

## Changes in the New Century



**SS.912.A.7.12** Analyze political, economic, and social concerns that emerged at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century.

**Vocabulary Builder:** **involve** (in VOLV) *v.* to include or cause to participate; **access** (AK seh) *n.* a means of getting or using

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### Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe

In 1989, reform movements spread across Eastern Europe. One by one, Communist governments fell. In November, after the fall of East Germany's Communist government, the gates of the Berlin Wall were finally opened. People could travel between East and West Berlin for the first time in nearly 30 years. This cleared the way for East and West Germany to reunite as a single country. In the Soviet Union, some leaders in the Communist party made a final attempt to maintain Communist rule. They tried to overthrow Gorbachev in 1991. Although they failed, Gorbachev soon resigned. By the end of 1991, the Soviet republics separated into 15 independent nations. The Soviet Union ceased to exist. The fall of communism led to the rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia, which was made up of six republics. In 1991, the republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. The republics of Macedonia and Bosnia soon became independent, too. By 1992, the republics of Montenegro and Serbia were the only remaining republics in Yugoslavia. In 2003, Yugoslavia was renamed Serbia and Montenegro. In 2006, Serbia and Montenegro each became independent countries.

### New Goals and Policies

The end of the Cold War brought changes to American foreign policy. The United States began to put more emphasis on providing foreign and humanitarian aid and on protecting human rights. However, the end of the Cold War did not lead to a new era of peace, as many Americans had hoped. The United States continued to be involved in conflicts in other parts of the world. The most significant and longest involvement has been in Iraq.

### Terrorism and Violence

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, showed Americans that they, too, are vulnerable to terrorism. This attack changed the way Americans view their security, the way they travel, and the way they view the world. Security screening has become commonplace at airports, government buildings, even at some public events. In spite of these precautions, Americans today feel less certain of their safety even within the borders of the United States.

## Changes in the New Century (continued)

### Communication and Information Technology

Technology and media have undergone a true revolution in the past 30 years. Today's Americans have unique access to communication and information, not only in the realm of business but also for individual consumers. Even those who live in rural areas, once handicapped by their location, can have the same up-to-the-minute information and constant communication capabilities as city dwellers. Any American can be exposed to global viewpoints and information. The tools that made these advances possible can be found in many American households: cellular phones, personal computers, satellite or cable TV, and Internet access. The advent of 24-hour news channels, such as CNN, began the information revolution that was made even more widespread by the World Wide Web. The Web became a tool for the general public in the 1990s. Its capabilities gave rise to e-mail, instant messaging, and social networking sites, changing communication forever.

One of the most widely used outcomes of communication technology takes workers out of the office and students out of the classroom. The telecommuting boom has allowed workers across the country to do some or all of their work from the comfort of their homes. They are still able to function effectively thanks to the Internet, intranets—secure company Internet sites—and connectivity tools such as handheld devices that work as phones, cameras, Web browsers, and e-message tools. In addition, many high school and college students have the option of taking entire courses on the Internet. Distance learning reduces hardship for commuter students and adult students trying to juggle school, work, and family.

**Check for Understanding** How has the accessibility to improved technology and communications affected American culture?

## The Global Economy



**SS.912.A.7.14** Review the role of the United States as a participant in the global economy (trade agreements, international competition, impact on American labor, environmental concerns).

**Vocabulary Builder:** *vary* (VAIR ee) *v.* to be different; *available* (uh VEY luh buhl) *adj.* ready for use

*Trade* is the exchange of goods and services. In today's global economy, trade occurs in markets worldwide.

### Reasons for International Trade

- **To obtain goods and services that a region cannot produce or cannot produce efficiently:** States and nations trade because resources vary from region to region. No region has the resources to produce everything its citizens want or need. Resources that are available in one country or region may allow some goods and services to be produced more efficiently, or more easily, than in other countries or regions. As a result, regions specialize. *Specialization* means focusing resources on producing a limited variety of goods and services. States and countries specialize in producing what their resources are best suited to produce. They trade with other states and countries for the products they cannot produce as efficiently.
- **To provide goods and services at a lower cost or a lower opportunity cost:** Specialization results in lower production costs and therefore in lower prices. Competition from foreign companies also forces domestic companies (companies here in the United States) to become more efficient (productive). Greater efficiency results in lower prices for consumers.
- **To sell goods and services to other countries:** International trade expands the markets for goods from Florida and the United States. Larger markets mean more opportunity to sell goods and services. Greater sales bring companies more profit.
- **To create jobs:** When international trade brings more profit, companies expand to produce more goods and services to meet the worldwide demand. The need to expand production creates jobs for workers.

### Technology and Trade

*Technology* is the use of science to advance, or improve, business or industry. Advances in technology lower the costs of production. Technology also contributes to the global flow of information, capital, goods, and services.

### Trade Agreements

President Bill Clinton believed that both the security and the prosperity of the United States could be served by promoting free trade. Free trade means removing barriers to trade between countries. These barriers include tariffs, or taxes on imports. President George H.W. Bush had already proposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but it had not gone into effect when he left office. It called for the gradual removal of trade barriers among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. NAFTA supporters thought that it would lead to economic growth and would reduce prices. Its opponents worried that American manufacturing jobs would be moved to Mexico, and thousands of American jobs would be lost. Although many of his fellow Democrats opposed it, Clinton vigorously supported NAFTA, and the trade agreement went into effect in 1994.

## The Global Economy (continued)

### Outsourcing

The globalization of business by outsourcing and offshoring connects the communication revolution to the global economy. Outsourcing means to subcontract a process to another company. Offshoring involves moving a business process from one country to another. Both of these techniques have gained popularity in recent years. They are seen as a way to maximize production and cut costs. For example, a company may operate a customer service center or have technical computer work done in a country such as India, where costs are lower. Manufacturing work may be sent to countries such as China and South Korea. Opponents argue that these practices take jobs away from Americans. Nevertheless, the trend has continued. As many technical jobs make their way overseas, more Americans are working in service industries. These include areas such as law, banking, education, government, retail, and social services. These activities involve people providing a service, rather than an actual product. Service industries are considered less likely to be subject to offshoring.

### Environmental Concerns

Environmental concerns can affect the cost of production in the United States and in other countries. Regulations to protect endangered species can make production more expensive in geographic regions impacted by environmental regulations. In addition, global warming has become an international issue as some countries have taken steps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Those nations and industries that try to reduce these emissions are sometimes at a disadvantage economically compared to nations that disregard environmental concerns.

**Check for Understanding** What are some possible positive outcomes to the outsourcing trend?

## The Attacks of September 11

**FL SS.912.A.7.15** Analyze the effects of foreign and domestic terrorism on the American people.

**Vocabulary Builder:** **shift** (shift) *n.* a change in position or direction; **stabilize** (STAY buh lah-yz) *v.* to make more solid or secure

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### "9/11"

George W. Bush, the son of George H.W. Bush, became President in 2001. He had been in office less than a year when terrorists struck. Shortly before 9:00 a.m. on September 11, 2001, a hijacked commercial airliner slammed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Within an hour and a half, three more airplanes had crashed. The Pentagon was in flames, and the World Trade Center soon collapsed. More than 3,000 lives were lost. The attack came to be known as "9/11," and it was the first attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor. A generation of Americans whose parents had said to them, "I remember where I was when Kennedy was shot" would now say to their children, "I remember where I was when the planes hit the towers."

### Effect on Foreign Policy

The 9/11 attacks led to a major **shift** in American foreign policy. President Bush began to focus on making the United States more secure. He called this the "war on terrorism." American officials soon learned that the al Qaeda network, led by Osama bin Laden, was behind the attacks. Al Qaeda was an Islamic fundamentalist group that had already attacked two American embassies and an American naval ship. Bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders were hiding in Afghanistan, which was controlled by the Taliban, another Islamic fundamentalist group. The Taliban allowed al Qaeda to run terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over the terrorists, but it refused. In response, the United States and some of its allies attacked Afghanistan. They overthrew the Taliban and captured several al Qaeda leaders. However, bin Laden himself was not captured.

Bush then turned his attention to Iraq. Many officials believed that Saddam Hussein, Iraq's dictator, was producing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). These were nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons that could kill on a large scale. Bush saw Saddam Hussein as a threat to American and world security. In 2003, American and British forces invaded Iraq. Saddam Hussein was captured and later executed. However, no WMDs were ever found. After Saddam was overthrown, fighting broke out among different groups in Iraq. American troops stayed in Iraq to try to **stabilize** the country while it established a democratic government.

**Check for Understanding** How did the attacks on September 11, 2001, cause a major shift in American foreign policy?

## Terrorism and its Effects on Foreign Policy

**FL SS.912.A.7.15** Analyze the effects of foreign and domestic terrorism on the American people.

**Vocabulary Builder:** **compel** (kuhm PEHL) *v.* to force someone to do something

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### The Patriot Act

Although terrorist groups had been a concern of the U.S. government for quite some time, the events of September 11, 2001, caused a new urgency in the fight against terrorism. Soon after the attacks, Congress passed the USA Patriot Act. The full name of the act gives some clue as to its purpose: *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism*. This act, together with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, is aimed at fighting terrorism within the United States. It gives law enforcement more authority in monitoring suspected terrorists. This includes intercepting communications of any kind and relaxed surveillance requirements. The Patriot Act also makes it easier to detain or deport aliens suspected of terrorist activity. Opponents of the act claim that it infringes on citizens' civil liberties and is too easily abused by law enforcement. Supporters believe that the act is necessary to keep the country safe.

### Terrorism Abroad

The post-9/11 terrorism initiative does not rest on apprehending terrorists who enter the country. President George W. Bush went on the offensive after the attacks. In his State of the Union Address in January 2002, he said of the terrorists operating across the globe, "These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are." In addition to military action by the U.S. against Afghanistan and Iraq (where terrorist groups are known to operate), the war on terror includes diplomatic initiatives. The U.S. actively seeks the support of its traditional allies, such as Great Britain. It also seeks the support of countries in the Middle East and elsewhere that are friendly to the American cause. In addition, the government has put pressure on foreign governments that harbor terrorists. The U.S., UN, and European Union have levied sanctions against nations that are considered to pose a terrorist threat, such as Iran and Libya. The hope is that nations that harbor terrorists will be compelled to expel them or halt their activities.

**Check for Understanding** Why would the U.S. respond to terrorists by initiating actions both in this country and abroad?

## Immigration

**FL SS.912.A.7.16** Examine changes in immigration policy and attitudes toward immigration since 1950.

### Vocabulary Builder: field (feeld) *n.* a type of job

Persons from different countries continue to immigrate to the United States. While in past eras immigrants tended to come from Europe, in recent times many immigrants have come from Latin American and Asian countries. Like immigrants of the past, those of today are most often seeking political freedom and economic opportunity.

Americans continue to debate which immigration policies the government should follow. The table below shows some of the questions the government has to consider.

IMMIGRATION	
Question	Issues
How does immigration affect the economy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrants contribute to the labor force. In some <b>fields</b>, like science and engineering, immigrants have expanded the number of people in the United States capable of working in those industries.</li> <li>Immigrants who lack higher education often end up in low-paying jobs. Because many of these immigrants are willing to work for less money than native-born Americans, the costs of the goods and services they produce can become more affordable. However, native-born Americans can lose out on jobs they may have otherwise been able to get.</li> </ul>
How does immigration affect government spending?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigration can strain government services. Public schools and welfare services have to serve more people when the population increases. Communities that offer bilingual education have to spend additional money to provide this service.</li> <li>Enforcement of immigration laws costs money. Patrolling the Mexican and Canadian borders, investigating people who have stayed in the United States past the time they are legally allowed to, and hearing deportation cases in courts all require the government to spend tax dollars.</li> </ul>
How does immigration affect society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrants contribute to the cultural diversity of American society. Cultural diversity is reflected in music, art, and literature.</li> </ul>

Current immigration law, passed in 1990, sets the number of immigrants who may move to the United States each year. Nearly everyone who is allowed to enter the country as an immigrant can become a citizen of the United States. Generally, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a part of the Department of Homeland Security, investigates immigrants who want to become citizens. They then report their findings to a judge, who decides if the immigrant should become a citizen. If approved, the immigrant takes an oath or affirmation of citizenship.

**Check for Understanding** Why do immigrants continue to be such an important part of the U.S. population?

