

The American People Face a New Century

PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. describe the changing shape of the American economy and work force, and the new challenges facing the United States in an international economy during the “information age.”
2. explain the changing roles of women since World War II and the impact of those changes on American society.
3. analyze the difficulties affecting the American family, and explain the new power of the elderly.
4. describe the impact of the newest wave of immigration from Asia and Latin America and the growing voice of minorities in American society.
5. describe the difficulties and challenges facing American cities, including poverty and drug abuse.
6. describe the changing condition of African-Americans in American politics and society.
7. discuss the major developments in American culture and the arts since World War II.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **biosphere** The earth’s entire network of living plants and organisms, conceived as an interconnected whole. “. . . the fragile ecological balance of the wondrous biosphere in which human-kind was delicately suspended.” (p. 1016)
2. **nuclear family** A parent or parents and their immediate offspring. “The nuclear family, once prized as the foundation of society. . . .” (p. 1020)
3. **undocumented** Lacking official certification of status as a legal immigrant or resident alien. “. . . attempted to choke off illegal entry by penalizing employers of undocumented aliens. . . .” (p. 1023)
4. **amnesty** An official governmental act in which some general category of offenders is declared immune from punishment. “. . . by granting amnesty to many of those already here.” (p. 1023)
5. **civil trial** A trial before a judge or jury instigated by a private lawsuit in which one party seeks relief, compensation, or damages from another. A **criminal trial** is instigated by an indictment for criminal law violations brought by a state prosecutor on behalf of the government (“the people”); it may result in fines, imprisonment, or execution. “In a later civil trial, another jury found Simpson liable for the ‘wrongful deaths’ of his former wife and another victim.” (p. 1025)

PART II: Checking Your Progress

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark **T**. Where it is false, mark **F**, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- ___ 1. The communications and genetics revolutions in postwar America created new social and moral dilemmas as well as widespread economic growth.
- ___ 2. The United States remained the world's richest nation with the highest per capita income in the 1990s.
- ___ 3. Continuing discrimination as well as different career patterns still caused women to receive lower wages than men in the late 1990s.
- ___ 4. By the 1990s almost all women without children at home were employed, but a majority of mothers remained outside the workplace.
- ___ 5. One of the greatest problems caused by the weakening of the family was the growing poverty of America's elderly.
- ___ 6. One factor that made Hispanic immigration to the U.S. unique was the close proximity of Mexican-Americans to their former homeland across the border.
- ___ 7. The fastest growing American minority in the 1980s and 1990s was African-Americans.
- ___ 8. By the late 1990s, a majority of Americans lived in suburbs rather than central cities or rural areas.
- ___ 9. The large-scale Los Angeles riots of 1992 occurred in reaction to the jury's verdict in the O. J. Simpson murder case.
- ___ 10. African-Americans attained considerable success in both local and national political leadership positions in the 1980s and 1990s.
- ___ 11. The rise of a substantial black middle class after the 1980s created a growing division between the well-off and poor within the African-American community.
- ___ 12. The rise of television and rock music caused a sharp decline in the number of Americans who were consumers of the "high culture" of museums and symphony orchestras.
- ___ 13. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the decline of regional themes in American writing and culture.
- ___ 14. American playwrights and theatre audiences generally turned away from sensitive subjects like the AIDS epidemic.
- ___ 15. Environmental concerns and disillusionment with wealth caused some late twentieth-century Americans to advocate a "no-growth" economy for the country.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The “flagship business” of the heavy industrial economy of the *early* twentieth century was
- the International Business Machines Company.
 - the Microsoft Corporation.
 - the U.S. Steel Corporation.
 - the General Mills Corporation.
- ___ 2. The primary engine driving the U.S. economy of the 1990s was
- scientific knowledge.
 - corporate mergers and acquisitions.
 - labor union activism.
 - international investment in American companies.
- ___ 3. The earliest great successes of the “genetic revolution” occurred in
- improving the human gene pool.
 - increasing crop yields and curing genetic diseases.
 - providing new sources for human organ transplants.
 - artificial insemination and human cloning.
- ___ 4. Compared to other countries’ median incomes, Americans in the 1990s were
- still the wealthiest people in the world.
 - in the middle third of the world’s income levels.
 - seeing a steady decline in their average incomes.
 - no longer at the top but still among the world’s most affluent people.
- ___ 5. The most striking development in the American economic structure in the 1980s and 1990s was
- the growing inequality between rich and poor.
 - the slow general decline in the American standard of living.
 - the growing reliance on investments and real estate rather than jobs for income.
 - the increasing concentration of wealth in certain regions and affluent suburbs.
- ___ 6. Which of the following was *not* among the causes of the income gap in the United States?
- intensifying global economic competition
 - the shrinkage in manufacturing jobs for unskilled and semi-skilled labor
 - the decline of labor unions.
 - the weakening family structure
- ___ 7. The most dramatic change in the patterns of women’s employment from the 1950s to the 1990s was
- the end of “occupational segregation” in certain female job categories.
 - that the majority of mothers with young children went to work outside the home.
 - that women were unable to break through into traditional single-sex colleges and universities.
 - that married women worked at a higher rate than single women.

- ___ 8. Perhaps the most significant sign of the weakening of the traditional American family was
- that television no longer portrayed family situations.
 - that a majority of children no longer lived with their birth parents.
 - that families were increasingly slow to form at all.
 - that the elderly were no longer likely to live with their adult children.
- ___ 9. The increasingly longer lives of America's senior citizens were often eased by
- the ability of the potent elderly lobby to obtain government benefits for seniors.
 - the willingness of younger generations to provide income support for aged parents.
 - the large-scale migration of senior citizens to the West Coast.
 - the more positive portrayals of the elderly in movies and television.
- ___ 10. The deepest problem caused by federal programs like Social Security and Medicare in the twenty-first century was likely to be
- that benefits could not keep up with rising inflation.
 - that the Social Security and Medicare trust funds would exercise too great a control over the economy.
 - that the higher taxes necessary to support benefits would create a generational war with younger workers.
 - that the health care system could no longer meet the rising demand for services to the elderly.
- ___ 11. The "new immigrants" of the 1980s and 1990s came to the United States primarily because
- they wanted jobs and economic opportunities unavailable in their homelands.
 - they were fleeing religious and political repression.
 - they admired American cultural and intellectual achievements.
 - they wanted to strengthen the minority voting bloc to the United States.
- ___ 12. The largest group of the "new immigrants" came from
- East Asia.
 - Mexico and other Latin American countries.
 - Africa and the Middle East.
 - South Asia.
- ___ 13. The period between 1920 and the mid-1990s will likely be seen as a unique but passing age in American demographic history because
- a majority of people lived in the Northeast rather than the South and West.
 - a majority of people were of European rather than African-Americans or Hispanic ancestry.
 - a majority of people were the children or grandchildren of immigrants.
 - a majority of people lived in central cities rather than in rural areas or suburbs.
- ___ 14. An increasingly important development among African-Americans since the 1960s has been
- the growing equality of incomes within the community.
 - the inability of African-Americans to break through into politics or the arts.
 - the growing gap between successful affluent African-Americans and those in poverty.
 - the concentration of nearly all African-Americans in the central cities.

- ___ 15. The most striking development in American literature in the past two decades has been
- the importance of the fantastic literature of absurdism and “black comedy.”
 - the rise of writers from once-marginal regions and ethnic groups.
 - the focus on themes of nostalgia and lost innocence.
 - the rise of social realism and attention to working-class stories.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- _____ 1. The computer corporation that symbolized the U.S. economy in the 1990s much as U.S. Steel did in 1900
- _____ 2. Health care program for the elderly, enacted in 1965, that created large economic demands on the American economy by the 1990s
- _____ 3. Law of 1986 that granted amnesty to past illegal immigrants and penalized employers of future illegal workers
- _____ 4. The largest of the “new immigrant” groups
- _____ 5. Organization headed by Cesar Chavez that worked to improve conditions for migrant workers
- _____ 6. City where major racial disturbance erupted in 1992
- _____ 7. American region that saw a particularly rich literary revival in the 1980s and 1990s
- _____ 8. Zora Neale Hurston’s 1937 novel that received widespread new attention because of interest in feminist and African-American literature
- _____ 9. Avant-garde painting movement pioneered by Jackson Pollock and others in the 1940s and 1950s
- _____ 10. Oil tanker whose 1989 spill off the coast of Alaska sparked deep concern over oil drilling and transportation on the world’s oceans

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

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|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. O. J. Simpson | A. Leading Indian writer, author of <i>House Made of Dawn</i> |
| ___ 2. L. Douglas Wilder | B. Pioneer artistic creator of “abstract expressionism” in the 1940s and 1950s |
| ___ 3. Carol Mosely-Braun | C. The first African-American state governor |
| ___ 4. Larry McMurtry | D. Irish-American writer whose memoir <i>Angela’s Ashes</i> revived interest in the older European immigrant groups |
| ___ 5. Norman MacLean | E. African-American writer of the 1930s whose works were rediscovered and gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s |
| ___ 6. August Wilson | F. Playwright who deployed gritty American slang in socially critical dramas like <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> |
| ___ 7. Toni Morrison | G. Former football star whose murder trial became a focus of racial tension |
| | H. Author of <i>Beloved</i> and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature |

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| <p>___ 8. N. Scott Momaday</p> <p>___ 9. David Mamet</p> <p>___ 10. Zora Neale Hurston</p> <p>___ 11. Jackson Pollock</p> <p>___ 12. Frank McCourt</p> | <p>I. Western writer who portrayed small towns in <i>Last Picture Show</i> and the cattle-drive era in <i>Lonesome Dove</i></p> <p>J. First African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate</p> <p>K. African-American playwright who portrayed the psychological costs of the northern migration</p> <p>L. Former English professor who wrote memorable tales of his Montana boyhood</p> |
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E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

- ___ F. Douglas Wilder is elected the first African-American governor.
- ___ Congress passes the Immigration Reform and Control Act to try to thwart illegal immigration.
- ___ Jackson Pollock and others pioneer “abstract expressionism” and the leading form of modern American painting.
- ___ Los Angeles experiences a major riot as the result of a racial incident involving police brutality.
- ___ California voters approve Proposition 209 in an attempt to overturn affirmative-action policies.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
___ 1. Decline of manufacturing jobs and higher pay for educated workers	A. Made the American southwest increasingly a “bi-cultural” zone
___ 2. The computer revolution and the new trend toward “genetic engineering”	B. Changed both child-rearing patterns and men’s social roles
___ 3. Expanding economic opportunities for women	C. Brought major literary prominence to minority and Western writers
___ 4. Rise of the median age of the population since the 1970s	D. Contributed to sharply increased income inequality in the U.S.
___ 5. Growing numbers and political power for Hispanic Americans	E. Made the elderly a powerful political force
___ 6. The growth of the African-American middle class and their migration to the suburbs	F. Further isolated the poverty-stricken lower class in the inner cities
___ 7. Poverty and economic upheavals in Latin America and Asia	G. Made New York City the art capital of the world
	H. Created the highest rates of immigration to the United States since the early 1900s
	I. Led California voters to pass measures restricting the use of racial categories
	J. Expanded the economy but threatened many traditional jobs while creating new ethical dilemmas for society

- ___ 8. The resentment against many affirmative action measures
- ___ 9. The rise of previously “marginal” ethnic groups and regions
- ___ 10. The success of modernist American art movements since the 1940s

PART III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. What were the consequences of the dramatically changed American economy in the 1990s? What caused the rapidly increasing gap between rich and poor in this period?
2. How did women's new economic opportunities affect American society? What barriers to women's complete economic equality proved most difficult to overcome?
3. How did the "new immigration" and the rise of ethnic minorities transform American society in the 1990s? Were the effects of the new immigration similar to that of earlier waves of immigration, or fundamentally different?
4. How were the changes in American society reflected in literature and the arts in the 1980s and 1990s?
5. What social and moral challenges seem most urgent as America enters a new millennium? How are these challenges rooted in American history, and how does understanding that history contribute to engaging these problems?