

## CHAPTER FOUR—THE HIT PARADE AND THE BIG PICTURE

One of the nicest things about the Regents exam, from a test taker's point of view, is that the test repeats many questions from year to year. If you take all eight tests in this book, you'll frequently get the feeling that you are answering a question you have answered before, and you'll be right. Although the wording changes from test to test, about half the questions on every Regents exam test the same concepts and have essentially the same correct answers.

Below is a list of the facts tested on almost every Regents exam, along with all the information you need to know about them in order to answer the appropriate question. We call this list the Hit Parade. Learn it, and you'll be halfway home.

### GOVERNMENT HIT PARADE

These are terms, names, and concepts you must know for the government questions of the Regents exam. We've listed them here with brief definitions, then highlighted them in discussions of the governmental concepts that the Regents exam likes to cover.

**Articles of Confederation**—The United States' first constitution. The government formed by the Articles of Confederation lasted from 1782 (the end of the Revolutionary War) to 1789. The government under the Articles proved inadequate, because it did not have the power to collect taxes from the states, nor could it regulate foreign trade, and, in so doing, generate revenue from import and export tariffs.

**Bill of Rights**—First ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights guarantees personal liberties and limits the powers of the government.

**checks and balances**—The system that prevents any branch of government from becoming too powerful by requiring the approval of more than one branch for all important acts.

**Constitutional amendments**—Additions and changes to the original Constitution. The first ten amendments make up the Bill of Rights; there are currently twenty-seven amendments.

**elastic clause**—The section of the Constitution that allows Congress to pass laws "necessary and proper" to the performance of its duties. It is called the elastic clause because it allows Congress to stretch its powers beyond those that are specifically granted to it (*enumerated*) by the Constitution.

**English Enlightenment**—Intellectual movement of late seventeenth century and eighteenth century England. Enlightenment philosophers stressed the use of reason (as opposed to religious faith) in scientific and philosophic study.

**Federal government**—A federal government is one in which the national government and local governments share power. The United States has a federal government.

**Judicial review**—The power of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional.

**Locke, John**—An important philosopher of the English Enlightenment. Locke believed that the rights to life, liberty, and ownership of property were given by God and could not be taken away by governments. His philosophy influenced the framers of the Constitution.

**Separation of powers**—The system that prevents any branch of government from becoming too powerful by dividing important tasks among the three branches. Also called the system of "checks and balances."

**Unwritten Constitution**—Certain deeply ingrained aspects of our government that are not mentioned in the Constitution, such as political parties, political conventions, and Cabinet meetings.

**The United States government is a federal government**

The definition of a federal government is one in which the national government and local governments share power. The national government of the United States is further limited by the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which reserves to the states any powers not granted the national government in the Constitution. The U.S. government differs from many other democracies around the world, whose local governments have little power.

**Each branch of the government is limited by the system of checks and balances**

The term "checks and balances" describes the way in which different branches of the government share power in order to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful. The Regents' favorite examples of checks and balances are: the nomination process for Supreme Court judges; the ratification process for treaties; and judicial review, which refers to the Supreme Court's power to decide whether a law is Constitutional. The fact that the different functions of government are divided among the three branches is called the **separation of powers**. This system grants the legislative branch the sole power to create laws, while empowering the

executive branch to enforce the law and the judicial branch to interpret the law. Separation of powers also prevents a person from serving in more than one branch of the government. A Congressperson (legislative branch), for example, may not also be a judge (judicial branch) or a Cabinet member (executive branch). If a Congressperson were appointed to one of these positions, s/he would first have to resign his/her seat in Congress.

**The Constitution is flexible**

One of the reasons the Constitution has endured for so long with so little change is that it is a flexible document. Judicial review allows the Supreme Court to interpret the Constitution, which results in changing interpretations of the Constitution to meet the needs of a particular era. Furthermore, the Constitution can be amended. It has been amended twenty-seven times; the first ten amendments are called the **Bill of Rights**. The Regents' favorite example of the Constitution's flexibility is the **elastic clause**, which allows Congress to pass laws that are "necessary and proper" to the performance of its duties under the Constitution. It is called the **elastic clause** because it allows Congress to stretch its powers beyond those that are specifically granted to it (*enumerated*) by the Constitution.

**Certain deeply ingrained aspects of our government are not in the Constitution—These traditions are called the "unwritten Constitution"**

The Regents' favorite examples are: political parties; political conventions; and Cabinet meetings. None of these are required by the Constitution, yet each plays a fundamental role in our elections and government.

**The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are based on English Enlightenment ideals**

Many of the ideas in the these documents were inspired by the English Enlightenment philosopher **John Locke**. Locke believed that the rights to life, liberty, and ownership of property were given by God and could not be taken away by governments. At the time, Locke's thinking was very progressive. Most people believed that governments were chosen by God and could therefore do whatever they wanted, regardless of the rights of the people.

**Before the Constitution, there was something called the Articles of Confederation**

The Articles of Confederation is the name of the United States' first constitution. Under the Articles of Confederation, the U.S. had a weak national government. The men who designed America's first government intentionally

made the national government weak, so that it could not exercise the same type of power that the British government had exercised over the colonies. Remember, the colonists had just finished fighting a war to liberate themselves from "British tyranny." The government formed by the Articles of Confederation lasted from 1782 (the end of the Revolutionary War) to 1789. The government under the Articles of Confederation was inadequate, primarily because it did not have the power to collect taxes from the states, nor could it regulate foreign trade, and, in so doing, generate revenue from import and export tariffs. The problems caused by having such a weak central government inspired the framers of the Constitution to divide power more evenly between the national and state governments.

## HISTORY HIT PARADE

These are terms, names, and concepts you must know for the American History questions of the Regents exam. We've listed them here with brief definitions, then highlighted them in discussions of the major events in American history that the Regents exam likes to cover.

**brinkmanship**—A Cold War policy of the United States to force confrontations with the USSR to reach the brink of crisis.

**civil disobedience**—Nonviolent civil disobedience requires activists to protest peacefully against laws they believe unjust and to be willing to accept arrest as a means of demonstrating the justice of their cause. The notion was popularized by nineteenth century American writer Henry David Thoreau and was practiced by Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Cold War**—Period of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, lasting from the end of World War II until 1991. A "cold war" is one in which two countries do not engage in military battles but are nonetheless clearly enemies. During a cold war, the prospect of military engagement is never far off.

**collective security**—Policy of forming "mutual defense" groups, such as NATO and SEATO. The U.S. goal in pursuing collective security was to prevent Soviet expansion into countries unable to defend themselves against an invasion.

**containment**—American policy toward communism from the Truman administration to the Nixon administration. The policy of containment said that the U.S. would not try to overthrow communist governments, but it would try to stop other countries from becoming communist. The **Korean War** is a good example of containment.

**Cuban Missile Crisis**—Major U.S.-USSR confrontation in 1962, involving the placement of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. President Kennedy pursued a policy of brinkmanship, eventually pressuring the Soviets into removing the missiles.

**détente**—President Richard Nixon traveled to the Soviet Union in the early 1970s to ease hostilities, and returned to the U.S. to announce that a new period of *détente* was beginning. *Détente* called for the super-powers to accept each other's existence even if they did not like each other's economic and political systems.

**domino theory**—The belief that one communist revolution in a region triggers many others, with an effect similar to that of dominoes falling. The domino theory was used to justify American involvement in Viet Nam.

**DuBois, W. E. B.**—Founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and civil rights advocate.

**executive privilege**—The right of the president to withhold information that he feels would compromise national security if it were made public.

**George Washington's "Farewell Address"**—In his final speech as president, George Washington warned that the United States should "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." The speech set the tone for American foreign policy for much of the next 150 years.

**Great Society**—President Lyndon B. Johnson's social/economic program, aimed at raising the standard of living for America's poorest residents. Among the Great Society programs are Medicare, Medicaid, Project Head Start, Job Corps, and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

**Jim Crow laws**—Name given to a group of laws passed in the post-Reconstruction South to enforce racial segregation and otherwise restrict the rights of African Americans.

**Korean War**—When communist North Korea invaded South Korea after World War II, the United States led UN forces in defending South Korea. The American goal was to contain communism within the North Korean borders. American participation in the war illustrates the country's commitment to the policy of containment.

**Marshall Plan**—The Marshall Plan offered financial aid to European countries to rebuild after World War II. One requirement of participating in the Marshall Plan was alignment with the United States against communism. The plan had two goals: revive the European economy, and halt the spread of communism.

**McCarthy era**—Senator Joseph McCarthy rose to fame by accusing government officials and other prominent citizens of sympathizing with communists. His accusations frequently had little or no basis in fact. The near-hysterical fear of communism typical of many Americans of the time allowed McCarthy to rise to great power.

**Medicaid**—Great Society program aimed at improving health care for the poor and disabled.

**Medicare**—Great Society program aimed at improving health care for the elderly.

**muckrakers**—Investigative journalists of the early 1900s. Among the most famous works of the muckrakers are: Ida Tarbell's *History of Standard Oil*; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*; and Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities*.

**Open Door Policy**—U.S. foreign policy of the late 1800s stating that trade with China should remain unrestricted. The purpose of declaring this policy was to warn other countries that the United States might take hostile action toward anyone who prevented U.S.-Chinese trade.

**Populists**—Political party of the late 1800s. The Populists primarily represented farmers and working-class Americans. They sought inflationary economic policies to increase farm income. They also lobbied for a number of democratic reforms that would later be adopted by the Progressives, such as direct election of senators.

**Progressive Era**—A period of social and political reform lasting from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of World War I.

**progressive income tax**—A progressive tax increases tax rates for people with higher incomes. Those citizens at the poverty level, for example, might pay few or no taxes. Middle-class citizens might be taxed at a 15 percent rate, while the wealthy are taxed at two or three times that rate. The goal of a progressive tax is to allow those with greater need to keep more of what they earn while taking more from those who need it least.

**Red Scare**—Period of intense anti-communism following World War I.

**Schenck v. United States**—Supreme Court case involving limits on free speech rights. The Schenck case established the "clear and present danger" principle in determining what type of speech could be restricted.

**States' rights**—Term used to describe the position of those who believe the Constitution grants most powers to the states and strictly limits the powers to the national government. States' rights was a popular cause among those who fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War.

**supply-side economics**—The term "supply-side" refers to businesses, which are the suppliers for society. Ronald Reagan argued that, if incentives (such as tax cuts) were offered to businesses, those businesses would invest their savings in the economy, resulting in prosperity, economic growth, and more jobs.

**Truman Doctrine**—The Truman Doctrine was formulated in response to a potential communist takeover of Greece. In it, President Harry Truman pledged U.S. military support to any European nation attempting to fend off a communist takeover.

**war on poverty**—Those programs of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society that were specifically aimed at assisting the poor were known collectively as the "war on poverty." Among these programs was Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Medicaid, and the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

**War Powers Act**—Law requiring the President to seek periodic approval from Congress for any substantial troop commitment. Passed in 1973 in response to national dissatisfaction over the Viet Nam War.

**Washington, Booker T.**—African American agricultural scientist of the late 1800s. Founder of the Tuskegee Institute.

**Watergate**—The name of the apartment complex in which spies working for Richard Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign were caught breaking in to Democratic National Committee headquarters. The name "Watergate" soon became synonymous with a number of illegal activities undertaken by the Nixon White House. The resulting scandal forced Nixon to resign the presidency in 1974.

### **The Constitution was achieved by compromise**

Delegates at the Constitutional Convention compromised on a number of important issues in devising the Constitution. The compromise that the Regents often tests is the "great compromise" that resulted in a bicameral legislature, one with proportional representation (the House of Representatives) and one in which each state is equally represented (the Senate). Proportional representation benefits larger states; equal representation benefits smaller states.

### **George Washington's "Farewell Address" established American foreign policy until World War II**

Whenever you think about American foreign policy prior to World War II, remember Washington's "Farewell Address," in which he warned that the United States should "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."

### **The slavery issue was not the only cause of the Civil War**

There were two important causes of the Civil War. The first, the battle over slavery, is the one that everyone remembers. The second, the battle over states' rights vs. the national government, is the one most people forget. It is also the one that the Regents exam always tests.

### **After Reconstruction ended, the rights of African Americans in the South were restricted through Jim Crow laws**

Southern legislatures began passing Jim Crow laws in 1881. These laws permitted businesses to refuse to serve blacks, restricted blacks' rights to congregate, and authorized separate public facilities for blacks and whites. The Supreme Court of the era upheld these odious restrictions, arguing that the fourteenth amendment, which should have prevented such laws, applied only to the national and state governments, and not to local governments or private businesses. In 1896 the Court went one step further, ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that "separate but equal" facilities for the different races were not unconstitutional. This ruling opened the door to seventy-five years of state-sanctioned segregation in the South.

### **W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington disagreed over how African Americans could best achieve equal rights in the United States**

Booker T. Washington was a southern African American agricultural scientist in the late 1800s. Among his many achievements is the founding of the Tuskegee Institute, a vocational institution for African Americans. Washington believed that economic success would provide African Americans their quickest route to equality in American society, and Tuskegee was created with that goal in mind. A southerner who had lived through the slave era, he harbored no illusions that the South would soon grant African Americans equal social and legal status.

Because Washington did not demand an immediate end to legal discrimination, he has sometimes been portrayed as an "accommodationist." He is often compared with W. E. B. DuBois. DuBois, a northerner of the generation following Washington's, took a more aggressive approach, demanding immediate equality under the law for African Americans. He was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

### **In the late 1890s, there was a party called the Populists**

The Populists chiefly represented farmers, who were experiencing hard economic times at the end of the nineteenth century. Their biggest problem was that many owed large amounts of money in mortgage payments for

their farms. However, produce prices were falling due to overproduction, making it difficult for the farmers to make ends meet. The farmers hoped to persuade the government to mint more money. If more money was put into circulation in the economy, they reasoned, inflation would result. Inflation would increase the price of farm goods and therefore make their debts easier to pay off. Because silver was cheap and plentiful, the Populists called for a liberal policy toward the minting of silver coins. That is how the Populists came to be associated with the "silver issue."

This party lasted for less than a decade and never won a national election, but it was important for a number of reasons. First, as noted above, it was a party of the common people, which made it unusual. Second, it championed a number of ideas that were later adapted by the major parties during the Progressive Era. These ideas included the eight-hour work day, the progressive income tax, and the direct election of senators.

### **The Open Door Policy was supposed to open China to U.S. trade**

In the late 1800s, Japan and Europe established outposts in China. The United States was afraid that these countries would annex sections of China and prohibit trade with the United States in the areas they controlled. In an effort to prevent this, the United States declared the Open Door policy, which said that trade with China should remain unrestricted. The purpose of declaring this policy was to warn other countries that the United States might take hostile action toward anyone who prevented U.S.-Chinese trade. The policy had only limited effectiveness because the U.S. was not prepared to enforce it wholeheartedly.

### **Investigative reporters of the Progressive Era were called muckrakers**

The term "muckrakers" refers to a group of journalists whose work revealed widespread corruption in urban management (Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities*), oil companies (Ida Tarbell's *History of Standard Oil*), and the meat-packing industry (Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*). These books and others like them outraged the public, which in turn called for widespread reform.

### **The government can suppress some civil rights during wartime**

Abraham Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus in the border states during the Civil War, an action later overturned by the Supreme Court. (A writ of habeas corpus is used by a defendant to appear before a judge, who determines whether the government has the right to hold the defendant as a prisoner. A defendant's right to a writ of habeas corpus is what prevents the government from arresting and imprisoning people without just cause.)

the Espionage and Sedition Acts suppressed free speech rights during World War I. The famous case *Schenck v. United States*, which applied the "clear and present danger" principle to free speech, involved a violation of the Espionage Act. During World War II, the government imprisoned Japanese Americans living on the West Coast, relocating them to detention camps in Alabama, arguing that they might otherwise assist a Japanese invasion of the United States.

Of these three examples, the Regents most often asks about the Schenck case.

### **Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to "pack" the Supreme Court**

During Roosevelt's first term, the Supreme Court was very conservative. Many of the justices felt that Roosevelt's programs exceeded the constitutional limits. In several cases, the court declared key pieces of Roosevelt's New Deal unconstitutional. In response, Roosevelt started looking for a way to change the political philosophy of the court. Since justices cannot be fired nor forced to retire, Roosevelt tried to "pack" the Supreme Court by proposing legislation that would allow him to name six additional justices (one for each justice over the age of seventy). The plan ignored the principle of "separation of powers," which assigns specific tasks to the different branches of the government. Roosevelt's goal was to override the prerogative of the judiciary simply because he did not like the way the justices performed their jobs.

Ultimately the court-packing plan didn't work, but soon after Roosevelt's goal was achieved because a number of justices retired and Roosevelt was able to replace them with judges whose politics more closely resembled his own. Roosevelt's actions in this episode were among the most unpopular of his thirteen-year presidency.

### **The Cold War had its own vocabulary**

You need to know several terms associated with the Cold War. **Containment** was a foreign policy aimed at preventing the spread of communism. The policy of containment said that the U.S. would not try to overthrow communist governments, but it would try to stop other countries from becoming communist. The **Korean War** is a good example of containment.

**Brinkmanship** (sometimes called "brinkmanship") is the term used to describe the willingness of the U.S. to force confrontations with the USSR to reach the brink of crisis. The **Cuban Missile Crisis** is a good example of brinkmanship. American involvement in international treaties, such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty

Organization), was called **collective security**. The goal of collective security was to prevent Soviet expansion into countries unable to defend themselves against an invasion. Finally, the **domino theory** is the term used to describe the belief that one communist revolution in a region triggers many others in neighboring countries, with an effect similar to that of dominoes falling. The domino theory was used to justify American involvement in Viet Nam.

You also need to know about the **Truman Doctrine** and the **Marshall Plan**. The Truman Doctrine was formulated in response to a potential communist takeover of Greece. In it, President Harry Truman pledged U.S. military support to any European nation attempting to fend off a communist takeover. The Marshall Plan, also initiated during the Truman administration, offered financial aid to European countries to rebuild after World War II. One requirement of participating in the Marshall Plan was alignment with the United States against communism. Both the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were developed at the beginning of the Cold War as means of stopping the spread of communism.

### **The Red Scare of the 1920s and the McCarthy era both exploited people's fears of communism**

Senator Joseph McCarthy rose to fame by accusing government officials and other prominent citizens of sympathizing with communists. His accusations frequently had little or no basis in fact. In the 1920s, the country went through a similar period. During the 1920s, anti-communist propaganda was aimed primarily at newly arrived immigrants and labor unions.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated the use of nonviolent civil disobedience**

The concept of nonviolent civil disobedience, popularized in the writings of Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi, requires activists to protest peacefully against laws they believe unjust and to be willing to accept arrest as a means of demonstrating the justice of their cause. In his most famous argument for nonviolent civil disobedience, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, King wrote:

"One who breaks an unjust law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law."

**Lyndon Johnson's social/economic program was called the Great Society**  
Great Society programs sought to reduce poverty and guarantee greater rights for minorities, particularly African Americans. Johnson declared war



on poverty. Other Great Society programs sought to improve education and medical care (through Medicare and Medicaid).

### **Dissatisfaction over the Viet Nam War resulted in the War Powers Act**

Before the United States goes to war, the Constitution requires a declaration of war approved by Congress. Congress made no such declaration concerning the Korean and Viet Nam Wars, however; officially, the United States was not at war in either situation. In reality, of course, the nation was at war; the government skirted the issue by declaring both conflicts "police actions." After the Viet Nam War, Congress moved to make it more difficult for the president to commit troops overseas by passing the **War Powers Act**, which requires the president to seek periodic approval from Congress for any substantial troop commitment.

### **The Watergate scandal proved that no American is above the law**

The Watergate affair involved the burglary of Democratic National Committee headquarters by Republican spies and the Nixon administration's efforts to hide its role in the burglary. A prolonged Senate investigation into the affair revealed other potentially illegal activities in the Nixon White House, extending the length and scope of the Senate hearings. When it was discovered that Nixon had secretly taped all conversations in the White House, including many concerning Watergate, the Senate demanded the tapes. Nixon refused, claiming **executive privilege** (executive privilege is the right of the president to withhold information that s/he feels would compromise national security if it were made public). The Supreme Court ruled against Nixon, and soon after Nixon resigned in disgrace. The incident demonstrated that no one, not even the president, is above the law.

### **Ronald Reagan's economic theory was called supply-side economics**

The term "supply-side" refers to businesses, which are the suppliers for society. Ronald Reagan argued that, if incentives (such as tax cuts) were offered to businesses, those businesses would invest their savings in the economy, resulting in prosperity, economic growth, and more jobs.

## **THE BIG PICTURE**

The Hit Parade lists facts that the Regents exam tests over and over. While we cannot predict the content of all Regents exam questions, we can guarantee that the correct answers to Regents questions will reinforce certain generalizations about history and government. We call those generalizations the **BIG PICTURE**. Below are all the **BIG PICTURE** facts you need to correctly answer most questions on the Regents.

## **ERAS**

### **The 1880s and the 1890s—Rapid Economic Expansion**

- **Westward expansion** and the rapid growth of industry created many opportunities for people to get rich. Those who did became very powerful.
- The government was conservative and pro-business during this period. It made a few attempts to regulate the excesses of business, but not many. The courts were even more conservative than the government, and almost always ruled in favor of businesses no matter how outrageous business' actions were.
- As a result, this was a bad era for labor. **Unions** were weak and met with opposition not only from businesses but from the government as well. To make labor's situation even more difficult, millions of immigrants arrived during this period, creating a huge, cheap supply of labor, especially for **unskilled factory work**.
- Times were tough not only for labor, but for all the poor and disenfranchised. Southern blacks were subjected to **Jim Crow laws**; by the end of the era, the conservative Supreme Court had sanctioned segregation (*Plessy v. Ferguson*). Native Americans were herded onto poor parcels of land; the government later tried to force Native Americans to assimilate into U.S. society (*Dawes Severalty Act*).

## **Definitions**

**Dawes Severalty Act**—1887 Government effort to assimilate Native Americans by moving them from reservations to tracts of privately owned land. Many Native Americans refused to participate, and the plan failed. As a result of the Dawes Act, the amount of land set aside for reservations was reduced by half.

**Jim Crow laws**—Name given to a group of laws passed in the post-Reconstruction South to enforce racial segregation and otherwise restrict the rights of African Americans.

*Plessy v. Ferguson*—1896 Supreme Court ruling that "separate but equal" facilities for the different races were not unconstitutional. This ruling opened the door to seventy-five years of state-sanctioned segregation in the South.

### **The 1900s and the 1910s—The Progressive Era**

- The government attempted to curb the excesses of big business. **Monopolies** and **trusts** were broken up by the government for the purpose of generating competition in the marketplace. **Regulatory**

agencies were created to insure consumer safety and to allow the government greater control over the economy.

- The government was made more responsive to the people. Constitutional amendments of this period mandated the election of senators by popular vote (they had previously been chosen by state legislatures), the extension of voting rights to women, and the establishment of income taxes. Other reforms broadened the power of voters, giving them the initiative, the referendum, and the recall election. Progressive reforms reflected the belief that the government bore some small measure of responsibility for the health and economic well-being of its citizens.

### Definitions

**initiative**—Process through which voters may propose new laws. One of several Progressive-era reforms that increased voters' power over government.

**monopoly**—A business concern, such as a corporation, that controls an entire product or service. Because they face no competition, monopolies can control the price and availability of goods.

**recall election**—Process through which voters can shorten an office holder's term. One of several Progressive-era reforms that increased voters' power over government.

**referendum**—Process through which voters may vote on new laws. One of several Progressive-era reforms that increased voters' power over government.

**trust**—A business organization in which several competitors consolidate into a single business entity for the purpose of increasing control of prices and availability of goods.

### The 1920s—An Era of Contrasts

- Government grew more conservative and pro-business. Regulations were relaxed and occasionally ignored. The economy grew quickly, and many investors believed the growth period would never end. This gave them the confidence to make more risky investments. These conditions eventually contributed to the causes of the Great Depression.
- More Americans entered the middle class. Leisure spending increased, and American popular culture blossomed in the movies, theater, and sports, especially baseball.
- At the same time that many Americans became more liberal, others grew much more conservative. The backlash against modern values

was best demonstrated by the *Scopes trial*, in which a teacher was prosecuted for teaching evolution.

### Definitions

**Great Depression**—Period of general economic decline beginning with the stock market crash of 1929 and continuing throughout the 1930s. During the Depression, the unemployment rate approached 25 percent.

**Scopes trial**—Famous court case of the 1920s in which a school teacher was tried for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution in public school. The trial has come to represent the tensions of the era between progressive secular humanists and conservative religious forces.

### The 1930s—The New Deal

- Prior to the New Deal, the federal government played a minimal role in providing for citizens' well-being. It intervened in the economy only rarely, and then only to curb the excesses of specific industries, never to provide for the welfare of the poor. The New Deal changed that, involving the government in the creation of jobs, the regulation of agricultural prices, and other tasks aimed at insuring public subsistence.
- The New Deal greatly expanded the size and power of the federal government. The Regents exam often asks about periods that resulted in the expansion of the government. Aside from the New Deal, these periods include the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Great Society. As a rule, war requires a larger government, and once the government expands it is very hard to shrink it back to its former size.

### Definitions

**New Deal**—Franklin D. Roosevelt's program for recovery from the Great Depression. Roosevelt's New Deal greatly increased the government's power to manage the economy; it also established the government's role in providing a "safety net" for the country's poorest citizens.

**welfare (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)**—New Deal program that provided federal funding to poor families with children. AFDC was revamped during the Clinton administration, with limits placed on how long a family could receive AFDC payments.

### The Cold War—Squaring Off Against the Soviet Union

- Opposition to the Soviet Union influenced almost every American action from 1948 to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.



- Other important facts about the Cold War are listed in the Hit Parade, above, under the heading "The Cold War had its own vocabulary."

### **The 1960s—Civil Rights and Viet Nam**

- The civil rights movement made its greatest gains during the 1960s. Lyndon Johnson's **Great Society** programs included the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which ended legal discrimination in the United States. The Constitution was amended to outlaw poll taxes and literacy tests, which had been used to prevent African Americans from voting.
- Civil unrest stemmed not only from the struggle for civil rights, but also because of opposition to America's participation in the **Viet Nam War**. Opposition eventually grew so strong that, in 1974, the United States withdrew from Viet Nam without having achieved its objective: namely, preventing a communist takeover.

### **Definitions**

**Civil Rights Act of 1964**—Federal law that made illegal segregation in most public places, increased penalties and sentences for those convicted of discrimination in employment, and withheld federal aid from schools that discriminated on the basis of race or gender.

**Great Society**—President Lyndon B. Johnson's social/economic program, aimed at raising the standard of living for America's poorest residents.

Among the Great Society programs are Medicare, Medicaid, Project Head Start, Job Corps, and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

**Viet Nam War**—War between Communist North Viet Nam and American-supported South Viet Nam. American involvement in the war resulted in great social unrest at home. Opposition to the war eventually forced the United States to abandon it, and soon after, Viet Nam came under communist control.

**Warren Court**—The Supreme Court during the era in which Earl Warren served as Chief Justice. The Warren Court is best remembered for expanding the rights of minorities and the rights of the accused.

## **IMPORTANT HISTORICAL THEMES**

### **Economic History**

- The Regents never asks about the economy of the United States prior to the Civil War.
- The post-Civil War era was one of rapid growth. **Westward expansion** and the rapid growth of industry fueled that growth. Businesses

were allowed to grow so large that they controlled entire industries. Without competition, businesses were able to overcharge and to provide inadequate services and products.

- One group that did not enjoy this prosperity was farmers. **Farmers overproduced**, resulting in a greater supply than demand, which in turn drove prices down. On the Regents, the economic problems of farmers are always the result of overproduction.
- In the early 1900s, the government broke up many of these large monopolies. As a result, President Theodore Roosevelt came to be known as the **trustbuster**.
- After World War I, the economy entered another period of rapid growth. As a result, the middle class grew. Consumerism rose. Many Americans thought that this growth period would last forever. Overconfidence led many businesses, banks, and investors to make risky investments. The failure of these investments helped bring about the **Great Depression**.
- The Great Depression drove many Americans into poverty. The unemployment rate reached 25 percent. The **New Deal** helped many Americans avoid starvation and *may* have pulled the economy out of the Depression. However, many economists believe that the economy revived mainly because of the revitalization of war industries in the years leading up to World War II.
- The 1950s was another era of middle-class growth. This is also the era in which suburbs developed into a major residential center for Americans.
- The 1970s was an era of **high inflation** rates and **high unemployment**.

### **Definitions**

**Great Depression**—Period of general economic decline beginning with the stock market crash of 1929 and continuing throughout the 1930s.

During the Depression, the unemployment rate approached 25 percent.

**inflation**—Term economists use to describe what happens when consumer prices increase rapidly.

**New Deal**—Franklin D. Roosevelt's program for recovery from the Great Depression. Roosevelt's New Deal greatly increased the government's power to manage the economy; it also established the government's role in providing a "safety net" for the country's poorest citizens.

**recession**—Term economists use to describe a prolonged slow-down in economic growth.

**suburbs**—Residential areas surrounding cities. Because they are less extensively developed than are cities, they are described as “sub-urban.”

### Labor History

- Labor unions faced insurmountable opposition from both business and the government until the passage of the **Wagner Act of 1935** (also called the **National Labor Relations Act**). The Wagner Act recognized the right of labor to organize in unions and to negotiate contracts as a group (**collective bargaining**).
- The one exception to this rule is the **American Federation of Labor**. The AFL succeeded in the early 1900s by organizing only skilled laborers and craftsmen. Because its membership was in greater demand by employers, the AFL was able to negotiate higher wages, shorter work days, and other benefits.
- The power of unions peaked during the 1960s and 1970s. Although still powerful, unions have lost some leverage because of competition from overseas. In the 1980s, the number of union members in the U.S. declined for the first time since the 1930s.

### Definitions

**American Federation of Labor**—One of the few successful labor unions of early labor history. Led by Samuel Gompers, the AFL succeeded by limiting its membership to skilled craftsmen (it also barred African Americans from membership) and by focusing on the “bread-and-butter” issues of higher wages, increased benefits, and safer working conditions.

**“bread-and-butter” issues**—Those political issues specifically directed at the daily concerns of most working-class Americans, such as job security, tax rates, wages, and employee benefits.

**collective bargaining**—Labor unions’ power to negotiate contracts on behalf of their members.

**Wagner Act of 1935**—New Deal law that created the National Labor Relations Board. The Wagner Act also recognized the right of labor to organize in unions and to negotiate contracts as a group.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR MINORITY RIGHTS

### African Americans

- The first major advance in the struggle for equal rights for minorities occurred after the Civil War. The **Thirteenth Amendment** abolished slavery; the **Fourteenth Amendment** guaranteed all citizens equal protection under the law, due process, and citizenship. The **Fifteenth Amendment** extended the right to vote to African American men.
- These advances were effectively erased, especially in the South, through **Jim Crow** laws and the Supreme Court’s decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (see Hit Parade, above).
- Military service by African Americans during both world wars led to some temporary, minor gains in rights. Those gains quickly disappeared after the wars ended.
- The civil rights movement gained great momentum during the 1950s and early 1960s. Boycotts, demonstrations, lawsuits (especially the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ended legal segregation in schools) and acts of civil disobedience helped bring an end to segregation and overt discrimination.
- The **Civil Rights Act of 1964** removed the legal basis for discrimination based on race. All the same, African Americans continued to experience discrimination.

### Definitions

**Brown v. Board of Education**—In the 1954 case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court overturned the “separate but equal” standard as it applied to education; “separate but equal” had been the law of the land since the Court had approved it in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In a 9 to 0 decision, the court ruled that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

**Civil Rights Act of 1964**—Federal law that made illegal segregation in most public places, increased penalties and sentences for those convicted of discrimination in employment, and withheld federal aid from schools that discriminated on the basis of race or gender.

**Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution**—Extended voting rights to African Americans.

**Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution**—Applied the Bill of Rights to state governments. Previously, the Bill of Rights had protected citizens from federal violations of their rights.

**Jim Crow laws**—Name given to a group of laws passed in the post-Reconstruction South to enforce racial segregation and otherwise restrict the rights of African Americans.

**Plessy v. Ferguson**—1896 Supreme Court ruling that “separate but equal” facilities for the different races were not unconstitutional. This ruling opened the door to seventy-five years of state-sanctioned segregation in the South.

**Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution**—Abolished slavery.

**Voting Rights Act of 1965**—Federal law that increased government supervision of local election practices, suspended the use of literacy tests to prevent people (usually African Americans) from voting, and expanded government efforts to register voters. The Voting Rights Act of 1970 made permanent the ban on literacy tests.

## Native Americans

- As a rule, correct answers to Regents questions about Native Americans reflect the poor treatment they have received from the U.S. government.
- Until 1890, the government generally forced Native American tribes to relocate whenever those tribes occupied lands sought by white settlers and ranchers. Often the government would negotiate **treaties** guaranteeing the tribes autonomy in return for relocation. The government frequently broke these treaties.
- Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the government attempted to assimilate Native Americans into the mainstream by means of the **Dawes Severalty Act**, which offered private property to Native Americans if they would leave their reservations. The Dawes Act failed to achieve its goal, and most Native Americans remained on reservations.
- During the 1960s, Native Americans joined the growing ranks of those seeking greater civil rights. Increased activism ultimately resulted in the extension of **tribal powers of self-government**. Recently, some tribes have successfully sued the government to honor its treaties.

## Definitions

**Dawes Severalty Act**—1887 government effort to assimilate Native Americans by moving them from reservations to tracts of privately owned land. Many Native Americans refused to participate, and the plan failed. As a result of the Dawes Act, the amount of land set aside for reservations was reduced by half.

## Women

- Women have often played an important role in social and political reform movements. Many early abolitionists were women. During the 1830s, women spearheaded the movements to improve the treatment of the insane and the poor.
- In 1848, a group of activist women met at **Seneca Falls** to coordinate their campaign for women's rights. These women sought increased educational and economic opportunities, expanded legal rights, and the right to vote. None of these goals would be achieved easily.
- Women again played a key role in campaigning for change during the Progressive Era. They spearheaded the temperance movement which ultimately resulted in Prohibition.
- Like African Americans, women enjoyed increased rights and opportunities during the world wars. Similarly, those rights and opportunities disappeared at the war's ends.
- Women finally received the **right to vote** in 1920, by constitutional amendment.
- Most recently, the struggle for equal rights for women made its greatest gains during the **women's liberation** movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The movement failed, however, to secure passage of a constitutional amendment prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender (the **Equal Rights Amendment**, or ERA).

## Definitions

**Equal Rights Amendment**—Failed constitutional amendment that would have guaranteed equal protection under the law for women.

**Seneca Falls Convention (1848)**—First national meeting of women's rights activists.

## FOREIGN POLICY

- At the end of his presidency, George Washington gave a “**Farewell Address**,” in which he argued that the United States should pursue economic relations overseas but should avoid all permanent alliances. Washington's call for **neutrality** defined American foreign policy from 1800 until the late 1890s, and then again from the end of World War I until 1941.
- During the 1890s and the early 1900s, the United States went through a period of overseas expansion, called **imperialism**. As a result of the

Spanish-American War, the U.S. took control of the Philippines. During the early 1900s, the U.S. frequently intervened in Latin America and Central America, usually to protect U.S. business interests. Such interventions were justified by invoking the **Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine**, which stated that the U.S. had the right to interfere in Latin American affairs in order to prevent European interference in the region. The primary goal of this policy was to increase the nation's wealth.

- After World War I, the United States entered a period of **isolationism**, attempting to minimize its involvement in international affairs. Only when it became clear that aggression by Japan, Italy, and Germany might threaten U.S. security were Americans convinced that the country should enter World War II.
- After World War II, the United States became **internationalist**. It participated in the United Nations and increased aid to foreign countries. Its primary foreign policy objective was to **contain the expansion of the Soviet Union**.

### Definitions

**containment**—American policy toward communism from the Truman administration to the Nixon administration. The policy of containment said that the U.S. would not try to overthrow communist governments, but it would try to stop other countries from becoming communist. The **Korean War** is a good example of containment.

**George Washington's "Farewell Address"**—In his final speech as President, George Washington warned that the United States should "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." The speech set the tone for American foreign policy for much of the next 150 years.

**imperialism**—Term used to describe what happens when one country, such as the United States, attempts to control a foreign nation, often by taking control of the local government.

**internationalism**—Term used to describe American foreign policy since the end of World War II, during which time the United States has grown increasingly involved in international affairs.

**isolationism**—American foreign policy of avoiding involvement in affairs overseas, particularly in Europe. Until the end of World War II, the United States generally followed an isolationist policy.

**Monroe Doctrine**—A declaration of mutual non-interference with Europe. You stay out of the Western Hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine told Europe, and we'll stay out of your squabbles.

**neutrality**—American policy toward World War I from its beginning in 1914 until the U.S. entered the war in 1917. Neutrality required the U.S. to favor neither side in the war.

**Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine**—Policy stating that the U.S. had the right to interfere in Latin American affairs in order to prevent European interference in the region. The Roosevelt Corollary was invoked by the government to justify military interventions in Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

### IMMIGRATION

- The **first wave** of immigration occurred in the mid-1800s. Immigrants arrived primarily from western and northern Europe and included the Irish, Germans, and English.
- The **second wave** of immigration occurred between the 1880s and the early 1900s. These immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe. Among them were Russians, Italians, Greeks, and Poles. Despite the fact that millions of immigrants were arriving every year, the United States did not limit immigration during this period because the immigrants provided a source of cheap labor for the many urban factories that were being built.
- In the 1920s, the government set limitations on immigration. Prejudice against southern and eastern Europe can be seen in the immigration quotas of the era, which heavily favored western and northern Europe.
- The **Immigration Act of 1965** abolished quotas based on national origin and replaced them with limits for immigration from the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Permits for immigration have since been awarded on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

### Definitions

**first wave of immigration**—Period of immigration beginning in the mid-1800s, during which immigrants arrived primarily from western and northern Europe and included the Irish, Germans, and English.

**Immigration Act of 1965**—Federal law that abolished quotas based on national origin and replaced them with limits for immigration from the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Permits for immigration have since been awarded on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

**second wave of immigration**—Period of immigration beginning in the 1880s. "Second-wave" immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe. Among them were Russians, Italians, Greeks, and Poles.

## INDEX OF TERMS

**Aid to Families with Dependent Children**—New Deal program that provided federal funding to poor families with children. Often referred to simply as "welfare." AFDC was revamped during the Clinton administration, with limits placed on how long a family could receive AFDC payments.

**American Federation of Labor**—One of the few successful labor unions of early labor history. Led by Samuel Gompers, the AFL succeeded by limiting its membership to skilled craftsmen (it also barred African Americans from membership) and by focusing on the "bread-and-butter" issues of higher wages, increased benefits, and safer working conditions.

**Articles of Confederation**—the United States' first constitution. The government formed by the Articles of Confederation lasted from 1782 (the end of the Revolutionary War) to 1789. The government under the Articles proved inadequate, because it did not have the power to collect taxes from the states, nor could it regulate foreign trade, and, in so doing, generate revenue from import and export tariffs.

**Bill of Rights**—First ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights guarantees personal liberties and limits the powers of the government. Originally the Bill of Rights applied only to the federal government; the Fourteenth Amendment extended the protections of the Bill of Rights to include state law.

**"bread-and-butter" issues**—Those political issues specifically directed at the daily concerns of most working-class Americans, such as job security, tax rates, wages, and employee benefits.

**brinkmanship**—A Cold War policy of the United States to confrontations with the USSR to reach the brink of crisis.

**Brown v. Board of Education**—In the 1954 case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court overturned the "separate but equal" standard as it applied to education; "separate but equal" had been the law of the land since the Court had approved it in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In a 9 to 0 decision, the court ruled that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

**checks and balances**—the system that prevents any branch of government from becoming too powerful by requiring the approval of more than one branch for all important acts.

**civil disobedience**—Nonviolent civil disobedience requires activists to protest peacefully against laws they believe unjust and to be willing to accept arrest as a means of demonstrating the justice of their cause. The notion was popularized by nineteenth century American writer Henry David Thoreau and was practiced by Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964**—Federal law that made illegal segregation in most public places, increased penalties and sentences for those convicted of discrimination in employment, and withheld federal aid from schools that discriminated on the basis of race or gender.

**Cold War**—Period of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, lasting from the end of World War II until 1991. A "cold war" is one in which two countries do not engage in military battles but are nonetheless clearly enemies. During a cold war, the prospect of military engagement is never far off.

**collective bargaining**—Labor unions' power to negotiate contracts on behalf of their members.

**collective security**—Policy of forming "mutual defense" groups, such as NATO and SEATO. The U.S. goal in pursuing collective security was to prevent Soviet expansion into countries unable to defend themselves against an invasion.

**Constitutional amendments**—Additions and changes to the original Constitution. The first ten amendments make up the Bill of Rights; there are currently twenty-seven amendments.

**containment**—American policy toward communism from the Truman administration to the Nixon administration. The policy of containment said that the U.S. would not try to overthrow communist governments, but it would try to stop other countries from becoming communist. The Korean War is a good example of containment.

**Cuban Missile Crisis**—Major U.S.-USSR confrontation in 1962, involving the placement of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. President Kennedy pursued a policy of brinkmanship, eventually pressuring the Soviets into removing the missiles.

**Dawes Severalty Act**—1887 Government effort to assimilate Native Americans by moving them from reservations to tracts of privately owned land. Many Native Americans refused to participate, and the plan failed. As a result of the Dawes Act, the amount of land set aside for reservations was reduced by half.

**détente**—President Richard Nixon traveled to the Soviet Union in the early 1970s to ease hostilities, and returned to the U.S. to announce that a new

period of *détente* was beginning. *Détente* called for the superpowers to accept each other's existence even if they did not like each other's economic and political systems.

**domino theory**—The belief that one communist revolution in a region triggers many others, with an effect similar to that of dominoes falling. The domino theory was used to justify American involvement in Viet Nam.

**DuBois, W. E. B.**—Founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and civil rights advocate.

**elastic clause**—The section of the Constitution that allows Congress to pass laws "necessary and proper" to the performance of its duties. It is called the elastic clause because it allows Congress to stretch its powers beyond those that are specifically granted to it (*enumerated*) by the Constitution.

**English Enlightenment**—Intellectual movement of late seventeenth century and eighteenth century England. Enlightenment philosophers stressed the use of reason (as opposed to religious faith) in scientific and philosophic study.

**Equal Rights Amendment**—Failed constitutional amendment that would have guaranteed equal protection under the law for women.

**executive privilege**—The right of the president to withhold information that he feels would compromise national security if it were made public.

**federal government**—A federal government is one in which the national government and local governments share power. The United States has a federal government.

**Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution**—Extended voting rights to African Americans.

**first wave of immigration**—Period of immigration beginning in the mid-1800s, during which immigrants arrived primarily from western and northern Europe and included the Irish, Germans, and English.

**Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution**—Prevented the states from denying "due process of law" and "equal protection under the law" to citizens. The amendment was specifically aimed at protecting the rights of newly freed slaves. In the twentieth century, the Supreme Court has used the amendment to strike down state laws that violate the Bill of Rights.

**George Washington's "Farewell Address"**—In his final speech as president, George Washington warned that the United States should "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." The speech set the tone for American foreign policy for much of the next 150 years.

**Great Depression**—Period beginning with the stock market crash of 1929 and continuing throughout the 1930s. During the Depression, the unemployment rate approached 25 percent.

**Great Society**—President Lyndon B. Johnson's social/economic program, aimed at raising the standard of living for America's poorest residents. Among the Great Society programs are Medicare, Medicaid, Project Head Start, Job Corps, and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

**Immigration Act of 1965**—Federal law that abolished quotas based on national origin and replaced them with limits for immigration from the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Permits for immigration have since been awarded on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

**imperialism**—Term used to describe what happens when one country, such as the United States, attempts to control a foreign nation, often by taking control of the local government.

**inflation**—Term economists use to describe what happens when consumer prices increase rapidly.

**initiative**—Process through which voters may propose new laws. One of several Progressive-era reforms that increased voters' power over government.

**internationalism**—Term used to describe American foreign policy since the end of World War II, during which time the United States has grown increasingly involved in international affairs.

**isolationism**—American foreign policy of avoiding involvement in affairs overseas, particularly in Europe. Until the end of World War II, the United States generally followed an isolationist policy.

**Jim Crow laws**—Name given to a group of laws passed in the post-Reconstruction South to enforce racial segregation and otherwise restrict the rights of African Americans.

**judicial review**—The power of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional.

**Korean War**—When communist North Korea invaded South Korea after World War II, the United States led UN forces in defending South Korea. The American goal was to contain communism within the North Korean borders. American participation in the war illustrates the country's commitment to the policy of containment.

**Locke, John**—An important philosopher of the English Enlightenment. Locke believed that the rights to life, liberty, and ownership of property were given by God and could not be taken away by governments. His philosophy influenced the framers of the Constitution.



**Marshall Plan**—The Marshall Plan offered financial aid to European countries to rebuild after World War II. One requirement of participating in the Marshall Plan was alignment with the United States against Communism. The plan had two goals: revive the European economy, and halt the spread of Communism.

**McCarthy era**—Senator Joseph McCarthy rose to fame by accusing government officials and other prominent citizens of sympathizing with Communists. His accusations frequently had little or no basis in fact. The near-hysterical fear of communism typical of many Americans of the time allowed McCarthy to rise to great power.

**Medicaid**—Great Society program aimed at improving health care for the poor and disabled.

**Medicare**—Great Society program aimed at improving health care for the elderly.

**monopoly**—A business concern, such as a corporation, that controls an entire product or service. Because they face no competition, monopolies can control the price and availability of goods.

**Monroe Doctrine**—A declaration of mutual non-interference with Europe. You stay out of the Western Hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine told Europe, and we'll stay out of your squabbles.

**muckrakers**—Investigative journalists of the early 1900s. Among the most famous works of the muckrakers are: Ida Tarbell's *History of Standard Oil*; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*; and Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities*.  
**neutrality**—American policy toward World War I from its beginning in 1914 until the U.S. entered the war in 1917. Neutrality required the U.S. to favor neither side in the war.

**New Deal**—Franklin D. Roosevelt's program for recovery from the Great Depression. Roosevelt's New Deal greatly increased the government's power to manage the economy; it also established the government's role in providing a "safety net" for the country's poorest citizens.

**Open Door Policy**—U.S. foreign policy of the late 1800s stating that trade with China should remain unrestricted. The purpose of declaring this policy was to warn other countries that the United States might take hostile action toward anyone who prevented U.S.-Chinese trade.

**Plessy v. Ferguson**—1896 Supreme Court ruling that "separate but equal" facilities for the different races were not unconstitutional. This ruling opened the door to seventy-five years of state-sanctioned segregation in the South.

**Populists**—Political party of the late 1800s. The Populists primarily represented farmers and working-class Americans. They sought inflationary economic policies to increase farm income. They also lobbied for a number of democratic reforms that would later be adopted by the Progressives, such as direct election of senators.

**Progressive Era**—A period of social and political reform lasting from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of World War I.

**progressive income tax**—A progressive tax increases tax rates for people with higher incomes. Those citizens at the poverty level, for example, might pay few or no taxes. Middle-class citizens might be taxed at a 15 percent rate, while the wealthy are taxed at two or three times that rate. The goal of a progressive tax is to allow those with greater need to keep more of what they earn while taking more from those who need it least.

**recall election**—Process through which voters can shorten an office holder's term. One of several Progressive-era reforms that increased voters' power over government.

**recession**—Term economists use to describe a prolonged slowdown in economic growth.

**Red Scare**—Period of intense anti-communism following World War I.  
**referendum**—Process through which voters may vote on new laws. One of several Progressive-era reforms that increased voters' power over government.

**Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine**—Policy stating that the U.S. had the right to interfere in Latin American affairs in order to prevent European interference in the region. The Roosevelt Corollary was invoked by the government to justify military interventions in Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

**Schenck v. United States**—Supreme Court case involving limits on free speech rights. The *Schenck* case established the "clear and present danger" principle in determining what type of speech could be restricted.

**Scopes trial**—Famous court case of the 1920s in which a school teacher was tried for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution in public school. The trial has come to represent the tensions of the era between progressive secular humanists and conservative religious forces.

**second wave of immigration**—Period of immigration beginning in the 1880s. "Second-wave" immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe. Among them were Russians, Italians, Greeks, and Poles.

**Seneca Falls Convention (1848)**—First national meeting of women's rights activists.

**separation of powers**—The system that prevents any branch of government from becoming too powerful by dividing important tasks among the three branches. Also called the system of "checks and balances."

**States' rights**—Term used to describe the position of those who believe the Constitution grants most powers to the states and strictly limits the powers to the national government. States' rights was a popular cause among those who fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War.

**suburbs**—Residential areas surrounding cities. Because they are less extensively developed than are cities, they are described as "sub-urban."

**supply-side economics**—The term "supply-side" refers to businesses, which are the suppliers for society. Ronald Reagan argued that, if incentives (such as tax cuts) were offered to businesses, those businesses would invest their savings in the economy, resulting in prosperity, economic growth, and more jobs.

**Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution**—Abolished slavery.

**Truman Doctrine**—The Truman Doctrine was formulated in response to a potential communist takeover of Greece. In it, President Harry Truman pledged U.S. military support to any European nation attempting to fend off a communist takeover.

**trust**—A business organization in which several competitors consolidate into a single business entity for the purpose of increasing control of prices and availability of goods.

**unwritten Constitution**—Certain deeply ingrained aspects of our government which are not mentioned in the Constitution, such as political parties, political conventions, and Cabinet meetings.

**Viet Nam War**—War between Communist North Viet Nam and American-supported South Viet Nam. American involvement in the war resulted in great social unrest at home. Opposition to the war eventually forced the United States to abandon it, and soon after Viet Nam came under communist control.

**Voting Rights Act of 1965**—Federal law that increased government supervision of local election practices, suspended the use of literacy tests to prevent people (usually African Americans) from voting, and expanded government efforts to register voters. The Voting Rights Act of 1970 made permanent the ban on literacy tests.

**Wagner Act of 1935**—New Deal law that created the National Relations Board. The Wagner Act also recognized the right of labor to organize in unions and to negotiate contracts as a group.

**war on poverty**—Those programs of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society that were specifically aimed at assisting the poor were known collectively as the "war on poverty." Among these programs was Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Medicaid, and the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

**War Powers Act**—Law requiring the President to seek periodic approval from Congress for any substantial troop commitment. Passed in 1973 in response to national dissatisfaction over the Viet Nam War.

**Warren Court**—The Supreme Court during the era in which Earl Warren served as Chief Justice. The Warren Court is best remembered for expanding the rights of minorities and the rights of the accused.

**Washington, Booker T.**—African American agricultural scientist in the late 1800s. Founder of the Tuskegee Institute.

**Watergate**—The name of the apartment complex in which spies working for Richard Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign were caught breaking in to Democratic National Committee headquarters. The name "Watergate" soon became synonymous with a number of illegal activities undertaken by the Nixon White House. The resulting scandal forced Nixon to resign the presidency in 1974.

**welfare (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)**—New Deal program that provided federal funding to poor families with children. AFDC was revamped during the Clinton administration, with limits placed on how long a family could receive AFDC payments.