Unit 4: Conservatism (Reagan to George H. W. Bush)

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s):
Time Period: **December**
Length: **2 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Transfer

After several decades during which progressive and liberal ideas dominated American politics, conservatism made a comeback in the 1980s. In the 1980s, voters elected Republican President Ronald Reagan whose foreign policies contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union. The United States emerged from the Cold War as the world's sole superpower, but the country encountered obstacles as it tried to find its place in the "new world order". The 1990s brought prosperity as new technologies helped drive a decade of robust economic growth and change in many aspects of American life.

Enduring Understandings

- Conservatism reached a high point with the election in 1980 of President Ronald Reagan and Vice-President George Bush.
- Presidents Reagan and Bush pursued a conservative agenda that included tax cuts, budget cuts, and increased defense spending.
- Beneath the surge of prosperity that marked the conservative era of the 1980s lay serious social problems.
- The end of the Cold War, marked by the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, led to a redirection of many U.S. goals and policies.

Essential Questions

- What was the agenda of the New Right?
- What were the concerns of the Moral Majority?
- What factors led to Reagan’s victory in 1980?
- What are the main ideas of supply-side economics?
- What were some of the effects of Reaganomics?
- What problems in education emerged during the 1980s?

Content

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the reasons for the resurgence of conservative values, and list the major goals of the New Right.
2. Analyze the emergence of Reagan and Bush as conservative leaders.
3. Summarize Reagan's economic programs.
4. Describe the changes that occurred in the makeup and decisions of the Supreme Court.
5. Identify results of deregulation of the savings and loan industry and of cutting the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency.
6. Analyze the presidential elections of 1984 and 1988.
7. Identify national concerns about education, drug use, health issues, and urban problems.
8. Summarize political, economic, and social gains achieved by women.
9. Describe how conservative policies affected minority groups.
10. Identify changes in the Communist world that ended the Cold War.
11. Summarize US actions taken to influence Central American and Caribbean affairs.
12. Describe the events leading up to the Iran-Contra scandal.
13. Analyze US involvement in the Persian Gulf War Learning Activities.

21st Century Skills

1. Creativity
2. Collaboration
3. Critical Thinking
4. Communication
5. Information and Media Literacy

Standards

SOC.6.1.12.A.12.c	Explain how the Arab-Israeli conflict influenced American foreign policy.
SOC.6.1.12.B.13.b	Evaluate the effectiveness of environmental movements and their influence on public attitudes and environmental protection laws.
SOC.6.1.12.C.15.a	Relate the role of America's dependence on foreign oil to its economy and foreign policy.
SOC.6.1.12.D.12.c	Evaluate how the development of nuclear weapons by industrialized countries and developing counties affected international relations.
SOC.6.1.12.D.15.c	Explain how and why religious tensions and historic differences in the Middle East have led to international conflicts, and analyze the effectiveness of United States policy and actions in bringing peaceful resolutions to the region.