam Walton

- 1) Why were the strategies used by Sam Walton in his Wal-Mart stores successful?

## **Documents**

Medicare and Medicaid Act 1965

- 1) What is the difference between Medicare and Medicaid?
- 2) Why was President Truman enrolled as Medicare's first enrollee?

Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments (Hart-Celler Act) 1965

- 1) Why was reforming national immigration policy a popular idea in the 1960's?
- 2) What was an unintended consequence of the immigration law?

Clean Air Act 1970

- 1) What agency was created to oversee the Clean Air Act of 1970?
- 2) Why were Americans receptive to environmental reform like the Clean Air Act in the 1970's?

Title IX of the Education Amendments 1972

- 1) What is the purpose of Title IX of the Education Amendments?
- 2) How had Title IX impacted female athletes both at the high school and college level?

#### War Powers Resolution 1973

- 1) Why was the War Powers Resolution passed in 1973, and how effective has it been?

#### Endangered Species Act 1973

- 1) Describe the long term impact of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

#### Community Reinvestment Act 1977

- 1) Why did Senator Proxmire and others feel that it was necessary to pass a law mandating banks to grant loans in the communities in which they operate?

#### Ronald Reagan's First Inaugural Address 1981

- 1) Describe the overall message of Ronald Reagan's First Inaugural Address.

#### Immigration Reform and Control Act (Simson-Mazzoli Act) 1986

- 1) What are the two main provisions of this bill?
- 2) Explain how features of this bill are controversial.

#### American with Disabilities Act 1990

- 1) Why do supporters of the American with Disabilities Act believe this law has been a success?

#### Sections of the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act 2001

- 1) Why was the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act passed?
- 2) How has the law altered the power of the executive branch?

#### American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009

- 1) Why was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 passed?
- 2) How does it compare to the New Deal passed during the Great Depression?

### **Landmark Supreme Court Cases**

#### *Tinker v. Des Moines School District 1969*

- 1) Why were the school students wearing black arm bands to school?
- 2) Explain why the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the First Amendment's rights of public schools students?

#### *Wisconsin v. Yoder 1972*

- 1) Why did the local school district bring a lawsuit against Yoder and other Amish families?
- 2) What reasoning did the Supreme Court use to rule in favor of the Amish?

#### *San Antonio ISD v. Rodriguez 1973 (Edgewood ISD v. Kirby)*

- 1) Explain how Texas school districts had unequal funding for public schools?
- 2) Why did the Supreme Court reverse the lower court's decision thus sustaining Texas' public school finance system?
- 3) What did *Edgewood ISD v. Kirby* do that was different when it later attempted to fix the unequal funding in Texas school districts?

*White v. Regester 1973*

- 1) Why were multimember districts ruled unconstitutional?

*Bush v Gore 2000*

- 1) Explain the role the *Bush v Gore* decision played in the outcome of the presidential election of 2000.

**Connection Questions**

1. Of the following entrepreneurs, Bill Gates, Estee Lauder, Lionel Sosa, Robert Johnson, Sam Walton, & Oprah Winfrey, which has had the greatest impact on American life and why?
2. Which contemporary president, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, or Barack Obama, most exemplifies the Contemporary America and why?
3. Based on the laws passed during the Contemporary America, what three issues would say were most important to the American people?
4. Which law passed during the Contemporary Era is the most important and why?