Chapter 31

A Dynamic Economy, A Divided People
1980–2000

Teaching Resources

Chapter Instructional Objectives

After you have taught this chapter, your students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What economic changes impacted the United States during the 1980s and 1990s, and how did the nation recover from economic stagnation?
2. In what ways did the United States take part in globalization during the 1990s? What did critics of globalization argue?
3. How did computer technology “revolutionize” the United States? Who benefited and who did not?
4. What is meant by the term “culture wars”?
5. How did gays and lesbians respond to major social changes taking place in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s?

Chapter Annotated Outline

I. America in the Global Economy and Society

   A. The Economic Challenge
      1. The 1980s began on a depressing economic note. Unemployment remained above seven percent and the cost of living continued to soar at a rate of eight percent a year. The nation experienced a sharp recession in 1981 and 1982—with nearly ten percent of the workforce without jobs.
      2. The economy quickly revived and turned the rest of decade into one of relative prosperity. The wealthiest fifth of Americans, the primary beneficiaries of President Reagan’s tax cuts and economic policies, did especially well. Many middle-class Americans also enjoyed a modest affluence, but the real wages of manufacturing and retail workers continued to stagnate.
      3. The fate of the poor was of little concern to the well-educated “baby boom” children who entered the labor force in the early 1980s. Many took high-paying jobs in the rapidly growing professional and technology sectors of the economy. These Young Urban Professionals—the Yuppies, as they were called—set the tone for a strikingly materialistic culture.
      4. Their example shaped the outlook of the next generation. Surveys reported that 80 percent of college students now placed a high value on individual economic success while only 40 percent gave importance to enlightened social values—an exact reversal of student attitudes during the 1960s.
      5. Until the 1970s the United States had been the world’s leading exporter of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and investment capital. Then American exports began to fall, undercut in world markets by cheaper and often better-designed products from Germany and Japan. By 1985, for the first time since 1915, the United States registered a negative balance of international payments. It now imported more goods than it exported, a trade deficit fueled by soaring imports of foreign oil, which increased between 1960 and 2000 from 2 to 12 million barrels per day.
      6. The rapid ascent of the Japanese economy to the second largest in the world was a key factor in this historic reversal. Japan’s Nikkei stock index tripled in value between 1965 and 1975, and then tripled
again by 1985. Now more than a third of the American annual trade deficit of $138 billion was with Japan.

8. While Japan and Germany prospered, American businesses grappled with a worrisome decline in productivity. Between 1973 and 1992, the productivity of American workers grew at the meager rate of one percent a year, a far cry from the post-WWII rate of three percent annually. The wages of most employees stagnated and the number of high-paying, union-protected manufacturing jobs shrank.

9. As middle-class families struggled to make ends meet, poor Americans just held their own. The number remained stable, at about 31 million, and despite the Reagan-era budget cuts, Americans entitled to Medicare, food stamps, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children received about the same level of benefits in 1990 that they had in 1980.

10. Challenging economic times accelerated changes already underway in family life and gender roles. As men’s wages stagnated during the 1970s, women increasingly sought paid employment—even though their pay averaged only about seventy percent of that paid to men.

11. Women entered male-dominated fields, such as medicine, law, skilled trades, law enforcement, and the military, but the majority still labored in traditional fields, such as teaching, nursing, and sales work. In fact, one in five women held a clerical or secretarial job, the same proportion as in 1950.

B. The Turn to Prosperity

1. Between 1985 and 1990 American corporate executives and workers learned how to compete against their German and Japanese rivals. As corporations fitted out their plants and offices with computers, robots, and other “smart” machines, the productivity of the workforce rose.

2. The stock market quickly reflected these initiatives, as ambitious and aggressive baby-boom brokers took control of Wall Street and government policy encouraged private investors.

3. The rise in stock values unleashed a wave of corporate mergers, as companies used stock to buy up competitors. As these deals multiplied, so too did the number of traders who profited illegally from insider knowledge.

4. The economic resurgence of the late 1980s did not restore America’s once dominant position in the international economy. The nation’s heavy industries—steel, autos, chemicals—continued to lose market share, both because of weak executive leadership and because of the relatively high wages paid to American workers.

5. During the 1990s the economy of the United States grew at the impressive average rate of three percent per year. Moreover, its main international competitors were now struggling.

6. During Bill Clinton’s two terms in the White House (1993–2001), the stock market value of American companies nearly tripled. This boom, which was fueled by the flow of funds into high-tech and e-commerce firms, enriched American citizens and their governments.

7. As was the case during the Reagan era, the prosperity of the Clinton years was not equally distributed. By 1998 the income of the wealthiest 13,000 families in the United States was greater than the poorest 20 million families.

8. A spectacular “bust” hit the over-inflated stock market in late 2000; within two years stock values fell about forty percent. Faced by falling tax revenues, state governments cut services to balance their budgets and the federal government again spent billions more than it collected.

C. Globalization

1. As Americans sought economic security, they recognized that their success depended in part on developments in the world economy.

2. During the final decades of the Cold War, the leading capitalist industrial nations formed the Group of Seven (or G-7) to discuss—and manage—global economic policy.

3. The G-7 nations—the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada, and France—largely controlled the activities of the major international financial organizations: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Taxes (GATT).

4. During the 1990s these organizations be-
came more inclusive. Russia joined the G-7, which became the Group of Eight, and in 1995 GATT evolved into the World Trade Organization (WTO), with nearly 150 member nations.

5. Working through the WTO, the promoters of freer global trade achieved many of their goals. They won reductions in tariff rates in many nations and removed many restrictions to the free international movement of capital investments (and profits).

6. Many agreements benefited the wealthier nations; in return, the industrial nations agreed to increase their imports of agricultural products, textiles, and raw materials from developing countries.

7. As globalization—the worldwide flow of capital, trade, and people—accelerated, so also did the integration of regional economies. In 1991 the nations of Western Europe created the European Union (EU) and began to move toward the creation of a single federal state.

8. Beginning as a free-trade zone, the EU subsequently promoted the free movement of its peoples among countries without passports and, in 2002, introduced a single currency, the Euro.

9. To offset the economic clout of the Euro-bloc, in 1993 the United States, Canada, and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This treaty, as ratified by the U.S. Congress, provided for the eventual creation of a free-trade zone covering all of North America.

10. The growing number of multinational business corporations testified to the extent of globalization. In 1970 there were 7,000 corporations with offices and factories in multiple countries; by 2000 the number had exploded to 63,000.

11. The intensification of globalization dealt another blow to the fragile position of organized labor in the United States. In the 1950s, 33 percent of non-farm American workers belonged to unions; by 1980 the number had fallen to 20 percent and President Reagan helped to push it still lower. Shortly after coming into office, he crushed a major union of public employees.

12. To take advantage of low-cost labor, many multinational corporations closed their factories in the United States and “outsourced” manufacturing jobs to plants in Mexico, Eastern Europe, and especially Asia.

13. As the world got smaller, certain dangers increased in magnitude. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) spread from Africa to the United States during the 1970s.

14. Within the United States, AIDS took thousands of lives—more than the number who died in the Korean and Vietnam Wars combined. Then, between 1995 and 1999, American deaths from HIV dropped 30 percent.

15. The expanding global economy also threatened the health of the world’s peoples by polluting the environment. In some countries, the rapid rise in the number of mines, factories, and power plants destroyed irreplaceable natural resources or rendered them unusable.

16. The industrialized nations also threatened the environment. As millions of cars and thousands of power plants in Europe and North America burned coal, oil, and other hydrocarbons, they raised the temperature of the atmosphere and the acidity of the oceans—with potentially momentous consequences.

17. These dangers prompted thousands of Americans to join environmental-protection organizations such as the Sierra Club and the Nature Conservatory. These groups and officials of the Environmental Protection Agency successfully curtailed some pollution.

18. The United States did support a few environmental initiatives. In 1987 the United States was one of thirty-four nations that signed the Montreal Protocol, which banned the production of ozone-damaging CFCs by 1999.

19. Critics see globalization as a new form of imperialism, whereby the industrialized nations exploit the peoples and natural resources of the rest of the world.

II. The New Technology

A. The Computer Revolution

1. Scientists devised the first computers for military purposes during World War II. Subsequently, the federal government funded computer research as part of the drive for American military superiority during the Cold War.

2. The first computers were cumbersome and finicky machines. They used heat-emitting vacuum tubes for computation power and punched cards for writing programs and analyzing data.

3. Progress continued at an unrelenting pace, as computer wizards devised smaller and more sophisticated chips. A great breakthrough came in 1971 with the development of the microprocessor, which placed the entire central processing unit (CPU) of a computer on a single silicon chip.

4. The day of the “personal computer” (or PC) had arrived. In 1977 the Apple Corporation offered a personal computer for $1,195 (about $3,300 today), a price middle-class Americans could afford.

5. In three decades, the computer had moved from a few military research centers to thousands of corporate offices and then to millions of people's homes. In the process, it created huge entrepreneurial opportunities and a host of overnight millionaires.

6. During the 1990s personal computers grew even more significant with the spread of the Internet (or World Wide Web). Like the computer itself, the Internet was the product of military-based research.

7. The debut of the graphics-based World Wide Web in 1991 enhanced the popular appeal and commercial possibilities of the Internet. By 2006 slightly more than one billion people worldwide used the Internet and nearly seventy percent of all Americans regularly went online.

8. Computers and the Internet transformed leisure as well as work. Millions of Americans took advantage of e-mail to stay in close touch with families and friends.

9. The Web empowered people by providing easy access to knowledge. For nearly two centuries, local public libraries had served that function; now, much of the content of a library was instantly available in a home or office.

10. Advances in electronic technology fostered the rapid creation of new leisure and business products. The 1980s saw the introduction of videocassette recorders (VCRs), compact disc (CD) players, cellular telephones, and inexpensive fax machines.

11. Like all new technologies, the computer-Internet-electronics revolution raised a host of social issues and legal conflicts. Many disputes involved the “pirating” of intellectual property though the illegal reproduction of a computer program or a content file.

12. Computers empowered scientists as well as citizens. Researchers in many scientific disciplines used powerful “supercomputers” to analyze complex natural and human phenomena ranging from economic forecasting to nuclear fusion to human genetics.

B. Technology and the Control of Popular Culture

1. Americans have reveled in mass consumer culture ever since the 1920s, when the spread of automobiles, electric appliances, movies, and radio enhanced the quality of everyday life and leisure.

2. During the 1970s new technological developments reshaped the television industry and the cultural landscape.

3. By the 1990s millions of viewers had access to dozens, sometimes hundreds, of specialized television channels. By 1998 such specialized programming had captured 53 percent of the prime-time TV audience.

4. As TV became more “stimulating” and “reality” oriented, critics argued that it negatively shaped people's outlook and actions. For evidence they cited violent television dramas, such as HBO's critically acclaimed series, The Sopranos, which interwove the personal lives of a Mafia family with the amoral and relentless violence of their business deals.

5. As the controversy over TV violence indicates, technology never operates in a social and political vacuum. The expansion of cable television and specialized programming stemmed in part from policies set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) during the Reagan administration.

6. Whatever the programming, the television stations that carried them were increasingly owned by a handful of large companies. In 1985 Congress raised the number
of television stations a company could own from seven to twelve. Subsequent regulations promoted even more concentration in media ownership; by 2003 one company owned eight radio stations and three television stations in a single city, in addition to a newspaper and a TV cable system.

7. Australian-born entrepreneur Rupert Murdoch stands as the exemplar of concentrated media ownership in the new global economy. As of 2004 Murdoch owned satellite TV companies in five countries and a worldwide total of 175 newspapers; in the United States his holdings included Direct TV, the Fox TV Network, the Twentieth Century Fox Studio, the New York Post, and thirty-five television stations.

III. Culture Wars
A. An Increasingly Pluralistic Society
1. According to the Census Bureau, the U.S. population grew from 203 million people in 1970 to 280 million in 2000 (and topped 300 million in 2006).
2. In the 1990s Latinos surpassed African Americans as the country's largest minority; their growing numbers have increased their significance as consumers and voters and have led advertisers and politicians alike to vie for their loyalty.
3. By 1992 there were over 9 million Asian immigrants and 16 million immigrants from Latin America in the United States.
4. These immigrants have had a tremendous impact on America's social, economic, and cultural landscape, producing thriving ethnic communities, ethnic restaurants, and specialized periodicals.
5. Based on present rates of immigration and births, demographers have predicted that by 2050 Americans of European descent will be a minority of the population.
6. Many Americans celebrated the nation's ethnic pluralism, while others viewed immigrants as scapegoats for all that was wrong with the United States.
7. The most dramatic challenges for immigrants have emerged at the state level.
8. In the 1980s California absorbed more immigrants than any other state; in 1994 voters there approved Proposition 187, which barred undocumented aliens from public services and required state workers to report suspected illegal immigrants to the INS.
9. In the cities, African Americans and the new immigrants were forced by economic necessity and segregation patterns to compete for space in decaying, crime-ridden ghettos.
10. The 1992 Los Angeles race riots were multiracial, which showed that the cleavages in urban neighborhoods went beyond a simple matter of black indignation and were class-based protests against the failure of the American system to address the needs of all poor people.
11. In 1995 the University of California voted to end affirmative action; in 2003 the Supreme Court upheld the principle of affirmative action in two cases involving the University of Michigan, but insisted that admissions' affirmative action policies be "narrowly tailored" to achieve racial diversity.
12. Lumping affirmative action together with multiculturalism, critics warned that all this counting by race, gender, sexual preference, and age would fragment American society.

B. Conflicting Values: Women's and Gay Rights
1. Conservative critics targeted the women's movement and held it responsible for every ill affecting modern women, although polls showed strong support for feminist demands.
2. Feminism was also weakened by racial and generational fault lines, with women of color feeling themselves to be tokens in a predominantly white movement and young women feeling the movement had become obsessed with women as passive victims, which resulted in a third wave of feminism.
3. The deep divide over abortion, one of the main issues associated with feminism, continued to polarize the country.
4. Harassment and violence toward those who sought or provided abortions became common; although only a fraction of antiabortionists supported violent acts, disruptive confrontational tactics made practicing their legal right dangerous for women.
5. Conservatives insisted that civil rights for gays were undeserved "special rights" that threatened America's traditional family values; across the nation "gay bashing" and other forms of violence against homosexuals continued.
6. As more gay men and women “came out of the closet” in the years after Stonewall, they formed groups that demanded a variety of protections and privileges. Defining themselves as a “minority” group, gays sought legislation that protected them from discrimination in housing, education, public accommodations, and employment.

7. The Religious Right had long condemned homosexuality as morally wrong and a major threat to the traditional family. Pat Robertson, North Carolina senator Jesse Helms, and other conservatives campaigned vigorously against antidiscrimination measures for gays. Their arguments that such laws amounted to undeserved “special rights” struck a responsive cord in Colorado.

8. In 1992 Colorado voters amended the state constitution to bar local jurisdictions from passing ordinances protecting gays and lesbians—a measure subsequently overturned as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

9. In 1998 Congress entered the fray by enacting the “Defense of Marriage” act, which allowed states to refuse to recognize gay marriages or civil unions formed in other jurisdictions.

Lecture Strategies

1. Write a lecture explaining the reasons why the United States experienced economic downturns in the 1980s and 1990s, only to see a return to prosperity in the late 1990s. What explains this economic transition?

2. Create a lecture that provides historical background for understanding how and why the computer revolution altered American society and culture. Draw connections to the modern computer industry to keep students interested in the major changes impacting the technology sector over the past twenty years. Steve Wozniak’s autobiography might be a helpful resource.

3. Compose a lecture explaining the protest movements orchestrated by the gay and lesbian community against homophobia in the 1980s and 1990s.

4. Write a lecture that sheds light on the recent history of immigration in the United States. Be sure to draw attention to both pro- and anti-immigrant arguments, as well as highlighting the major immigration waves over the past twenty years.

5. Examine the AIDS epidemic. Because AIDS was first seen as a gay disease, public-health authorities ignored its spread, but the AIDS-related deaths of prominent celebrities and the media-friendliness of AIDS activists focused public attention on the illness.

Reviewing the Text

These questions are from the textbook and follow each main section of the narrative. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

America in the Global Economy and Society (pp. 958–970)

1. What were the sources of the American economic recovery of the 1980s and 1990s? Who were its heroes, and what were its shortcomings?

   • Sources of recovery were fueled by the flow of funds into high-tech and e-commerce firms, the decline of Japan and Germany as major competitors, the recovery of the stock market, the rise of the technology sector, ambitious and aggressive baby-boom brokers who took control of Wall Street, and government policies that encouraged private investors.

   • Heroes of the recovery included Lee Iacocca for rescuing old industries and Donald Trump for creating new ones.

   • Shortcomings of the economic recovery included an inability to raise the living standards of the poor and failure to reverse the rising cost of energy production.

2. What factors promoted “globalization”?

   • The end of the Cold War shattered the political barriers that had restrained international trade and impeded capitalist development of vast areas of the world; new communication systems—satellites, fiber optic cables, global positioning networks—shrank the world to a degree unimaginable at the beginning of the twentieth century; and the major nations of the world, working through the WTO, promoted the idea of a freer global trade system.

3. Outline the arguments for and against globalization. Who is making these arguments? Why?

   • Pro: Western European and American governments and large corporations promote free trade for its ability to reduce tariff rates and remove many restrictions to the free international
movement of capital investments, making more profits for those who own industry. Many agreements benefited the wealthier nations; in return, the industrial nations agreed to increase their imports of agricultural products, textiles, and raw materials from developing countries. Thanks to such measures, the value of American imports and exports rose.
• Anti: Unions and environmental special interest groups view globalization as a negative force because of the increase of free trade networks that impoverish workers around the world through lower wages, outsource jobs by allowing companies through NAFTA to relocate to foreign countries like Mexico to take advantage of lax labor laws, and contribute to global pollution through the increase of industrialization.

The New Technology (pp. 970–975)
1. What are the most important aspects of the computer revolution? What are the social consequences of this changing technology?
• Some important aspects are the use of computers by the federal government for military purposes during World War II, the invention of the microchip in the early 1970s, the creation of the first personal home computer in 1971, and the creation of the Internet in the 1990s.
• Social consequences include wider dispersal of knowledge to more groups of people, the increase of personal home computers across the country, the use of computers in military and government service, the protection of intellectual property and privacy, the rise of the digital divide, the use of computers by the government to fight terrorism at home and abroad, the increase of employment opportunities, and new social opportunities as a result of the Internet.

2. How is the computer revolution related to globalization?
• The computer revolution helped to increase globalization by bringing people together for work and recreational purposes, allowing people from all cultures and classes to interact in “cyber” space.

3. How did the television industry change after 1980? Why does it matter?
• During the 1970s new technological developments reshaped the television industry and the cultural landscape. The advent of cable and satellite broadcasting brought more specialized networks and programs into American living rooms, and people could get news round-the-clock. By the 1990s millions of viewers had access to dozens, sometimes hundreds, of specialized channels. Television stations became owned by fewer and fewer companies.
• As TV became more “stimulating” and “reality” oriented, critics argued that it negatively shaped people’s outlook and actions. As the controversy over TV violence indicates, technology never operates in a social and political vacuum. TV newscasts increasingly shunned serious coverage of political and economic events and focused on the lurid; the distinction between news and entertainment became blurred.
• Whatever the programming, the television stations that carried the new shows were increasingly owned by a handful of large companies that helped to homogenize the political messages sent to audiences through advertising and television programming.

Culture Wars (pp. 975–984)
1. Who were the new immigrants? What were the sources of hostility to them?
• The new immigrants included mostly people from Latin America, particularly Mexico; and Asia, particularly China, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Korea.
• Hostility grew from critics—mostly native-born white Anglo-Saxon Protestants—who charged that the new immigrants were part of a giant wave of people who would assimilate slowly, endanger the environment, and become a drain on social services—burdening the government with millions of dollars in costs for schools and welfare programs, depressing wages for all workers, and raising crime rates.

2. How do you account for the cultural conflict over issues relating to women and homosexuals? Who are the sides in this conflict?
• Feminism and gay rights became part of the civil and human rights movements of the countercultural 1960s. As the demand for rights increased it created a major cultural conflict that addressed the traditional role of marriage and sexuality within American culture, the universal applicability of the issue of sexual orientation, the empowerment of women, and the state of American families. The conflict was elevated to a national level by politicians using it as a moral compass to gain public office.
• The culture wars in general pitted religious conservatives against secular liberals, but also divided women based on moralistic interpretations of political issues.

Chapter Writing Assignments

These questions appear at the end of Chapter 31 in the textbook. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

1. In what ways did the new technology affect the American economy? What was its relation to globalization?
• The new technology made the use of computers integral to American business and society. Their widespread use created an entire economic sector of software, hardware, and dot.com industries.
• Advances in electronic technology fostered the rapid creation of new leisure and business products, increasing personal employments and recreational opportunities for individuals.
• Computers empowered scientists as well as citizens. Researchers in many scientific disciplines used powerful "supercomputers" to analyze complex natural and human phenomena that led to new inventions in the American economy.
• As fewer companies owned a larger share of the technology industry, owners like Rupert Murdoch used his conservative influence to shape how technology delivered political messages to the American viewers.
• As the use of computers increased worldwide, corporations and their employers were no longer regional. People who were unable to connect in a physical space connected in cyber space, resulting in the phenomena of globalization.

2. What was the outcome of the various cultural wars of the 1980s and 1990s?
• The outcome of the various culture wars included increasing divisions in American society based on moralistic views of political issues, the rise of the Christian Right as a political power in Congress, the Republican Party's increase of power in Congress, the rise of the lesbian and gay movements, the increase in hate crimes, and the rise of multiculturalism.

Class Discussion Starters

1. How did American society recover economically during the 1980s and 1990s?
   Possible answers
   a. There was an increase in investment funds into high-tech and e-commerce firms.
   b. Japan and Germany were no longer major competitors.
   c. The stock market recovered.
   d. The technology sector rose.
   e. Ambitious and aggressive baby-boom brokers took control of Wall Street and government policy and encouraged private investors.

2. What factors promoted "globalization"?
   Possible answers
   a. The end of the Cold War shattered the political barriers that had restrained international trade.
   b. The end of the Cold War removed impediments to capitalist development of vast areas of the world.
   c. The rise of new communication systems—satellites, fiber-optic cables, global positioning networks—shrank the world to a degree unimaginable at the beginning of the twenty-first century.
   d. The economically dominant nations of the world through the WTO promoted the idea of a freer global trade system.

3. Who criticized globalization, and what did critics argue about the movement?
   Possible answers
   a. Unions and environmental special interest groups viewed globalization as a negative force for its increase of free-trade networks that impoverished workers around the world through lower wages.
   b. The outsourcing of jobs and the rise of domestic unemployment was the result of allowing companies through NAFTA to relocate to foreign countries like Mexico to take advantage of lax labor and environmental laws.
   c. Critics believed, and still do, that the increase of free trade through globalization increases global pollution through the increase of industrialization.
4. How did gays and lesbians respond to the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s?

Possible answers

a. They increased efforts to achieve social equality through marriage laws and other social justice issues of equal rights with heterosexuals.

b. They attempted to educate a homophobic American society by infusing gay and lesbian issues into mainstream American culture through the media, particularly television.

c. Efforts were made to increase awareness of AIDS as a worldwide, non-gay issue.

d. They entered American politics to achieve a social rights revolution through law making.

5. What has been the impact of the computer revolution on American society?

Possible answers

a. Firms have been able to cut back on white-collar employment.

b. Communication has become more rapid and efficient.

c. The shape of American industry has been reconfigured by the rapid and successful growth of the computer industry.

d. Business operations have been transformed by computer-controlled transactions.

Classroom Activity

1. This is most likely the first or second chapter in which students will make a personal connection because the events occurred during their lifetime. Create an assignment based on the birthday of the students in class. Ask each student to select either their date of birth (a year most likely between 1983 and 1989) or their tenth birthday (or fifteenth, whichever makes more sense based on the ages of students in your class). Students should then examine a microfilm collection of any newspaper and copy the front page corresponding to their birthday. Ask students to bring their photocopied material into class for a general discussion. During class discussion, draw the students’ attention to the themes and events presented in each newspaper. This assignment could also work as a research paper.

Oral History Exercise

• An oral history assignment about the 1980s and 1990s provides a rare opportunity for students to interview their parents or a family friend in-depth, most likely for the first time. During class, have students brainstorm to create a list of themes from this time period, about which they can question their relatives. For example, the students can ask their parents how computer technology has impacted their lives at work and home. Students can also pursue issues related to the “cultural wars,” since most Americans participated in one way or another in these ongoing debates. Or have students ask their parents comparative questions, such as “How did the 1980s differ from the 1990s?” The main point here is for students to make a personal connection between family history and the larger historical forces shaping the American people over the past twenty years. This assignment could also be tailored for a research paper.

Working with Documents

COMPARING AMERICAN VOICES

Cheap Labor: Immigration and Globalization (p. 978)

1. Describe the experiences of the workers as related in their statements. What generalizations can you make about the impact of immigration on wages? On the relations among ethnic groups in the United States?

• Workers related their difficult working conditions, low pay, lack of support services, ethnic antagonisms with owners, and the importance of unions in shaping working conditions.

• New immigrant groups take jobs unwanted by more assimilated and established immigrants, enabling employers to exploit new immigrants through low wages. As a result, the pay is lowered in certain industries that rely exclusively on new immigrant labor, like the garment industry.

• The relations between ethnic groups in the United States as discussed in the documents is characterized by economic competition fed by capitalist efforts to pit one group against the other in order to lower wages for workers in general. Unions served to bind workers together across ethnic lines.
2. How does “globalization,” a major focus of this chapter, affect the lives of these workers? Provide some specific examples from the documents that show its impact.

- For these workers, globalization initially offered better opportunities, but ultimately causes instability and hardship. Globalization enabled workers such as Petra Mata to and Mr. Chen to enter the United States as immigrants and be employed in American factories earning good wages. But with the rise of the free market during globalization, Ms. Mata lost her factory job when the company that employed her moved their manufacturing operations to overseas locations. Similarly, Mr. Chen suggests that it is becoming more difficult for him to find work in the United States, since garment factories can find cheaper labor overseas.

3. What role would these workers like the federal government to play? According to the discussion in this chapter, what is American policy with respect to globalization?

- Workers would like the federal government to intervene to force capitalist owners to provide a living wage for immigrant workers. They would also like the federal government to include workers in major decisions that affect their lives. American policy regarding globalization was to allow free trade to increase to assist corporations at the expense of the working class in nations across the globe.

4. Consider the questions raised in the introduction: Who benefits from immigration, legal or illegal? How does it affect working conditions? Is there a cost, and who pays it?

- The entire nation benefits from both legal and illegal immigration through the labor and taxes provided by new people coming into the nation. New immigrants are often exploited by capitalist owners, who pay them low wages and have little regard for the overall working conditions. Because immigrants often do not voice their concerns over working conditions in a new and unfamiliar nation, owners take advantage of them by failing to provide a living wage, giving rise to immigrant crime and the use of social services paid for by the American taxpayer.

VOICES FROM ABROAD

Janet Daley: A U.S. Epidemic (p. 981)

1. According to Daley, why is violence so widespread in the United States? How convincing is her analysis?

- She convincingly argues that violence is widespread because of the Second Amendment to the Constitution, the ad hoc settlement of diverse and competing social groups in the context of minimal government regulation and interference, and the conformity and intolerance of American life.

2. Does Daley’s argument provide insight into the rape of the Central Park jogger?

- In a loose way, Daley argues that the rape case is not tied to the social background of the assailants, as the media contended, but in reality the perverse character of a serial rapist whose actions were typical of a violent and loosely governed American society.

3. What are we to make of Daley’s conclusion, given the bombing of the London subway system in 2005 by four Muslim youths, three of whom were born in England of Pakistani descent?

- The individuals who bombed the subways were not from wealthy families, but were young, politically motivated men who wished to stop British invasion of Islamic countries in the post–September 11 world. Her conclusion that violence would not spread to Britain because its history diverges from the United States is apparently inaccurate, since the Muslim men were from privileged backgrounds and felt ethnically alienated from racist British society.

Reading American Pictures

The Abortion Debate Hits the Streets (p. 985)

1. Describe the people marching in the street. Who is protesting on the sidewalk? What does the composition of the two groups say about the abortion controversy?

- Both pro- and antiabortion protesters appear to be young, white, middle class, and predominately women. These identifying factors illustrate that the abortion issue of the 1990s was a younger, female, middle-class issue polarizing American politics.
2. Next, look at how the police are positioned. From what you’ve read in the narrative, why might this type of police deployment be necessary?

- Abortion protests, except for the bombing of abortion clinics, was relatively peaceful. However, some right-to-life organizations targeted medical clinics and doctor’s offices for protest, and even committed violence against nurses and other health-care professionals.

3. Finally, look at the signs both groups are holding. What messages do they convey? How do the slogans frame the debate? What principles do they invoke?

- The antiabortion protesters argue that patients at the clinic were forced to get an abortion and that pro-life is the most important religious and political stance to take on the issue.
- The proabortion protesters emphasize the constitutional right of women to choose whether or not to act on a state-supported abortion right. Because it is a woman’s own body, she has the legal right to an abortion, a right that supersedes any others’ religious or moral authority.

4. Abortion was a significant political issue in the mid-nineteenth century, when many states first outlawed the practice, and again in the 1960s, when five states repealed antiabortion laws and eleven others reformed their legislation. Since the late 1970s, abortion has become an important issue in national politics and often divides Democrats and Republicans. From what you’ve read in the text and see in this picture, how can you explain the political importance of this issue?

- The rise of the civil rights and countercultural movements in the 1960s suggested that it was no longer the responsibility of the state to reinforce moral or religious orthodoxy at the expense of minority rights. Instead, minority or individual rights would trump majority rule, elevating the importance of the abortion issue in American politics and society.
- The rise of women’s rights as a national movement in the 1960s and 1970s brought issues impacting women onto the national political agenda. As tensions over religion, the media, and private rights escalated in the 1970s and 1980s, women became the focal point of modern culture wars because of their role as conveyors of the traditional values of family life.

Electronic Media

Web Sites

- The Age of AIDS
  http://www.pbs.org/wgbb/pages/frontline/aids/
  Created by PBS program Frontline, this site provides a historical overview of the course of the AIDS epidemic.
- New Americans
  http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/
  This PBS site provides commentary on the recent history of immigration in the United States.

Films

- Before Stonewall (1984, Frameline, 120 minutes)
  This documentary helped to elevate the gay and lesbian movement in American politics and culture.
- Wag the Dog (1997, New Line Cinema, 120 minutes)
  Directed by Barry Levinson and starring Robert DeNiro and Dustin Hoffman, the film is a parody of modern American politics.

Literature

- Steve Wozniak, From Computer Geek to Cult Icon (New York: Norton, 2006)
  The cofounder of Apple Computer, Wozniak explains the personal and societal impact of the computer revolution.
  Written by a gay ghostwriter, Falwell’s autobiography illuminates the Christian Right’s stance on feminist and gay issues in the modern period.

Additional Bedford/St. Martin’s Resources for Chapter 31

FOR INSTRUCTORS

Transparencies

The following maps and images from Chapter 31 are available as full-color acetates:
• www.TimBerners-Lee
• Map 31.1 Growth of the European Community, 1951–2005
• Map 31.2 Hispanic and Asian Populations, 2000
• Divided Women, Divided Public: Protesting in Washington, D.C., 2004

**Instructor's Resource CD-ROM**

The following maps, figures, and images from Chapter 31, as well as a chapter outline, are available on disc in both PowerPoint and jpeg formats:

• Map 31.1 Growth of the European Community, 1951–2005
• Map 31.2 Hispanic and Asian Populations, 2000
• Figure 31.1 Productivity, Family Income, and Wages, 1970–2004
• Figure 31.2 The Increase in Two-Worker Families
• Figure 31.3 Boom and Bust in the Stock Market
• Figure 31.4 American Immigration, 1920–2000
• www.TimBerners-Lee
• Divided Women, Divided Public: Protesting in Washington, D.C.

**FOR STUDENTS**

**Documents to Accompany America's History**

The following documents and illustrations are available in Chapter 31 of the companion reader by Kevin J. Fernlund, *University of Missouri- St. Louis*:

5. Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (1993)
7. U.S. Census Bureau, On Women-Owned Businesses (1996)

**Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/henretta**

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the text as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. The following visual and documents activities are available for Chapter 31:

**Visual Activity**

• Reading American Pictures: The Abortion Debate Hits the Streets

**Reading Historical Documents Activities**

• Comparing American Voices: Cheap Labor: Immigration and Globalization
• Voices from Abroad: Janet Daley: A U.S. Epidemic