

Into the 21st century: the United States

The last two decades of the 20th century saw significant changes within the United States. The focus of leaders shifted from the Cold War to working within an increasingly multi-centered world. The period was marked by significant technological changes ranging from the introduction and growth of cell phones, personal computers, and the formation and transformation of the Internet from part of the defense industry and scientific community to a commercial World Wide Web. The 1980s and 1990s saw challenges in the areas of health, with the AIDS epidemic, and the environment with acid rain, ozone layer depletion, and an increasing awareness of global climate change. The concept of globalization came to the forefront as the impact of communication technologies increased the flow of information and capital across international boundaries. Popular culture evolved across the diverse geographical regions of the United States. New cable channels such as CNN, ESPN, and MTV challenged to primacy of the big three networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC. The video-cassette and the Compact Disc (CD) began to change the way Americans enjoyed entertainment at home. New trends in music included “hip hop” and “grunge,” while self-help books and suspense thrillers were among bestselling books. Films in the 1980s included the Cold War themed *Rocky IV* and *Red Dawn* and in the 1990s Clint Eastwood’s western, *Unforgiven*, and the James Cameron blockbuster *Titanic*. Singer and actress Madonna became a cultural symbol in, and of, the 1980s, combining showmanship, artistry, assertiveness, sexuality and materialism. In sports, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, and Michael Jordan made professional basketball a popular sport, and in the closing years of the 1990s, teenage sisters Venus and Serena Williams re-popularized tennis in the United States. It was indeed a busy 20 years.

Technology

Technological evolution and revolution drove many, but not all of the social and cultural changes of the latter part of the 20th century. Developments in technology changed the way people in the United States worked, communicated with each other and entertained themselves. It also influenced the way entertainment was created and introduced new terms into the vocabulary. Areas worthy of examination are the personal computer, the Internet, and the mobile phone. These two devices and a newly available network system changed the way most people worked and communicated. Because of this, ideas, products and creative arts from around the nation and world were able to come into homes and change the way the world was understood.

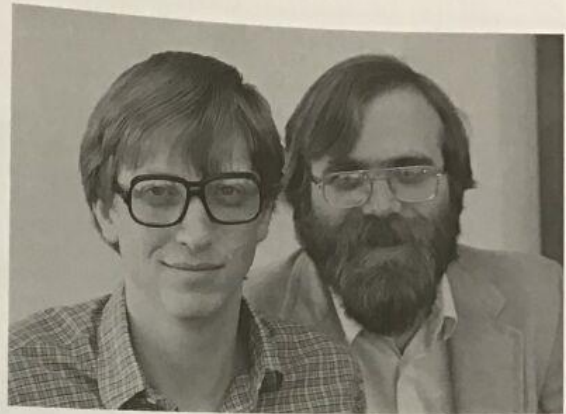


In the 1960s and 1970s the mainframe computer was the image most Americans had of the computer.

The computer

The computer had been used in government, universities, and industry for decades. The idea of the mainframe computer was familiar to most people, even though how a computer worked, or what it was used for, beyond a general sense, was not commonly understood. It was when the computer became small enough to sit on a desk and consumers did not have to know how it worked to use it (much like television sets or automobiles) that personal computers became fixtures in offices and homes. The combination of the physical downsizing of the computer to desk size along with user-friendly software made the personal computer almost as commonplace as the television by 2000. During the 1960s and 1970s, various microcomputers—a term that would be replaced by the phrase personal computer (PC)—were invented. Manufacturers such as Hewlett-Packard and Micro Instrumentation and Telemetry Systems (MITS) produced machines. The MITS Altair (1975) featured a programming language called BASIC, the precise Altair Basic was written and licensed by future Microsoft founders, Paul Allen and Bill Gates. The computer sold in kits, at a cost of only \$400, but were mainly purchased by enthusiasts. Its functions were still quite limited. The next year brought the Apple I, followed a year later by the Apple II and the Tandy Radio Shack TRS-80, each new development bringing greater capability to do what is now called word processing as well as to play games. The greater capabilities of these machines helped bring more computers into homes. The TRS required no prior knowledge of computers to use, and it sold 10,000 units in the first month.

1981 was an important year for the PC. IBM brought out its first desktop model, the appropriately named IBM PC, and the first portable computer was manufactured by the Osborne Computer Corporation. Osborne 1 weighed only 24 pounds. Soon KayPro brought out a portable computer as well. All the computers offered a



Microsoft founders Bill Gates and Paul Allen were all smiles in 1983 just after delivering MS-DOS for the Tandy laptop and signing a contract to write MS-DOS for IBM

Activity

Analyzing advertising

Go to youtube.com and search 1984 Macintosh Commercial. Watch the advertisement.

- 1 What is the message of the advertisement?
- 2 Who or what does the on-screen face and voice symbolize?
- 3 Who is the gray audience supposed to be?
- 4 Understanding US culture: For what reasons was the advertisement broadcast during the Super Bowl game?

Bill Gates (1955–)

Bill Gates grew up in Seattle, Washington. He entered Harvard University as a freshman in 1973. Gates wrote software while at college. In 1975 he formed Micro-soft (later Microsoft) with Paul Allen and left Harvard in his junior year to develop the company. Their stated goal was to have a personal computer on every office desk and in every home. Microsoft grew to become the leader in operating systems and office productivity software used on personal computers, including Windows and Microsoft Office for business and home. With Microsoft's success, Gates became one of the world's wealthiest people, dedicating much of his multibillion fortune to charitable works, both within the United States and abroad.





Steve Jobs (left) and Steve Wozniak, co-founders of Apple Computer Inc, at the first West Coast Computer Faire, April 16–17, 1977.

full array of business software: spreadsheet, database, and word processing. In 1984, the Apple Macintosh, debuting at \$2,495, half the \$4,997 base price of the “econobox” Chevrolet Chevette or the \$5,249 standard two-door Honda Civic, was introduced by an advertisement broadcast only once, during the Super Bowl football championship game. The “Mac” was the first personal computer to come with “What You See Is What You Get” (WYSIWYG) graphics. The first Microsoft graphical interface was released in 1985, but was limited in capability compared to the Macintosh. The graphical interface made the computer significantly more useable for many computer-illiterate consumers. The evolution of personal computer capability and an increase in affordability shows in the number of PCs in use. In 1981, just over two million were on desks in the United States. In 1985 the number was 25 million, but the growth rate slowed to a doubling by 1990 (54 million PCs). By 2000, there were 161 million personal computers in use in the United States. Computers were in businesses, factories, schools, and homes. Millions of children were exposed to word processing through programs such as Apple Writer and learned about westward expansion by playing *Oregon Trail*. In the office people used WordPerfect or WordStar. Accountants could create financial spreadsheets with Lotus 123 and sales managers kept track of clients with dBase III+. Programs that were considered vital to the industry and drove users to purchase the supporting hardware or software necessary for the programs to run became known as “killer applications.” The growth in personal computers brought an entire industry with it: software. Not only were there business applications, but software was created for drawing, music, design, photography (to manipulate scanned photographs) and thousands of games. In the first two decades, the focus seemed to be a dual focus on the physical PC (hardware) and programs (software).

Discussion point

To what extent did the computer revolution differ in its effects on society from the impact of other inventions? What other technological innovations have had significant impact on the way people live?



Why do some advances in technology have greater impact than others?

The rise of the PC industry produced an economic bonanza for many. Microsoft and Apple are two famous examples of successful companies. Others include Adobe, Lotus (both founded in 1982), and Borland, which started the following year. Collectively, because so many of the companies were located in Santa Clara County, California, and the main ingredient of the computer chip was silicon, the area became known as Silicon Valley. The era also saw the rise and fall of many companies. An example is Ashton-Tate, the creator of dBase, considered a killer application when first released but failing by 1991, when it was bought out by Borland after a lifespan of 11 years. Many people became extremely wealthy: Bill Gates and Steve Jobs were two of the most famous billionaires.

A number of issues grew along with computer sales. By 1990, a rivalry had developed between the IBM PC hardware (and clones) with its MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System), and the Apple Macintosh machine and operating platform. Files produced by a DOS-based computer and a Macintosh could not be read or shared cross-platform. Even if conversion was possible, to the average computer user, the compatibility issues forced companies and home users to decide on one or the other. Loyalties developed along with marketing strategies. Consumers used to electronic devices such as televisions and phonographs had difficulty understanding why they were supposed to buy upgrades to computers and software that they'd just spent thousands of dollars acquiring and months learning how to use. Even as capabilities and speed advanced, many consumers used their home computers to keep their accounts, write letters, do school work and play games. To keep sales rising, hardware companies produced more attractive and more **capable machines** and software companies created more advanced versions of programs, along with new capabilities altogether, including the original Photoshop, released for Macintosh in 1990.

The Internet

The expansion of the PC was not only due to improvements in hardware and software, but to a communications network that had developed from the early 1970s into a system that eventually connected users all over the world through the World Wide Web. The network, ARPANET, that became the Internet, started as a connection between 19 computers in 1969. It expanded quickly in the 1970s. A satellite link to Europe expanded the system beyond the United States. During the 1980s, the system grew into 200,000 host computers and email addresses. An email program called Eudora, that made sending and receiving email simpler, came to be used by thousands of advanced computer users. The new users

Steve Jobs (1955-) and Steve Wozniak (1950-)



Steve Jobs, the cofounder of Apple Computers with Steve Wozniak, was born the same year as Bill Gates. While in high school in California, Jobs and Wozniak worked as summer employees at Hewlett-Packard, the electronics giant. After college, Jobs and Wozniak got together and formed Apple Computer, with Wozniak as the designer-engineer and Jobs working the business-marketing side of the partnership. Together, the two employed prior inventions, such as the mouse, to develop a user-friendly computer. The Macintosh, known to most people as a "Mac," became a leader in innovative personal computer design. The computer and software became a favorite of creative artists. Apple became known in later years for the iPod, a portable digital music player released in 2001 that became so popular that its name now stands in for any pocket-sized mp3 player.

Computer capability Moore's Law, attributed to Gordon Moore, predicted that the rate of computer processor (chip) capability (the processing speed) would double every two years. Not only did processing speeds increase but computer memory did, too. This enabled increasingly complex software that could perform more elaborate tasks. More storage meant larger files could be produced, including graphics.

connected to the Internet through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) by using a **modem** to dial the ISP and then the modem, with a sequence of beeps and hisses, would negotiate a connection. This allowed home and business computer users to communicate and transfer files via **FTP**, often through programs such as Fetch, a Macintosh program that featured a simple graphic of a dog running as a file was downloaded. At this stage, the user had to know where to go to get the files as there were no search engines. Early adapters signed up with “bulletin boards” where those interested in a particular field could post messages and files. Hundreds of usernet groups, usually open associations of online contributors with common interests, ranging from hobbies to history and mathematics to literature, also found vast numbers of users. The Internet was becoming more than a way to connect and communicate with others—it was becoming cyberspace.

In the early 1990s, the World Wide Web was added to the Internet. ISPs such as Prodigy, America Online (AOL) and MSN made accessing the Web easier. AOL, with its famous email client greeting, “You’ve got mail,” was among the first of a series of ISPs that provided dedicated software to make connecting and using the Internet simple for the new computer user. The AOL platform became so well-known that it featured in the movie of the same name, *You’ve Got Mail* (1998). Other Internet films from the 1990s included *Hackers* (1993) and *The Net* (1995). The growth of the impact of the Internet is illustrated by the fact that in 1990 the mainstream US media are recorded as using the word “Internet” only 346 times. In 1995 there were 71,000 mentions, and in 1999 over half a million.

The development of the browser made the Internet easier to use. The first widely used browser was Mosaic, developed by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. It allowed the ordinary computer user to access the World Wide Web without needing to know computer commands or learn a specific ISP’s interface. The browser let the user subscribe to any ISP, creating room in the ever-widening market. The browser used a language called hypertext markup language (html). HTML enabled web designers, often amateurs, to create web pages that featured both text and graphics. The creative presentation of information became increasingly important. As more information came to be presented on a given page, connection speed became increasingly critical to Internet use. While many large businesses, research facilities, government agencies, and educational institutions acquired broadband (high speed) connections, most home users and small businesses still used dial-up ISPs. Modem connection speeds went from 2,400 to 56,000 **bits** per second, a 25-fold increase in a few short years. Internet use rose to 19 million by 1997 in the United States. The multiplying number and complexity of websites seemed to demand ever-increasing bandwidth. By 2001, there were more than a billion online documents. In 2001, over three million new pages and almost three-quarters of a million images were added every day. But a revealing statistic from 2000 showed that while a full two-thirds of people in the United States used the Internet, only one in 20 had

A **modem** is a modulator-demodulator—a device that transmits and receives digital data from and to a computer.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP), a standard Internet protocol, is the simplest way to exchange files between computers on the Internet. Like the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which transfers web pages and related files, and the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP), which transfers e-mail, FTP is an application protocol that uses the Internet’s TCP/IP protocols. FTP sites are also commonly used to download programs and other files to your computer from other servers.

Activity

Infrastructures

Research the expansion of previous technologies and supporting/enabling infrastructures: Telegraph and telephone, railroad, electric light, road transport. Can you identify a relationship between government and industry? Compare another country in the Americas to the United States in the development and expansion of three technologies, including the computer (Internet).

A **bit** is one piece of binary information: either a 1 or a 0.



Why did the use of the Internet expand so quickly?

their own broadband connection, a lower share than a number of other nations. By 2002, the figure had reached 10%, but was less than that of several European nations and paled in comparison with South Korea, where one-in-two users had a high-speed connection. Broadband subscriptions per capita led to a similar conclusion: in the same year the United States had 6.9 subscriptions per hundred people, Belgium 8, Canada 11.7 and South Korea 21.4.

A study undertaken by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) found that two-thirds of the population of the United States had Internet access, 76% of those used email daily, and just upwards of half of Internet users had made an online purchase. In 2000, e-commerce totaled \$150 billion, up from just \$2 billion three years earlier. In fact, a quarter of Internet shoppers bought online once a month. The search engines Magellan, Exite, Lycos, AltaVista and Ask Jeeves, all Google predecessors, started to take the place of directories. The study also revealed that children enjoyed the World Wide Web to such a degree that they were denied access as punishment. The Web intruded on time spent watching television, as Web users reported 25% less viewing time. Spending time on the World Wide Web had become a commonplace activity in less than a decade.

The flurry of Web activity spawned the **dot-com** bubble. Beginning with the **IPO** of Netscape in 1995, investors saw Internet and tech companies as good investments with the potential for high yields. The peak years of 1998–2000 saw billions of dollars invested in new offerings, creating a speculative bubble. In 1998, the average first day increase in share value on a dot-com IPO was 22%. In 1999, the first day increase averaged 71%, meaning that a dollar in company value at the beginning of the day was worth \$1.71 several hours later. The bubble burst on March 10, 2000. In two years, the NASDAQ index fell from 5133 to 1114 (a 78% drop). Hundreds of companies failed and thousands of investors lost fortunes.

The amazing growth of the Internet and increasing public reliance on it for information and commerce led to issues around access. Would those without access to the Internet, either due to geography or income, be denied the educational, commercial, and informational opportunities that the rest of the United States already took for granted? Education, income, race, and geographic location were all factors. The UCLA study found that people with a college degree were almost three times as likely to use the Internet as those without a high school diploma. The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration found that individuals with household incomes of less than \$25,000 a year used the Internet at a rate less than half of those above \$50,000. Nevertheless, between 1997 and 2001 the percentage of computer and Internet users with family incomes below \$15,000 grew from 9% to 25%. The large differential in Internet use is often what is called the Digital Divide. The study also showed that Internet use increased in all racial classifications at faster rates for Hispanics and African Americans than for whites, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. Significant differences in computer availability and Internet use remained at the beginning of the new millennium.

TOK Link

Search engines

How do search engines direct knowledge acquisition?

- 1 Choose five terms (may be multiple words) to search.
- 2 Enter the terms into at least three different search engines.
- 3 Record the top ten results of each search engine. Analyze the results in terms of consistency and direction.
- 4 Go to search results #101–10. Assess the similarities and differences in the results when compared to #1–10.
- 5 How do search engines direct knowledge?

Dot-com refers to the ".com" affix to web addresses for businesses and corporations.

An Initial Public Offering (IPO) is when a private company first offers shares to the public. It is used as a way to acquire capital for research, expansion, etc.

Activity

The Digital divide

The following documents relate to the alleged disparity in the availability of computer technology between different racial and socioeconomic groups in the United States in the 1990s.

Source A

Internet use among Hispanics differs considerably depending on whether Spanish is the only language spoken in the household, which is the case for about one in nine of Hispanic households. In September 2001, 14.1 percent of Hispanics who lived in households where Spanish was the only language spoken used the Internet. In contrast, 37.6 percent of Hispanics who lived in households where Spanish was not the only language spoken used the Internet.

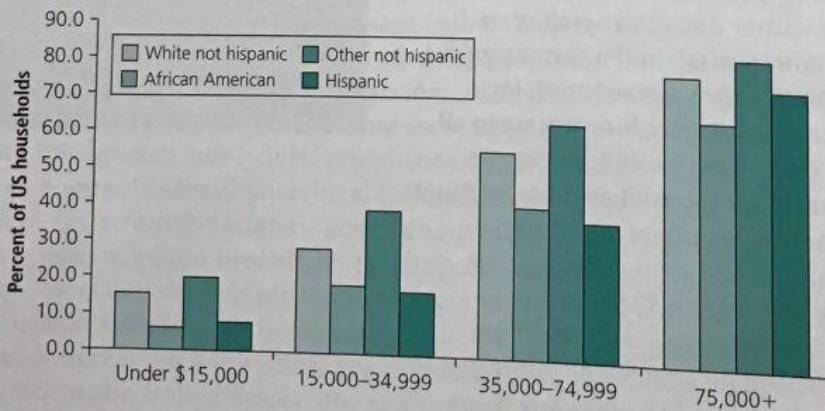
Source: The National Telecommunications and Information Administration report: "Falling Through the Net II: Data on the Digital Divide." <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/net2/falling.html>.

Source B

Then there are times when the digital divide looks unfathomably deep. The phrase has become mired in the blurry realm of cliché, applied variously to women, the disabled, seniors, ethnic minorities, rural and inner-city populations. But the underlying threat is real. Technology has moved so fast that a new upper class—composed largely of the same white, affluent, college-educated males that made up the old upper class—has spurred ahead of the rest of society, mostly because they have the time and money necessary to acquire and understand the tools of the digital revolution.

Source: Taylor, Chris et al. "Digital Divide." *Time*, December 4, 2000. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,998678,00.html>.

Source C



Percentage of US households with a computer by income, race or origin.

Source: "Falling Through the Net II: Data on the Digital Divide."

National Telecommunication and Information Administration.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/net2/Image13.gif>.



Source D

The gap between high- and low-income Americans is increasing. In the last year, the divide between those at the highest and lowest income levels grew 29%. Households with incomes of \$75,000 or higher are more than *twenty times* more likely to have access to the Internet than those at the lowest income levels, and more than *nine times* as likely to have a computer at home.

Whites more likely to be connected than African-Americans or Hispanics. The digital divide is also persistent and growing along racial and ethnic lines. Whites are more likely to have access to the Internet from home than African-Americans or Hispanics have from *any* location. African-American and Hispanic households are roughly *two-fifths* as likely to have home Internet access as white households. The gaps between white and Hispanic households, and between white and African-American households, are now more than six percentage points larger than they were in 1994. However, for incomes of \$75,000 and higher, the divide between whites and African-Americans has narrowed considerably in the last year.

Source: "From Digital Divide to Digital Opportunity: The Importance of Bridging the Digital Divide." From President Bill Clinton's White House Web site.
<http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/New/digitaldivide/digital3.html>

Questions

- 1 What evidence is there in source D that there is a digital divide?
- 2 What is the message of source B?
- 3 What are the similarities and differences between sources C and D?
- 4 What are the values and limitations of sources A and B for historians researching access to computer technology in the 1990s?
- 5 Using the documents and your own knowledge, assess the severity of the digital divide in the 1990s.

The cell phone

Another important advance in technology and communication was the cell phone. The first available cell phone was the Motorola DynaTAC 8000, launched in 1983. The phone was priced at \$3,995 and talk time was a maximum of one hour for the 13-inch long "brick." Cell phones were the province of the wealthy, but by 1985 there were some 340,000 cell phone subscribers in the United States. As cell phones grew smaller and less expensive, subscriptions increased to just over five million in 1990. Ten years later, more than 100 million of 281 million Americans used cell phones.

Aside from the rapid growth, spurred on by telecommunications companies such as Sprint, Cingular, AT&T and many more, the cell phone changed the nature of communication. Until its use became commonplace, a phone call was placed from one permanent location to a second permanent location. Essentially, one called a phone, not a person. The cell phone reversed the dynamic: a call was placed to a person, regardless of where the person was. Mobile phones enabled people to be just that—mobile. Business could be conducted almost any place, friends were available when they were not at home or work. Socially, the cell phone caused letters to be

Activity

Globalization and the mobile phone

Cell phones may have changed the way people in developed nations communicate.

What has been the impact of people living in less developed countries in both rural and urban areas?

written to newspapers about etiquette. When was it okay to talk on the phone? In a restaurant? At a bus stop? Being available more of the time was sometimes a positive, but it became more difficult to ignore a call.

The computer, the Internet, and the cell phone were not the only technological advances in the last two decades of the 20th century. Integrated circuits (chips) became commonplace in automobiles, household appliances, even toys. The Sony Walkman first accompanied **early adapters** in 1981, making music both portable and personal. The video cassette recorder (VCR) could be found connected to television sets, freeing viewers from the time constraints of network broadcast schedules and providing the movie industry with an entirely new way of distributing films. The compact disc (CD) replaced the vinyl long-playing (LP) record album, provoking arguments over sound quality and issues of copyright infringement. Unlike audio cassettes' analog degradation, CD "burners" made exact copies of digitized music; it was impossible to tell a copy from the original. DVDs appeared at the end of the 1990s, doing for video what the CD had done for audio. Millions of homes had several, if not all, of the VCRs, CD players, DVD players, internet-connected computers, and computerized game units, in living rooms, family rooms and bedrooms. Many of the manufacturers of the new electronic products were Japanese (for example, Sony), and South Korean (Samsung), supplanting or buying US companies such as RCA, Zenith and Motorola. By 2000, many devices that had not been invented or affordable for common use decades earlier were a part of the everyday life of the average consumer.

The effects of globalization on the United States

Many discussions of globalization involve consideration of the impact of US governmental policies and corporations on economies, environments, and peoples, in lesser developed countries (LDCs). Since the Second World War, the United States has generally pursued a policy of trade liberalization, allowing for expanding markets for American goods around the world. As the world's largest economy during the 1980s and 1990s, the dollar was the world's currency, involved in most of the major international trade and financial transactions around the globe. The United States promoted increased trade (to many observers, mainly on its own terms), and exported products from Coca Cola to garbage. It follows that the people and businesses of the United States were the major beneficiaries of the increased economic activity. A number of factors, however, test the validity of this assumption.

This section turns the gaze around and examines the effect of globalization on the United States. A number of factors influenced the growing awareness of globalization, even if the term was unfamiliar. Increased trade volume and new goods from new places



Photo shows the comparative size of a Sony Walkman cassette player and a pack of cigarettes. The Walkman was among the first of many Japanese electronics products to dominate the US market in the 1980s. Coincidentally, as portable-personal music players expanded in popularity, cigarette sales declined.

The term **early adopter** came to mean people who first used new technologies, whether the technologies were hardware (computers, cell phones, DVD players) or software (browsers, image processing, gaming).

Discussion point

The format war over the video cassette is similar to the format battle between HD and Blu-Ray. Why do consumers and manufacturers seem to settle on one format rather than welcoming a variety?

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations. It is a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.

Globalization101.org

landed on store shelves. Manufacturing jobs dropped in important sectors such as steel and automobiles at the same time imports of the same products became increasingly familiar. It seemed that more languages were spoken on the streets of US towns and cities as immigrants arrived from Latin America, East Asia, southwest Asia, the Caribbean, and the Horn of Africa. Unfamiliar clothing, food, music, and ideas arrived with the million new people each year. By 2000, one in ten residents was of foreign birth—and most of them were not of European ancestry. The globalization process of interaction and integration was visibly taking place in communities across the country, and the process was accelerating, partially due to advances in technology, including the Internet.

Positive effects

Globalization resulted in a number of positive outcomes in the United States. During the period of increased globalization, the number of jobs in the United States increased, as did GDP. In the last quarter of the 20th century, employment for college-educated women and men increased 400%. The 1980s and 1990s brought significant and almost continuous economic growth. Consumers benefitted enormously from the sheer variety of imports. Economists Christian Broda and David Weinstein argue that Americans underestimate the economic gains from increased foreign trade. They argue that the economy experienced a net gain of \$260 billion from 1972 to 2001 due to the increase in the variety of products available in the United States. During those same years, the quantity of different kinds of imported products more than doubled, and the total variety of products grew from 75,000 to 259,000. It follows that, for consumers, greater choice leads to many benefits. The gains are higher quality, lower price, and the expansion of choices from new fruits and vegetables, to clothing, washing machines and automobiles. Essentially, most people in the United States experienced a higher standard of living due, in part, to accelerated globalization. In addition, people in the US had greater access to new forms of music, art, and literature. For example, the documentary, *The Buena Vista Social Club* (Dir. Wim Wenders, 1999), a film about a group of Cuban musicians from the 1950s and 1960s who reunited, made \$7 million in the first six months of its release in the United States, exposing US audiences to a new sound from only 90 miles south of Florida. The cultural landscape of the United States in 2000 would have been quite different without the products and cultural contributions from around the world.

Globalization's downside

The overall good economic times of the Reagan and Clinton years was not good for everyone in the United States. Many view those years in which globalization accelerated, as symptomatic of an economic, political, and cultural decline for the nation as a whole. Opposition to globalization came from both the political right and the political left. To many US citizens, the increased interaction with the companies, institutions, and people of different countries signaled the decline of their country. Several factors contributed to this view.

Activity

Class debate

Is globalization good or bad?

- 1 Divide into groups by topic: economics, environment, religion, health, conflict and any additional topics the class would like to discuss.
- 2 Each group researches their chosen topic for different countries from the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Europe. There should be as many countries as group members.
- 3 As a class, discuss the benefits and disadvantages of globalization for each topic and decide whether globalization is, on balance, beneficial or harmful.

7 • Into the 21st century, 1980–2000

The increase in global trade and the accelerating shift of capital that allowed for multinational corporations opening new factories an ocean away from the factory that was closing, caused significant worker dislocation, especially among well-paid blue collar workers. Factory workers in the **Rust Belt** lost their jobs as Japan, Korea and other nations exported steel and automobiles that had previously been made in places like Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and Detroit, Michigan. US automobile companies had produced half of the world's cars in 1960; by 1994 the figure was 25%. Garment factories in the south closed as clothing manufacturing moved to Mexico and Malaysia. Nike opened a shoe factory in Vietnam in 1995. As a share of the total labor force, manufacturing jobs fell by more than a third from 1980 to 2000. Even white collar jobs were exported to countries such as India. As it became easier for corporations to make products in places with lower wages and fewer governmental regulations, to sell in more affluent markets, the **comparative advantage** of the United States in manufacturing and agriculture was declining. Government officials watched as the trade deficit grew from a few billion dollars and 0.7% of GDP in 1980 to approximately \$400 billion or 3.6% of GDP in 2000. It seemed that, economically, the United States was losing its world power status. Interestingly, people on both ends of the political spectrum saw downsides in the evolving world system. Unions, environmentalists, isolationists, small businesses, among others felt that the increasing power of multinational corporations and international financial institutions was causing a decline in the political and economic status of the ordinary citizen, as well as the degradation of the environment. The willingness to embrace globalization worked against the interests of many workers and communities in the United States and overseas. The opposition resulted in a variety of protests exemplified by massive protests against the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle, Washington, in 1999.

The **Rust Belt** is the region of the United States near the Great Lakes. Once known as the industrial heartland, factories producing steel, automobiles, and other goods once dominated the economies of the states of Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, but beginning in the 1970s and accelerating into the 1980s, they shut down and the chained shut, rusting gates became the symbol of the region.

Comparative advantage is the ability of one country to produce a specific product at a lower cost than another country.

Additionally, especially in the latter years of the Clinton administration, the United States saw many other nations challenging its global political position. Conservatives, including Patrick Buchanan, claimed that the United States was losing national sovereignty to international institutions such as the International Criminal Court and the United Nations. Leading up to the 2000 Republican primary election campaign, Buchanan said: "This then is a millennial struggle that succeeds the Cold War: It is the struggle of patriots of every nation against a world government where all nations yield up their sovereignty and fade away." Others, including an organization called the Project for a New American Century, wrote of the necessity of US leadership in the century to come. In their view, the United States could not relinquish its 20th-century hegemony. The decline of US power would mean the decline of the United States itself and an increase in crises around the world. They saw Clinton's internationalist foreign policy as furthering that decline.



Protest march against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) through Capitol Hill, Seattle, before talks begin, November 27, 1999.

The results of globalization

Economically and politically, globalization had mixed results in the United States. The 1980s and 1990s did see the decline of manufacturing jobs. As presidents Bush and Clinton moved to embrace international coalitions and organizations, the economy continued to grow. Job growth continued in the United States even as the manufacturing sector declined. As economist Russell Roberts reported, the proportion of manufacturing jobs as a part of the economy had fallen steadily since the Second World War. In the ensuing 55 years, the manufacturing output rose at a slightly faster rate than the rest of the economy. He argues that a more educated workforce requiring the use of more technologically advanced machinery caused the decline in manufacturing employment—not globalization itself. Still, the shifts in employment sectors caused dislocation and forced many to move or accept a lower standard of living. Job retraining was encouraged, but for middle-aged workers going to school was a challenge. It was also difficult to anticipate what job sectors held the most potential in a quickly shifting economy. The 1990s saw the United States working with international coalitions to solve problems. Solutions to environmental problems, in particular, became more international with the approved Montreal Protocol regarding ozone depletion in the 1980s and the unratified Kyoto Treaty concerning climate change in the 1990s. By 2000, the impact of the many aspects of globalization was still a hotly debated topic.

Activity

Change or continuity?

Research the practice of protectionism by the United States government in earlier historical periods. How similar or different was the reaction of groups such as labor to international trade in the late 20th century compared to earlier times?

As a variation on the above, you could research the prevalence of protectionism in a country of your choice in the Americas. How have various interest groups reacted to international economic pressures?

New concerns in health and the environment

The last 20 years of the century brought new concerns in both healthcare and the environment. The two decades in this case study began with President Reagan, who removed solar panels from the roof of the White House, and ended with the close defeat in the presidential election of 2000 of sitting vice president Al Gore, author of the 1992 best seller *The Earth in Balance*. But, to view environmental concerns through the lens of the White House is to minimize the sheer quantity of issues. In a country as geographically diverse as the United States the environmental issues were both local and national. Logging of old-growth forests provoked confrontations in the Pacific northwest and brought legislative action concerning forests in Alaska. Pollution of land and water by toxic chemicals in areas with unexplained high incidences of cancer and other detrimental health conditions brought headlines in local and nationally influential papers, and were popularized by films such as *Erin Brockovich* (2000, Dir. Steven Soderbergh). Studies showed that some pesticides used in agriculture caused illness in consumers and agricultural workers. Concerns regarding water quality were many. On the East Coast, watermen, recreational boaters, and environmentalists watched and worked for solutions as the Chesapeake Bay was contaminated by nutrients from agricultural run-off and sewage. Ocean fisheries suffered from over-fishing. Safe drinking water was a concern in cities across the country, leading to national legislation. Water shortages in the arid southwest led to debates about water allocation between farmers, the residents of fast-growing cities, industry, and environmentalists. Even the beaches of

Long Island brought fears of a spoiled ecosystem when medical waste washed up on the sands. Air pollution, often a local concern of smoggy automobile-dominated cities such as Los Angeles in California and industrial municipalities such as Gary in Indiana, garnered national attention. The location of high levels of pollutants and concerns over the effectiveness of government regulation enforcement caused some activists to level charges of environmental racism. Lead from gasoline was deemed a health hazard and acid rain that was the result of the burning of sulfur-rich fossil fuels damaged not only watersheds in Canada and the northeastern United States, but also caused building damage, including pitting the monuments on the National Mall in Washington DC. Awareness of a quickly growing “ozone hole” above the Antarctic followed by growing concern of the effect of greenhouse gasses on the global climate added to the plethora of environmental issues that confronted the United States during the two decades.

Health concerns

During the 1980s and 1990s, life spans of the average person in the United States increased. In fact, most health indicators showed improved health for Americans. Deaths from heart disease declined by 50%, and smoking fell by a quarter. Many recent technological advances including coronary stents, improved arthroscopy, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and Lasik eye surgery improved the daily lives of those who could take advantage of the medical advances. But, not for all: these and other expensive treatments were not available to the millions who could not afford them. While most people had health insurance through their employer or the programs of Medicare and Medicaid, the proportion of the population with no health coverage persisted just above 15%. The reliance of the majority of people on employer-supplied or supplemented health insurance was a concern as insurance premiums rose, increasing the financial burden on employers or on employees when the costs were passed onto them. The coverage concerns resulted in the effort by the Clinton administration to attempt comprehensive healthcare reform. Other health concerns that challenged the United States included the rise of eating disorders, both overeating and under-eating, reflected in the rising rates of obesity and anorexia. Food health became an important topic of discussion. Two concerns that caused public alarm, and gained massive media attention, connecting social issues to health issues were the rise in cocaine use and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The AIDS crisis

On July 3, 1981, the *New York Times* carried a story about 41 men who had been diagnosed with a strange disease that left eight of them dead within two years. The men exhibited a rare form of skin cancer and soon became ill from several other diseases. The men were homosexuals, and as the number of victims of this malady grew, AIDS was thought to be limited to homosexual men. It even acquired the moniker GRID (gay-related immune deficiency). In September 1982, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) named the illness Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Intravenous drug users also came down with AIDS. This combination

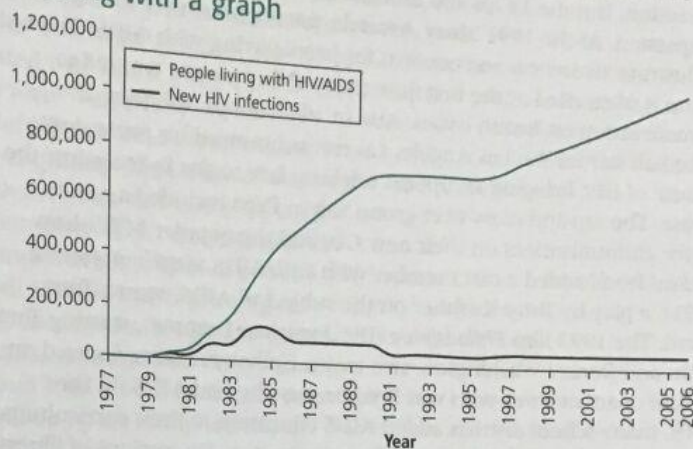
of victims contributed to making the public discussion of AIDS taboo. The death of the movie legend Rock Hudson from AIDS and a famous photograph of Elizabeth Taylor holding a gaunt Hudson's hand helped promote public discussion and action. Another AIDS case, 13-year-old Ryan White, provoked a strong reaction. White, a hemophiliac, contracted AIDS through a transfusion. When his school found out, he was banned from campus, but in time a court ordered the school to allow him to attend. Classmates made fun of him, but Ryan White helped change common perception of the disease.

By the time of Hudson's death and White's diagnosis, more than 10,000 people had died of AIDS in the United States. The number of deaths per year increased during the 1980s from 130 in 1981 to 51,000 in 1994. In 1993, AIDS was the leading cause of death for men aged 25–44, reaching a quarter of all deaths for that age group. AIDS rates among minority groups increased in the early 1990s: it accounted for a third of deaths of African American men (in the same age group) and 22% of African American women—the most affected groups in the United States. 1996 brought the introduction of anti-retroviral drugs and death rates plummeted. The phrase "People living with HIV/AIDS" became commonplace. 1996 marked the year that **HIV/AIDS** changed from being thought of as a death sentence to being a manageable disease, albeit with many side effects and great expense in healthcare provision.

The disease was a taboo subject throughout most of the 1980s and those with AIDS carried a stigma, often invoking fear and discriminatory treatment. For example, a 1990 survey of primary care physicians showed that a third felt no duty to treat someone with HIV/AIDS. Some well-known religious leaders called AIDS a punishment for sin. Jerry Falwell, the founder of the Moral Majority, said that AIDS was not only a punishment to homosexuals, but also a punishment to societies that tolerate homosexuality. Some African American activists, seeing the increasing occurrence of HIV/AIDS in their communities, discussed the possibility that AIDS was a creation of the United States Government. In 1992, film director Spike Lee wrote an essay that appeared in *Rolling Stone* magazine, stating his belief that AIDS was a "government-engineered disease" designed to kill "gays and minorities." A 1993

Activity

Working with a graph



The graph above is from the Centers for Disease Control. It details the prevalence of HIV infections and the number of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/images/infections-1g.jpg>

Questions

- 1 What does the solid blue line stand for?
- 2 When did people living with HIV/AIDS cross the 600,000 mark?
- 3 What was the peak year for new infections? Why?
- 4 Using your own knowledge and the graph, for what reasons did the number of people living with HIV/AIDS continue to rise from 1994–90, when new infections declined?

HIV is the retrovirus that causes the disease AIDS. AIDS is the disease caused by HIV.

survey revealed that one-third of African Americans agreed with that conclusion. But the 1990s also brought a shift among many people to compassion. At the 1991 **Tony Awards**, participants wore red ribbons to illustrate awareness and concern for people living with AIDS. The red ribbon is often cited as the first time that public pressure worked to promote action on health issues. Also in 1991, Magic Johnson, a basketball star for the Los Angeles Lakers, announced his retirement because of HIV, bringing an upbeat celebrity face to the fight against the disease. The rap and cross-over group Salt 'n Pepa included a public service announcement on their new CD, and the popular MTV show *The Real World* added a cast member with HIV/AIDS. *Angels in America* (1991), a play by Tony Kushner on the subject of AIDS, won a Tony Award. The 1993 film *Philadelphia* (Dir. Jonathan Demme), starring Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington, two major Hollywood stars, focused on the case of an attorney who was fired because he had AIDS. In the 1990s, many school districts added AIDS education to their curriculums, often invoking heated debate within communities. Discussions of illness and sexuality became more open and homosexuality appeared to gain greater acceptance, as evidenced by the popular television show *Will and Grace* broadcast on NBC 1998–2006.

HIV/AIDS did not stop at the end of the 1990s. By then, many nations around the world were affected to a much greater degree than the United States. During the Clinton administration, an important part of foreign policy was foreign aid directed towards several African nations. HIV continued to infect tens of thousands of people each year in the United States at the beginning of the new century, while thousands living with AIDS died.

The cocaine epidemic

The cocaine and crack cocaine epidemic of the late 1970s and the 1980s was the most visible of the illegal drug crisis. By the middle of the 1980s crack cocaine was linked to a rise in sexually transmitted diseases, increased violence, especially in the inner-city, and safety problems caused by drug use in the workplace. Cocaine use and drug-related violence became nightly stories on evening news broadcasts, including the new cable news channel, CNN.

Activity

Does music affect behavior?

Listen to a recording of "Cocaine Blues" by T. J. Amall. Johnny Cash recorded a version in 1968 in his album *At Folsom Prison*, as did George Thorogood.

- 1 What are the messages of the song?
- 2 Other songs that talk about cocaine, including "Casey Jones" by the Grateful Dead, can be interpreted as warning of the dangers of drugs. To what extent are popular songs an effective means to get people to change their behavior?
- 3 In a broader sense, to what extent does popular culture change or reflect, society?

Tony Awards Annual awards for the theatrical productions in the US.

Activity

Ethics and public health

A 1990 survey of African American church-attendees in five cities revealed that a third believed that AIDS was an artificial disease. Why might some Americans have suspected that HIV/AIDS was a government conspiracy? Research the Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1930–72), and its impact on African American perceptions of public healthcare conspiracies.

During the 1970s, cocaine use among the wealthy and the upper middle class rose. Cocaine was expensive and word-of-mouth spread the view that it was not addictive. (People had forgotten the cocaine epidemic that began a century before in the United States.) Use among the wealthy and college educated rose in the early 1980s, with persistent use peaking in 1983. There were indications of addiction problems as emergency room admissions for cocaine increased in the first years of the decade. Usage dropped quickly thereafter as stories of friends and co-workers emptying bank accounts and losing their jobs circulated. Comedian George Carlin remarked that, "Cocaine is God's way of telling you that you have too much money." Use of cocaine among high school graduates rose until 1985 before beginning to decline, but among the least educated, cocaine use (originally quite low in comparison to the aforementioned groups), rose slowly until surpassing college graduates in 1990 and high school graduates two years later. At its peak, cocaine users made up an estimated 5% of people aged 19–50.

The rise in cocaine use among the poor and less educated came with a dramatic drop in price. A new form of cocaine, crack—a rock that was smoked rather than a powder usually ingested through the nose—brought the price to \$5 a dose in New York City. Nevertheless, the first reported consumers of the new form of cocaine were the same upper-class cocaine users. It was after the low price created a demand for larger markets for cocaine that the use of crack spread significantly. Most reports record crack spreading quickly into poorer neighborhoods with large minority populations in the mid-1980s. As cocaine entered city neighborhoods, and left the privacy of living rooms and businesses, its use became more visible. Violence accompanied the new markets as gangs competed for turf, shooting and sometimes killing rivals. Between 1987 and 1989 firearm fatalities among black males increased by 71%. Unlike crimes linked with heroin in earlier decades, in which junkies committed robberies to get money to support their addiction, the majority of cocaine-related homicides were committed by dealers protecting or trying to increase their sales in "turf wars." As the shootings escalated, so did news coverage. The increase in crack cocaine and violence also occurred at the same time as a rise in sexually transmitted disease and an increase in babies born exposed to illegal drugs in the womb. Furthermore, the epidemic gave rise to an increase in incarceration rates for African American men. In the late 1980s, many people in the United States saw cocaine use as a significant problem worthy of government intervention.

The federal government responded with increased action by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The DEA also funded state and local task forces. The Comprehensive Crime Control Act (1984) included a provision that allowed the seizure of assets. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act provided \$8 million specifically for cocaine enforcement. The First Lady, Nancy Reagan, began her "Just Say, 'No,'" campaign. Many private groups formed to fight drug use. Among the best known was the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Numerous news broadcasts featured stories and schools included cocaine in all forms in drug education programs. The effectiveness of public outreach was

Activity

What is the effect of criminal penalties?

Research the debate over disparity in criminal penalties awarded for powder and crack cocaine.

- 1 How much of a difference was there in sentences for powder cocaine possession vs. crack cocaine possession?
- 2 What were the reasons given for the different sentencing rules?
- 3 What were the effects of those laws?
- 4 Were the sentencing laws just?

questioned as cocaine use, while at a lower level that its peak, remained constant into the latter half of the 1990s. Law enforcement efforts may have been more effective as crime levels dropped, but incarceration rates remained high, especially for minority males. The cocaine epidemic that cost upper class people money and careers in 1980 continued to burden communities across the country as the century ended.

Concerns about the environment

Concerns about the environment were numerous. Air pollution, water pollution, radiation leaks, and chemical waste were among the environmental hazards. However two places, the Love Canal and Three Mile Island, and two global environmental topics, ozone depletion and global climate change, became major topics for concern. While there are numerous problems, including declining fisheries, home pollutants (like asbestos) these places and topics demanded a great deal of attention and action in the United States.

The Love Canal

The Love Canal was constructed in the 1890s near the Niagara River in New York to provide hydroelectric power. It was never used. Instead, beginning in the 1920s, the site was used to dump chemical waste until its closure in 1952. The following year the disposal site was covered and sold for one dollar to the Niagara Falls Board of Education. The school board was informed that chemical waste was buried under the ground by the Hooker Chemical Company. Despite the warnings, or because of a misunderstanding of the dangers, an elementary school was built on the site and in 1955 the 99th Street School opened. Homes were built as well, but homebuyers were not provided with information about the site's potential hazards. From the 1950s to the 1970s, residents complained about odors and strange substances oozing out of the ground. The response of the school board was to cover the areas with soil or clay. In 1976, the city investigated and found that the soil and water was contaminated with **PCBs** and other toxins. Two years later, the State of New York investigated and found health problems, including reproductive problems in women, and high levels of air-borne and soil-borne toxins. In 1980, the federal government and New York State announced the temporary relocation of approximately 700 families. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agreed to clean up the site with Superfund dollars. The EPA covered a 40-acre area with a cap and a series of devices monitored the air and ground water. By the end of the cleanup and purchase of homes, more than 1,000 families were relocated and \$100 million was spent. A debate on the effectiveness of the EPA's response, and the safety of homes outside the cleanup area, continued into the 1990s. The Love Canal served to make Americans aware of the dangers of toxic waste and created continuing questions about the best ways to prevent and respond to chemical waste.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) are considered to be an environmental toxin and are a possible carcinogen.

Superfund is the common name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980

Three Mile Island

Three Mile Island (TMI) is a nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania. On March 28, 1979, due to design deficiencies, equipment failure, and human error, there was a severe meltdown of the core of Reactor 2. Within hours, all non-essential personnel were evacuated. The containment dome was not breached. By the evening the core had cooled and was considered stable. But on March 30 a significant amount of radiation from an adjoining building was released into the atmosphere. Pennsylvania governor, Richard Thornburgh, and the chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Joseph Hendrie, decided to advise pregnant women and young children within a five-mile radius to leave the area. The order caused some panic and confusion. Reactor 2 was decommissioned permanently, but the other reactors at TMI continued to operate.

TMI had mixed effects. Studies by numerous federal agencies as well as private studies revealed few residual health problems caused by the release of radiation. Average exposures were found to be one millirem, less than a quarter of the radiation in a chest x-ray. Maximum exposure was less than 100 millirem. The effect on the Nuclear Power Industry appears straightforward. While plants under construction at the time of Three Mile Island were completed, no new nuclear plants have been approved and built since the accident. Many industry observers blame overreaction to the dangers of nuclear power plants for the halt in construction, but others point to high initial construction costs requiring huge amounts of up-front investment capital compared to coal and natural gas power generators. Three Mile Island did make the public suspicious of nuclear power and ask questions, not only about operational safety, but also about nuclear waste disposal.

Global environmental concerns in the United States

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan sent the Montreal Protocol Treaty to the Senate for ratification. The treaty committed nations to reduce emissions of **CFCs**. The treaty took effect on January 1, 1989, and began the phase out of ozone-depleting chemicals. In the 1990s, new coolants for refrigeration were used, requiring some redesign of equipment. Seven international meetings took place in the 1990s to revise the pact, and by 2000 enough progress was made to allow scientists to predict that the ozone layer would recover by the middle of the century. By 2000, the United States had reduced CFC emission to close to zero. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, called the Montreal Protocol "Perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date."

A second global concern that gained significant public attention, especially in the 1990s, was global climate change. In the 1890s, some scientists predicted the possibility that pollution could cause climate change, but it was in the 1970s and 1980s that reports of global climate change began to receive public attention. In 1977, the National Academy of Sciences released a report that discussed the possibility of global warming. It also reported that 40% of man-made

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)

are chemicals that are known to deplete the ozone layer. The ozone layer protects the earth's surface from radiation. A common source of CFCs was Freon, used as a coolant in refrigerators and air conditioners.

(anthropogenic) carbon dioxide (CO₂) remained in the atmosphere. The panel urged the scientific community to continue research to examine the issues. The chairman of the National Academy Panel that reported on global warming was Roger Revelle. Al Gore, a congressman from Tennessee, and a former student of Revelle's became a co-sponsor of the first hearings on global climate change. Late in the decade, NASA climate scientist James Hansen reported that global warming would become manifest in the following decade and would have a major impact on the environment. With concerns mounting, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988.

At the same time as awareness of climate change was increasing, the United States was experiencing an expanding economy and rising expectations. US voters had rejected President Jimmy Carter's call to lower expectations and conserve resources in favor of Reagan's optimism and a culture that celebrated consumption and enjoying the many material benefits of a high standard of living. The world's largest economy also emitted the largest share of greenhouse gasses. With 5% of the world's population the United States emitted 25% of its CO₂. As the economy grew, people purchased larger homes, more appliances, and bigger automobiles, including SUVs. As a result, energy consumption increased as did emissions of gasses that contributed to global warming.

The economic gains did not take climate change off the agenda. At the beginning of the new decade the Global Change and Research Act of 1990 became law. It established the Global Change Research Information Office to provide information to foreign countries to help mitigate and prevent the effects of global climate change. It became active after the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. By 1997, there was still mixed opinion on the amount and effects of anthropogenic greenhouse gasses, but consensus was moving scientists and governments to explore ways to slow down or halt climate change. Representatives of more than 160 nations met in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997 to negotiate an agreement to limit the emissions of greenhouse gasses for more developed nations (MDCs). The Kyoto Protocol was the result and in it the Clinton administration (Al Gore, the former student of Roger Revelle, was vice president) agreed that the United States would reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to seven percent below 1990 levels. The reductions were to be achieved between 2008 and 2012. By the time Clinton had left office, the Senate had not ratified the treaty, and in 2001 President George W. Bush took ratification off the agenda.

Objections to the Kyoto Treaty were many. Aside from concerns that measures to meet the commitment would hurt the economy and discussion that the rapidly growing economies of India and China made any United States actions futile, doubts about the accuracy of the models used to predict the amount of climate change became louder. Skeptics, including George Easterbrook and Roger Bailey, cast doubts on the accuracy of the conclusions of the IPCC regarding climate change and the need for immediate action. Climate change skeptics explained that models, no matter how advanced, could not include most of the variables. Climate was an interaction of oceans,

A sports utility vehicle (SUV) is a generic term for a vehicle similar to a station wagon, but built on a light-truck chassis. Since SUVs are considered light trucks, they are regulated less strictly than passenger cars under the US Energy Policy and Conservation Act for fuel economy, and the Clean Air Act for emissions.

land, the atmosphere, and sun cycles, each having many sub-factors. Even among those who accepted that global warming was occurring, and that human activity was a major cause, it was debated whether adaptation was preferable to mitigation. In a 1999 NBC/ Wall Street Journal opinion poll only 11% agreed that concerns about global climate change were without justification and a 2000 Harris poll revealed that 72% of US citizens believed that greenhouse gasses caused global warming. Despite public opinion against skeptics' arguments, action to reduce greenhouse gas emission was a voluntary practice among environmental organizations, individuals, and businesses.

Over the two decades the environmental issues in the United States provoked a variety of responses. Problems that had local impact received action, even if slower and below the standards of critics, but often with lengthy litigation and debate. Concerns that involved the entire planet received mixed responses. Reasons for the differences may be due to political climate, economic well-being, political leadership, the immediacy of a local, visible problem vs. a global one in the indefinite future, or perceptions of costs and benefits that affected national interests.

Activity

Assessing public opinion polls

Visit www.americans-world.org to find summaries of polls on a variety of issues discussed in this chapter.

- 1 To what extent do the actions of political leaders coincide with public opinion?
- 2 How often do polls asking similar questions have results that differ significantly? Why?
- 3 Math link: What is margin of error? How many people should be polled for accurate results? What does "random" mean? (For an interesting perspective on randomness, read *The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules our Lives* by Leonard Mlodinow (2008).

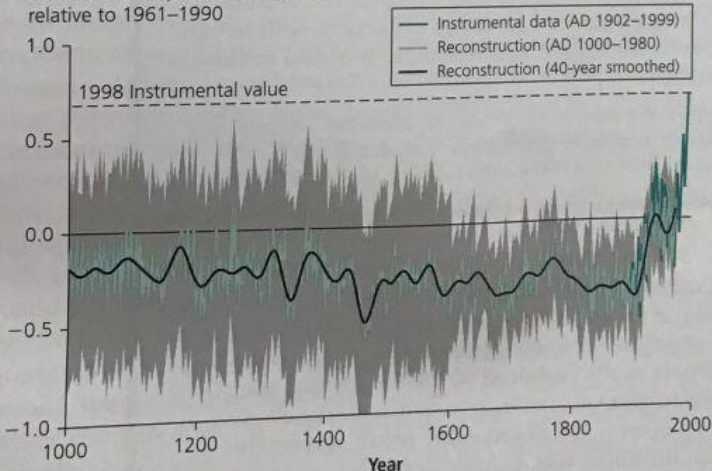
Activity

Global climate change

The following sources discuss or provide information about global climate change:

Source A

Northern hemisphere anomaly (°C) relative to 1961–1990



Millennial Northern Hemisphere (NH) temperature reconstruction (blue: tree rings, corals, ice cores, historical records) and instrumental data (red) from AD 1000 to 1999. A smoother version (black), and two standard error limits (grey) are shown.

Source: IPCC Third Assessment Report.

Source B

Using tree rings as a basis for assessing past temperature changes back to the year 1,000 AD, supplemented by other proxies from more recent centuries, [Michael] Mann completely redrew the history, turning the Medieval Warm Period and Little Ice Age into non-events, consigned to a kind of Orwellian “memory hole” ... (the hockey stick graph) shows Mann’s revision of the climatic history of the last millennium ...

At that point, Mann completed the coup and crudely grafted the surface temperature record of the 20th century (shown in red and itself largely the product of urban heat islands) onto the pre-1900 tree ring record. The effect was visually dramatic as the 20th century was portrayed as a climate rocketing out of control. The red line extends all the way to 1998 (Mann’s “warmest year of the millennium”), a year warmed by the big El Niño of that year. It should be noted that the surface record is completely at variance with the satellite temperature record. Had the latter been used to represent the last 20 years, the effect would have been to make the 20th century much less significant when compared with earlier centuries.

Source: Daly, John L. “The Hockey Stick: A New Low in Climate Science.” November 12, 2000. <http://www.john-daly.com/hockey/hockey.htm>.

Source C

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which calls for industrialized nations to reduce their CO₂ emissions to 95% of 1990 levels by 2012, is itself considered a difficult target to achieve. Yet the climate simulations lead to the conclusion that the Kyoto reductions will have little effect in the twenty-first century, and “30 Kyotos” may be needed to reduce warming to an acceptable level.

We suggest equal emphasis on an alternative, more optimistic, scenario. This scenario focuses on reducing non-CO₂ GHGs and black carbon during the next 50 years. Our estimates of global climate forcings indicate that it is the non-CO₂ GHGs that have caused most observed global warming. This interpretation does not alter the desirability of limiting CO₂ emissions, because the future balance of forcings is likely to shift toward dominance of CO₂ over aerosols. However, we suggest that it is more practical to slow global warming than is sometimes assumed.

Source: Hansen, James, et al. “Global warming in the twenty-first century: An alternative scenario.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. August 29, 2000. <https://www.pnas.org/content/97/18/9875>.

Source D

They (many scientists) warned, too, of the related danger of global warming, a rise in the earth’s temperature as a result of emissions from the burning of fossil fuels (coal and oil). These problems—and such others as the pollution of the oceans and the destruction of rain forests—required international solutions, which were much more difficult to produce. International conferences ... produced some broad agreements on several global environmental problems. But there was no way to enforce compliance with them; and the United States government, during the Bush administration, publicly rejected some of the accords.

Source: Brinkley, Alan. 1999. *United States History: A Survey*, 10th edn. p. 1153.

Questions

- 1 What are two main points of source D?
- 2 Compare and contrast sources A and B.
- 3 To what extent and in what ways does source C support source B? To what extent does it support source A?
- 4 Using your own knowledge and the documents, discuss the international response to global warming during the 1990s.

Popular culture in the 1980s and 1990s

A case study of the popular culture of a country is an attempt to understand the aggregate trends of various cultural **memes** as an object for study. As cultural historian Robert Darnton wrote, “Historians have always taken what a society writes, publishes, and reads as a guide to its culture, but they have never taken all its books as guidebooks. Instead, they select a few works as representative of the whole and settle down to write intellectual history.” In any nation the identification and assessment of the most significant trends in popular culture is problematic due to geographic, socio-economic and ethnic diversity; consequently, the task falls first to the selection of cultural products which collectively best serve as a “guide to its culture.” Thus, expanding Darnton’s point to include other forms of cultural media, a study of popular culture in the last two decades of the 20th century needs to include music, television, and film, as well as the printed word.

Television

In the United States, while major networks dominated television show production and audience share, the rise of cable television channels (cable had been available in some areas for decades, but the proliferation of satellite-based cable-only channels was a new development) significantly affected what people watched. The most successful challengers to broadcast networks were stations such as Music Television (MTV) which began broadcasting in 1981, the Entertainment and Sports Network (ESPN) which debuted in 1979 and became a 24-hour network in 1980, and Cable News Network (CNN) which began as a 24-hour news station in 1980. Spanish language stations used cable to expand their audience reach. By 1980, stations including Home Box Office (HBO) and Cinemax broadcast full length, commercial-free movies via cable as well. The rise in television offerings challenged the traditional entertainment venues, creating unease among broadcast television stations, the movie theater industry, and even booksellers, as more options competed for the entertainment dollar. The three national networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, began to feel the pressure of this new competition.

The popular network shows reflected general societal trends. In the era of Ronald Reagan, comedies such as *Family Ties* reflected the conflict between old liberalism, represented by the parents, and the young, energetic conservatism of their son, Alex. Another, even more successful 1980s comedy was *The Cosby Show*, starring comedian

Activity

Historical analysis

Write one or two paragraphs to answer the following questions.

- 1 For what reasons did the United States government officially support and take supportive action on the Montreal Protocol and not the Kyoto Treaty?
- 2 Why did the Love Canal and Three Mile Island have national importance, even though the immediate effects were local and somewhat limited?

Memos Richard Dawkins first coined the term *meme* in the 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins writes: “Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.”

TOK Link

Link to science

Read Richard Dawkins’ definition of *meme* above. Do you think that ideas are evolutionary as are genes? In other words, are the longevity, proliferation, and influence of cultural ideas determined by the “survival of the fittest?”

Bill Cosby. Both shows illustrated a trend celebrating the idealized nuclear family. The 1980s was also the era of prime-time soap operas, shows dominated by themes of power, betrayal, and wealth, the most famous of which was *Dallas*. Detective shows continued to be popular, led by *Murder, She Wrote*, starring Angela Lansbury as a middle-aged amateur detective and writer. Shows centered around women characters were among the most-watched half-hours on television, including *Golden Girls* and *Rosanne*. The 1980s also saw continued success of *Monday Night Football*, the only continuing prime-time sports program. However, the show that wielded real power to set agendas was the CBS news magazine, *60 minutes*, which drew more viewers than any television show during the 1980s.

In the early part of the decade shows about women, mostly comedies, were among the most watched. *Rosanne*, starring Rosanne Barr as an outspoken, often abrasive lead character, began a trend of more edgy comedies. The decade also featured a shift away from traditional and largely content families solving universal problems, to dysfunctional families with dim-witted and incompetent fathers. Two such shows were both on the emerging fourth major network, Fox: *Married With Children* and *The Simpsons*. *The Simpsons* created by Matt Groening, was a consistently clever and topical cartoon that addressed a broad range of social issues. Debuting at the end of 1989, *The Simpsons* continued into the 21st century and became the longest-running sitcom (situation comedy) in United States' television history. While *The Simpsons* featured a loving, but imperfect, family, *Married With Children* portrayed, often crudely, the Bundy family as four confused, morally suspect, and overwhelmingly self-centered people. The 1990s also featured the rise of New York as the setting for television comedies. *Living Single*, was set in Brooklyn, while *Friends*, featuring four **yuppies**, and *Seinfeld*, an influential show in which stand-up comedian Jerry Seinfeld became famous for playing a semi-fictional version of himself, were both set in Manhattan. The end of the decade brought HBO's *Sex in the City*, also set in Manhattan, and based on the book by columnist Candace Bushnell. It focused on female lifestyle issues, discussing sexuality and the obsession with fashion in a frank and up-beat semi-documentary/fictional mode. More risqué offerings were also featured in the animated series *Beavis and Butt-head* created by Mike Judge for MTV. Two gritty dramas with a more criminally violent edge were HBO's *Oz* and *The Sopranos*. The confronting nature of these dramas pushed the four major broadcast networks to examine their offerings as the decade came to a close.

Film

As cable television expanded and the 1990s saw the rise of Internet use, some experts within the entertainment industry questioned the viability of the film industry based on the significant decline of movie theater attendance, a phenomenon already evident from the 1970s as television became more ubiquitous. However, movie-going, while not growing during the 1980s, did not decline either. Needing to offer a better and different experience than home viewing, theater owners offered enhanced features including stadium-style seating and dynamic sound systems, which helped attendance increase in

Activity

Race and television

Many 1980s and 1990s TV shows featured mainly people of one race. For example, *Living Single* had African American main characters, while the casts of *Cheers*, *Friends*, and *Seinfeld* were overwhelmingly Caucasian. Others, including an action show, *The A Team*, and several Steven Bochco dramas (*Hill Street Blues*, *NYPD Blue*, *LA Law*) had mixed casts.

- 1 Research the characters of television shows and audience appeal.
- 2 Were there identifiable settings or environments that favored racial/ethnic diversity?
- 3 What does the casting say about the television industry and its perception of its viewers?
- 4 What does the racial/ethnic characterization say about US popular culture and society?
- 5 Additional exploration: Observe the racial/ethnic, gender and age group make-up of current television shows. Record the advertisements. To what extent does advertising correlate with program demographics?

Yuppies is an extended acronym for Young Urban Professionals.

the 1990s, even as more entertainment options became available. The increased attendance brought the rise of the movie complex, multiple screens in a single facility, offering movie-goers a broad selection of films. Additionally, the double feature disappeared as studios sold their lesser films directly to cable movie stations, and later through mass-market sales as commercially produced video cassettes when the video cassette player/recorder became an increasingly popular home-viewing option. As the 1980s progressed, studios looked to blockbusters to make money, often choosing safe formulas, popular actors and sequels to big hits to insure profitability. But the broader distribution options also made room for independent film-makers to make a variety of more daring films addressing contemporary issues, and extended more innovation and style to traditional genres.

Studios often did well with low risk sequels, conventional formulas and proven movie stars. The original 1976 hit about an underdog boxer, *Rocky*, starring Sylvester Stallone, was followed by *Rocky II* in 1979, *Rocky III* (1982), *Rocky IV* (1985), and *Rocky V* (1990). Another theater-filler was Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the first of several films featuring Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones. Ford became the middle-aged male action hero of the 1980s and 1990s, starring in more than a dozen action hits from science fiction to techno-thriller. The science fiction genre proved popular with Arnold Schwarzenegger as the *Terminator* (1984) and Michael J. Fox as teenager Marty McFly in *Back to the Future* (1985), and in the multiple sequels that followed each film.

Buddy films were quite popular, especially the mixed-race buddy action/comedy. These films appeared to combine the tight drama of Tony Curtis and Sidney Poitier in the *The Defiant Ones* (1958) with the humor of Paul Newman and Robert Redford in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969). Three pairings of actors began successful series of films: Eddie Murphy and Nick Nolte in *48 Hours* (1982), Mel Gibson and Danny Glover in *Lethal Weapon* (1987), and Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones in *Men in Black* (1997). A significant new direction in the buddy genre were female protagonists, as celebrated in *Thelma and Louise* (1991), starring Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon, which became a huge hit for director Ridley Scott.

Science fiction films, often a male-dominated genre, featured strong female characters in *The Terminator* (1984), featuring Linda Hamilton as the savior of mankind, and Sigourney Weaver as Ellen Ripley in *Alien* (1979) and the three sequels. Other important movies that featured female leads were *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991), *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), and *The First Wives Club* (1996). Women took the lead behind the camera as well. Directors Susan Sondheim (*Desperately Seeking Susan*, 1985), Penny Marshall (*Big*, 1988), Nora Ephron

Activity

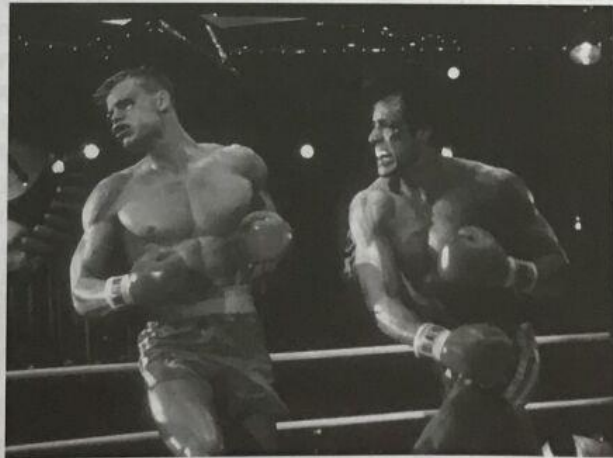
Science fiction

Science fiction is often used to ask questions or voice commentary about current social or political issues.

- 1 Why do writers create a new world rather than write about the one in which they live?
- 2 Watch a science fiction film, then discuss the issues presented.

Double feature The showing of two films for the price of one ticket.

buddy film A long Hollywood tradition, usually featuring two mismatched and antagonistic men who, through facing adversity together, learn to respect each other and become friends.



A scene from *Rocky IV* directed by Sylvester Stallone in 1985.

(*When Harry Met Sally*, 1989) and Kathryn Bigelow (*Point Break*, 1991) were responsible for many critically-acclaimed and successful films.

Films by and about minorities were an important part of US film culture in the 1980s and 1990s. African American themes came to the forefront. For example, director Spike Lee's *School Daze* (1988) took a look at student life in a historically black college. Other well regarded Spike Lee films of the era include *Do the Right Thing* (1989) and *Malcolm X* (1992). *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), based in South Central Los Angeles, brought director John Singleton an Academy Award nomination for Best Director, the first such honor for an African American. Ramón Menéndez's film *Stand and Deliver* (1988) was a movie portrayal of math teacher Jaime Escalante. The film detailed how Escalante led high school students in East Los Angeles to success in Advanced Placement calculus while fighting against the teaching staff, school administration and even some of their parents.

Literature

The 1980s and 1990s brought changes in the book retail industry. The proliferation of other forms of entertainment did not bring a decline to retail book sales. The 1980s featured yearly sales increases averaging 8%. However, how readers bought their books evolved over the two decades. In 1980, independent book stores dominated sales, but the rise of chain book stores, including E. Dalton and Crown, began to challenge the independents. Able to strike better deals with publishers, the chain stores discounted the retail prices of books, but often stocked only 15,000 to 20,000 titles, half that of the average independent, causing fear that the US book market would cater to the major publishers and well-known authors leaving little room for new writers. Many independent sellers did close, but by the early 1990s the book superstores Borders and Barnes & Noble challenged the discount sellers by offering many more titles, often well over 100,000, in a single store. By the end of the 1990s, the online bookseller Amazon, which offered more than a million different titles, challenged the dominance of the retail store.

The mainstay of sales continued to be the traditional genres. Spy novels by writers like Robert Ludlum and Ken Follett were frequently on best-seller lists. The romance genre remained perennially popular among women readers, with authors Judith Krantz and Danielle Steele, who wrote 20 bestsellers in 20 years, selling hundreds of millions of copies. James Michener, a prolific writer of historical fiction, published *Space* (1982) and *Poland* (1983) among other works. The horror novels of Stephen King were also popular. As the 1980s wore on, thrillers continued to be read by millions. New writers included Scott Turow and Sara Paretsky, whose novels revolved around corrupt lawyers and attorneys fighting ethical battles against a corrupt society. John Grisham, a popular writer of the legal thriller genre, sold over 60 million books in the 1990s, the most of any fiction writer. Vampires were a developing theme, as championed by Anne Rice, author of *Interview with the Vampire* (1973) the most popular vampire novel since Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The technothriller further extended the genre, and its

Activity

Genre and gender

Gender often forefronts different points of view in its application to genre. Compare and contrast two US films from 1980–2000 of a similar theme or genre to highlight the different points of view represented through male and female characters. Your analysis might also want to include, the point of view of the director or screenwriter, and an analysis of gender roles and models.

Activity

Teen movies

Watch a selection of US teen movies from the 1950s (for example, *Rebel Without a Cause* or *Blackboard Jungle*). Then compare them with US teen films from the 1980s.

- 1 Create a table of characters, conflicts, themes.
- 2 How do the movies reflect continuity across the decades?
- 3 How do the films demonstrate the changes that occurred over the 1960s and 1970s in the United States?

potential for adaptation, as demonstrated in the work of Tom Clancy, whose *The Hunt for Red October* was subsequently made into a video game and a film.

Many different categories of non-fiction found readers. Self-help books filled many store shelves. Diet books were quite popular, often two or three appearing on bestseller lists at the same time. Leo Buscaglia's books were widely read. Biographies and autobiographies of Ronald Reagan, Nancy Reagan, Princess Diana, and other well-known public figures came out every year. Science books were popular: Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* stayed on the bestseller list in 1980 and 1981, along with Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave* in 1980. Books about successful business practices became a significant genre, with titles such as *In Search of Excellence* (1983) by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman. Conservative and values books began appearing on the bestseller lists in the latter years of the Reagan administration, including *The Closing of the American Mind* by Allan Bloom and *Cultural Literacy* by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. In the 1990s, books by conservative media stars such as Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh began a trend that continued into the next decade. The books of John Gray, including *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*, reflected a fascination of many Americans with the differences in male and female communication patterns. The exploration of men and women's innate behaviors also found expression in Rob Becker's *Defending the Caveman*, which began its decades-long run in 1991.

Popular music

Charismatic personalities, ethnicity, geography, and technology have influenced American popular music for more than a century. The end of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century brought the first mass-production sound-playing devices, the Edison Phonograph and the Victrola, into homes in the United States. John Philip Sousa's band played to huge crowds and, according to the Dallas Wind Ensemble, "Before the Rolling Stones or the Beatles ... they were the first musical act to travel more than a million miles and perform for more than a million people." Regional and ethnic influence in the forms of the Blues of Mississippi and Chicago, Appalachian Bluegrass, Nashville Country, soul, the Tejano sounds of Texas, Dixieland Jazz, and surf tunes from Southern California, have continually illustrated the variety of popular music. Despite the variety of forms, by the 1960s and 1970 rock was the dominant form of popular music. Perhaps the most prominent development in popular music during the 1980s and 1990s was the decline of Rock in relation to other musical styles.

The two decades saw decentralized musical development. Scores of locations, from the large metropolitan areas of New York and Los Angeles, to the traditional country music center of Nashville, to Seattle and dozens of college towns became starting points for a variety of musical forms. Hip Hop, Techno, Rockabilly, Heavy Metal, Christian Contemporary, Punk, Grunge, College Pop, Teen Pop, Roots Rock, and combinations of the aforementioned types all commanded significant audiences. Rappers, boy bands, girl bands, and pop

Activity

Analyzing best-seller lists

Research US best-seller book lists from the 1980s and 1990s to find out what books people read. A good starting point is the *New York Times* adult best-seller lists that are archived by year on the Hawes Publications Website: <http://www.hawes.com/pastlist.htm>. Identify trends in publishing and or particular themes or genres in research and writing that captured the popular imagination in 1980–2000. Discuss your findings in relation to current events and social issues discussed in this case study.

Activity

The Oprah effect

Oprah's Book Club is a popular segment of her TV talk show. Oprah Winfrey started the book club in 1996, selecting a new novel for viewers to read and discuss each month. Because of the book club's wide popularity, many obscure titles have become best-sellers, increasing sales in some cases by as many as several million copies. This occurrence is widely known as the Oprah effect. Select some examples from her lists in 1996–2000 and discuss why you think she chose to give them her influential seal of approval.

megastars filled television screens and blasted from automobile speakers during the era. Among the most important developments was the changing delivery of popular music, represented by music television channels, and the rise of hip hop from a local style to a national and then international form.

Music video channels, such as Music Television (MTV), did not invent music videos, but made them mainstream and available in the home 24 hours a day. Prince, an artist who at one time changed his name to a symbol, had several enormous hits including *Little Red Corvette* (1983), and a popular movie with its own hit song by the same name, *Purple Rain* (1984). Madonna's music videos featured provocative visuals and costumes, and captured one view of the commercialism of the decade with her song *Material Girl* (1984). Teen pop star Britney Spears' 1999 debut album *Baby One More Time* attracted millions of devoted fans, but was also the subject of criticism for her Lolita-like video rendition of the title tune. But, the biggest musical star of the era was Michael Jackson. Jackson's videos, among them *Thriller* (1982), featured elaborate choreography, costumes and sets, and catchy music. Jackson's productions became so much a part of pop culture that people who had never watched a music video or heard a song of his knew of the "King of Pop's" "moon walk" dance step and his signature glove. The visualization of pop music created a music-video industry of producers, writers, directors, and actors and made the video an indispensable part of popular music.

Some musicians and audiences rebelled against the elaborate production and easily accessible music rifts. A rockabilly revival, punk, new wave, and Seattle-based grunge provided alternatives to top Billboard Magazine charts pop. Additionally, a number of musicians jumped from style to style, often combining different musical themes while never settling on one. Texas's Michelle Shocked, who referred to herself as a "skateboard punk rocker" in her song *Anchorage* (1988), recorded songs ranging in style from big band, to folk, to punk, to blues, to country, and seemed to personify the rebellion against fitting into a predetermined musical label.

Perhaps the biggest musical development was rap, a genre that not only influenced music, but culture as well. Rap is the music of the hip hop culture. The music follows earlier African American music, but moved into a new form. Rap's beginning is said to have originated in 1970s in the Bronx (one of five boroughs that comprise New York City), when disc jockeys (DJs) took their turntables, amplifiers and loudspeakers onto the street and spun records, adding commentary and rhymes in rhythm. The DJs "scratched" records to make new sounds. "Rapper's Delight," a song by Sugarhill Gang, released in 1979, was the first rap single to get airtime on mainstream music radio. Run-DMC gained national fame in the early 1980s and rap took off quickly after that. Rap artists also included women, including Queen Latifah, whose work dealt with a variety of issues and provided a strong woman's voice.

Rap music, with lyrics that spoke of rebellion, violence, sex, poverty, and politics, mostly in "street language," became a major force in popular music, reaching more than 10% of all music sales by the end

TOK Link Ethics

With the invention of digital music (first CDs, then mp3 files), the duplication of music became easy. Internet music-sharing services such as Napster appeared, facilitating the free distribution of music tracks without permission from the copyright holder.

Discuss the concept of ownership of creative products.

- 1 Who owns a song?
- 2 When a recording is purchased, what rights of use does the owner of the recording possess?
- 3 Examine the issue of copyright using the ethical reasoning of Jeremy Bentham and Immanuel Kant. How would each ethical system resolve the issue?

Activity

Applying cultural theory

Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* (2000) explained his theory that social phenomena spread like disease epidemics. Gladwell came up with three rules—the law of the few, the stickiness factor, and the law of context—to explain why certain cultural products become popular. Read a summary of Gladwell's theory, then, choosing one musical form or performer, research the rise to popularity of your subject.

- 1 Who or what was responsible for spreading the form or performer?
- 2 What factors of the music/artist made people pay attention and desire more?

What environmental factors (context) were critical to the growth in popularity?

of the 1990s. According to author and Professor Renford Reese, in the year 2000 the audience for rap was three-quarters non-black: the influence of the hip hop culture had grown into many segments of US society. The sometimes menacing movements and rough language of rappers upset some members of mainstream society. While rap songs dealt with many issues and, similar to rock and roll, heavy metal, and other forms of popular music, ranged in tone from gentle to aggressive, and subject from love to war, rap and hip hop culture did evoke continual criticism as offensive, especially to women. However, when the Parents Music Resource Center formed in 1985 over concerns about explicit music lyrics, most of the group's original list of 15 "filthy" songs were heavy metal bands, and none were rappers. But as awareness of rap grew, so did criticism. West Coast rapper Ice T and the group Body Count provoked heated condemnation from the Bush administration with the 1992 song "Cop Killer." The controversies regarding rap lyrics continued throughout the decade, as did its popularity.

As the 20th century came to a close, there was no dominant musical style. The two decades featured genres that evolved, combined, disappeared, or grew to absorb other styles. Rap music was just one of many genres that included country, metal, and techno, along with songs from both pop princesses and maturing rock legends.

Conclusion

Popular culture continued traditions and evolved in form during the 1980s and 1990s. If examined for trends, television, film, and literature continued many previously popular themes, but brought diverse new material to new audiences. Hundreds of new musical artists appeared and sold millions of records, but, several artists, including Michael Jackson, Madonna, and Britney Spears dominated sales. Perhaps the most important musical development was rap, which significantly influenced both music and culture across the country. The popular culture of the period reflected broader social change, while also illustrating the desire for escapist entertainment and, for some, a wish for a return to previous, more comfortable and better-understood values.

Activity

TOK Link

Language

Language is one of the Ways of Knowing.

- 1 What are the purposes of offensive language?
 - 2 Who owns words?
 - 3 Can an offensive word be rendered harmless by changing its meaning?
- Find examples to illustrate your point, and discuss in your group.



Pop group Menudo featuring Ricky Martin (left) in 1987.



Queen Latifah performs at KMEL Summer Jam 1994 at Shoreline Amphitheatre in Mountain View California, August 13, 1994.