

THE UNITED STATES MEETS NEW CHALLENGES

(1955–1982)



TIME LINE

EVENTS ELSEWHERE	DATE	EVENTS IN AMERICA
	1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> ended legal school segregation
	1955	Montgomery bus boycott
<i>European Economic Community (EEC) set up</i>	1957	
<i>U.S.S.R.'s Yuri Gagarin was first man in space</i>	1961	Shepard was first American in space
	1962	Rachel Carson's <i>Silent Spring</i> began environmental movement; Glenn was first American to orbit Earth
	1963	Kennedy assassinated; Lyndon Johnson became president; Civil Rights march on Washington; King's "I Have a Dream" speech
	1964	Civil Rights Act
<i>White minority in Rhodesia declared independence, set up government that ignored black rights</i>	1965	Watts riots; Voting Rights Act outlawed discrimination at the polls; Malcolm X assassinated
	1967	Thurgood Marshall appointed U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice
	1968	King assassinated; Robert Kennedy assassinated
	1969	Armstrong walked on the moon; Richard Nixon became president
	1970	Kent State students killed
	1972	Nixon visited China
<i>Arab nations at war with Israel</i>	1973	Cease-fire in Vietnam; Watergate scandal; <i>Roe v. Wade</i> legalized abortion
	1974	Nixon resigned; Gerald Ford became president
<i>Anti-apartheid riots in South Africa</i>	1976	
	1977	Jimmy Carter became president
<i>Camp David Accord signed</i>	1978	
<i>Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan</i>	1979	Salt II signed; U.S. embassy in Tehran seized; Three Mile Island nuclear accident
<i>Egypt's President Sadat assassinated</i>	1981	Ronald Reagan became president; U.S. hostages in Iran released; space shuttle <i>Columbia</i> launched; Sandra Day O'Connor first female on U.S. Supreme Court

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Watch for answers to these questions as you read.

- How did civil rights advance?
- How successful was the United States in promoting peace at home and abroad?
- What events in other nations affected the United States?
- What things in the economy and the environment were important?

INTRODUCTION

When President Kennedy was elected in 1960, he said the United States was entering a “New Frontier.” In the following years, the United States entered the Space Age. Great advances were made in science. Computers became more common and useful.

Important things happened outside the United States, too. Americans entered a war that they did not win. Relations with other nations became more and more important.

FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON

Human beings first went into space in the 1960s. Russian **astronauts** were the first to see Earth from space. But Americans were not far behind. In 1961, Alan Shepard was the first American to go up into space—and come straight back down. The next year, John Glenn was the first American to orbit the earth. He later became a U.S. senator for many years. Then, on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong took a “giant leap for mankind.” He was the first person in human history to walk on the moon.

Pictures from outer space helped people to realize that Earth is like a spaceship. Resources, such as oil and minerals—even air and water—are limited. People became concerned with ecology, which is the study of how things on Earth are related to one another. Americans realized that **polluting** the **environment** threatens our health and the quality of our lives. The government passed laws to reduce pollution from cars and factories and clean up the air and water. A growing population makes this harder and more expensive. At some point, choices may have to be made between some kinds of economic development and environmental health.

FROM CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS

Even though the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, African American people were still **discriminated** against. They did not have equal rights or equal opportunities. Peaceful demonstrations, many led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., made Americans aware of this.

astronaut—a person who travels in a spacecraft

pollute—to make dirty or impure

environment—everything around us, including soil, water, climate, and living things

discriminate—to treat someone differently for an unfair reason, such as race, sex, or religion

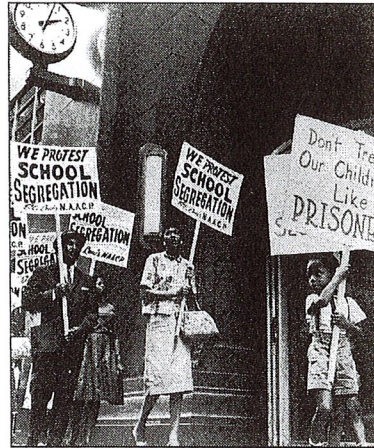
IRENE MORGAN

In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. Few people knew that Irene Morgan refused to give up her seat on a bus in 1944.

Attorney Thurgood Marshall successfully appealed Morgan's case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Later, Thurgood Marshall was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Black Power movement was not based on the nonviolence taught by Dr. King. It said African Americans needed to control their own businesses and schools. They wanted to take power for themselves. The Black Power movement spoke to many younger African Americans about the need to be proud of who they were.

By 1965, Congress had passed far-reaching **civil rights** and voting rights bills. These built on an important court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1954, that case had made school segregation illegal. In 1967, Thurgood Marshall became the first African American Supreme Court justice.



School segregation protest

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

civil rights—rights that belong to all citizens

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

In many cities in the South, African American riders were forced to ride in the rear seats of the bus. In 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to take a seat at the back of the bus. She was arrested.

The arrest of Mrs. Parks was the beginning of the Montgomery bus **boycott** by African American riders. They refused to ride the city buses until African American riders had the same rights and treatment as did white American riders. Civil rights leaders from other cities and states came to

Montgomery to call attention to the boycott.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a boycott leader. Dr. King gained support for his peaceful but effective means of protest against segregation.

The Supreme Court ruled that segregation of public means of transportation was unconstitutional. The Montgomery bus boycott ended. It had proved that peaceful protest can work.

boycott—a refusal to buy the products or use the services of a certain business or country

Other **minorities** learned from the example of African American people and organized to promote their rights. They included the poor, the aged, women, Hispanics (people of Spanish descent), and Native Americans. President Lyndon Johnson declared a "War on Poverty." Congress passed bills on health care for the elderly and to give better educational opportunities to all Americans.

minority—a group of people that differs from the larger population of which it is a part

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM (1924–2005)

Although she was born in the United States, Shirley Chisholm was raised by her grandmother in Barbados. She learned pride, courage, and faith from her grandmother.

When she returned to the United States, Chisholm continued her education. She debated well and studied sociology. She became a teacher and learned Spanish so she could talk with her students' parents. Shirley Chisholm worked for better conditions for children.

Chisholm entered politics. She was the first black woman to serve in the

New York State Assembly. She wanted state-supported day-care centers. She worked on ways for poor people to go to college.

Chisholm ran for the House of Representatives. Her slogan was "Unbought and Unbossed." In 1968, she became the first black woman ever elected to Congress. A liberal, Chisholm was a leader in getting help for underprivileged minority city dwellers. In 1982, she retired from Congress to become a college professor.

HIGHWAYS

The Interstate Highway system was begun in 1956. Highways with even numbers run east and west. Those with

odd numbers are north and south highways.

VIOLENCE AND THREATS OF VIOLENCE

All of this change did not come peacefully. President Kennedy was **assassinated** in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. In 1965, the African American Muslim leader Malcolm X was assassinated. Reverend King was killed in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968.

Urban riots by black and poor citizens swept the country. Thirty-four people were killed in six days of rioting in the Watts area of Los Angeles in August 1965.

assassinate—to attack and kill an important person

urban—of or relating to a city

CRITICAL THINKING

Urban riots result from frustration, fear, and anger. Why do rioters often destroy homes and businesses in their own neighborhoods?

NONVIOLENT MARCHES

Civil rights workers found that boycotts, sit-ins, and marches were all effective in calling attention to situations that **violated** the civil rights of some people.

In 1963, African American leaders organized a peaceful march in Washington, D.C., to protest the slow progress of civil rights laws. Nearly a quarter of a million people attended, both black and white.

This gathering helped influence the national government. The following year the Civil Rights Act became law. It says that it is illegal to use race or skin color as a reason to treat people in the United States differently in voting, use of public facilities, education, and jobs.

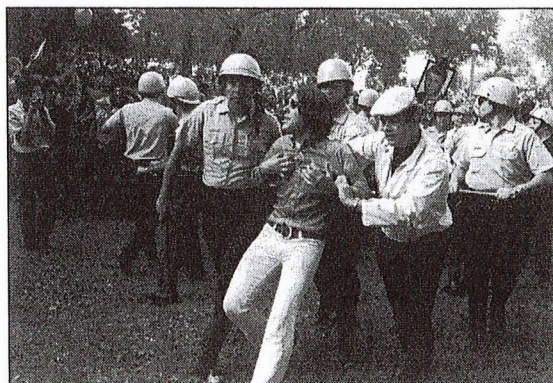
In March 1965, another noted march took place. This time it began at Selma, Alabama. The protesters marched to the state capital to demand equal voting rights for African American voters in Alabama.

News pictures of law officers turning fire hoses on marchers, attacking them with clubs, and doing other illegal acts did a lot to gain public support for the march.

That same year, partly because of the Selma march, no doubt, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. This legislation made it easier for African American voters, especially in the South, to exercise their right to vote.

violate—fail to keep or obey, as a law

Other Americans were protesting against the country's long involvement in the war in Vietnam. In the spring of 1970, students at Kent State University in Ohio staged a protest against the war in Vietnam. The **National Guard** was called in to break up the demonstration. During the protest, some troops fired at students. Four students were killed and ten wounded.



Anti-war demonstration

In many parts of the nation, Americans held peace marches. In May 1971, over 12,000 people protesting the war were arrested in Washington, D.C.

By the end of 1972, peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam had been going on for four years, with many stops and starts. In January 1973, the **cease-fire** came at last. More than 46,000 Americans had died in Vietnam. Soon after American troops left Vietnam, the Communists took control of the entire nation.

National Guard—government military

cease-fire—an agreement to temporarily stop fighting

GUERRILLA WARS

The world has seen many wars since the end of World War II. Most have been **guerrilla** wars, wars that usually begin when a small group opposes the government. They assemble and train in remote areas and attack villages or small government outposts.

Terror is one weapon in guerrilla wars. Another is the speed with which small groups attack and then fade away to hide. Quite often guerrilla wars are to **revolt** against an unpopular government.

If guerrilla forces achieve victories, more people are willing to join the group or at least help the guerrilla fighters. Eventually, the guerrillas are able to build a small army, especially if outside nations aid them with money and supplies. Once they are strong enough, the guerrillas will meet the government in open battle.

Communist forces long believed that guerrilla war is the best way to take over a nation. It worked in China. It also worked in Vietnam, where guerrilla forces drove out the French and were never defeated by the United States military.

Guerrilla warfare has worked well in nations in Africa, South America, and Central America. It has been used to introduce communism and to prevent its introduction. With training and support from the United States, for example, guerrilla fighters in Afghanistan were able to gain control after the Soviet Union invaded that nation. Just like the United States in Vietnam, the Soviets finally withdrew from Afghanistan in the face of unrelenting guerrilla warfare.

guerrilla—a soldier who is not part of a formal army and fights by attacking in sudden raids

revolt—to rebel, or rise up, against a ruler, government, or state

WORKING FOR WORLD PEACE

Not everything in the 1970s was violent. Several major attempts were made to promote world peace.

In February 1972, President Richard Nixon visited China. Because of Nixon's visit, the two nations began to trade with each other. At last, the United States had acknowledged that the People's Republic of China did exist.

Throughout the 1970s, American and Soviet leaders talked about peace. In November 1974, President Gerald Ford visited the Soviet Union. He and the Soviet leaders agreed to limit the arms race between the two nations.

Since 1903, the United States had controlled the Canal Zone in Panama. In 1977, the United States and Panama signed a new **treaty**. This agreement said the United States would gradually turn the running of the Canal over to Panama. Panama began taking over the Panama Canal in 1979. This process was completed by 2000.

In the late 1800s, a movement grew to create a Jewish state in Palestine. This was the source of tension, and often violence, between Arab and Jewish

treaty—an official agreement between two (or more) nations

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Palestinians. The creation of Israel in 1948 led to several wars between Israel and the Arab states surrounding it. A major step toward world peace began in 1978 when President Jimmy Carter invited Egypt's President Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Begin to talk about peace. The three leaders met at Camp David in the United States. They worked out a peace accord that they signed in September 1978.

POLITICAL SURPRISES IN THE 1970s

Just as the nation was beginning to relax from Vietnam, another problem came to light. Watergate became a household word in 1973. Some of President Nixon's aides had been involved in a break-in at the Watergate building. They wanted to steal information from the **Democratic party's** headquarters to help Nixon win a televised election debate. The president said he was not involved. His aides were forced to resign.

In October, Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned for other reasons. In December, Gerald Ford became the first **appointed** vice president in American history.

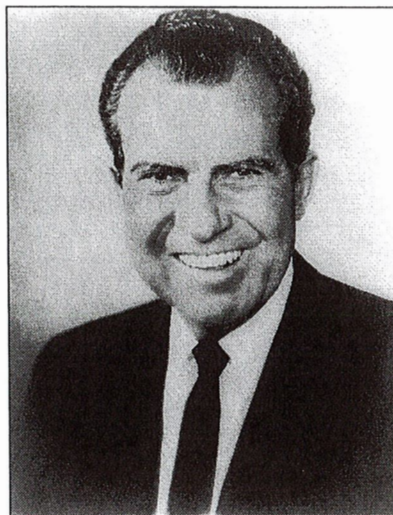
The Watergate problem went on. A federal **prosecutor** held hearings. It became clear that President Nixon had been involved in planning the break-in and in an attempted cover-up. Some of Nixon's former aides were found guilty of criminal acts. But it was not only because the acts were criminal that people were angry. It was because they tried to influence the outcome of a presidential election in a criminal way. Congress decided to hold hearings about the president to decide whether or not he should be **impeached**.

In August 1974, President Nixon resigned. He was the first president to do so. Gerald Ford became the new president on August 9. Ford was the first American president who had been appointed instead of elected. A month later, President Ford pardoned Richard Nixon.

OIL AND INFLATION

In 1973, Arab nations were at war with Israel. The United States supported Israel. In late October 1973, the Arab nations ordered a halt of oil **exports** to the United States. This **embargo** stayed in effect until March 1974.

As a result of the embargo, an oil shortage developed in the United States. Prices of gas and oil rose, allowing major American oil companies to make huge profits. Americans worried about the cost of gasoline and fuel to heat homes, schools, and factories.



President Richard M. Nixon

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Democratic Party—one of the two major political parties in the United States

appoint—choose for an official position or task

prosecutor—a person who acts for the state to take legal action against someone accused of a crime

impeach—to accuse an official of wrongdoing and hold a special trial

export—
(*n*) something that is sent to another country for sale or trade; (*v*) to sell goods to other countries

embargo—a ban on trade in a particular product or products from a particular country

When oil again began to flow from the Arabs, it was priced higher. Americans were spending billions of dollars for **imported** oil. A group of private oil companies began construction of the Alaska pipeline, approved by Congress in 1973. This huge 789-mile long pipeline carries oil from northern Alaska to the southern part of the state. From there it is shipped to the rest of the nation. By 1978, the pipeline was carrying close to a million barrels of oil each day.

CRITICAL THINKING

The price of oil influences the entire economy of the United States. How does oil's price affect almost everything in your life?

The rising cost of imported oil forced American **consumers** to pay more for many products. When prices keep going up, it is known as **inflation**. Inflation was destroying the will of the people to work and save.

With the economy weak, the number of workers entering the country illegally became an issue. Many Americans felt illegal **aliens** took jobs and money from American workers. Others argued that they took underpaid jobs most Americans did not want.

REVIEW: CHANGING TIMES IN THE 1960s

Fill in the lines below with the correct word or words.

1. President Kennedy said the United States was entering a New _____.
2. _____ was the first person to walk on the moon.
3. _____ is the study of how everything in the world is related.
4. Reverend _____ led peaceful demonstrations against racial discrimination.
5. Urban _____ were common in the 1960s.
6. _____ became president in 1969.

import—(v) to bring something into a country;
(n) something that is brought into a country

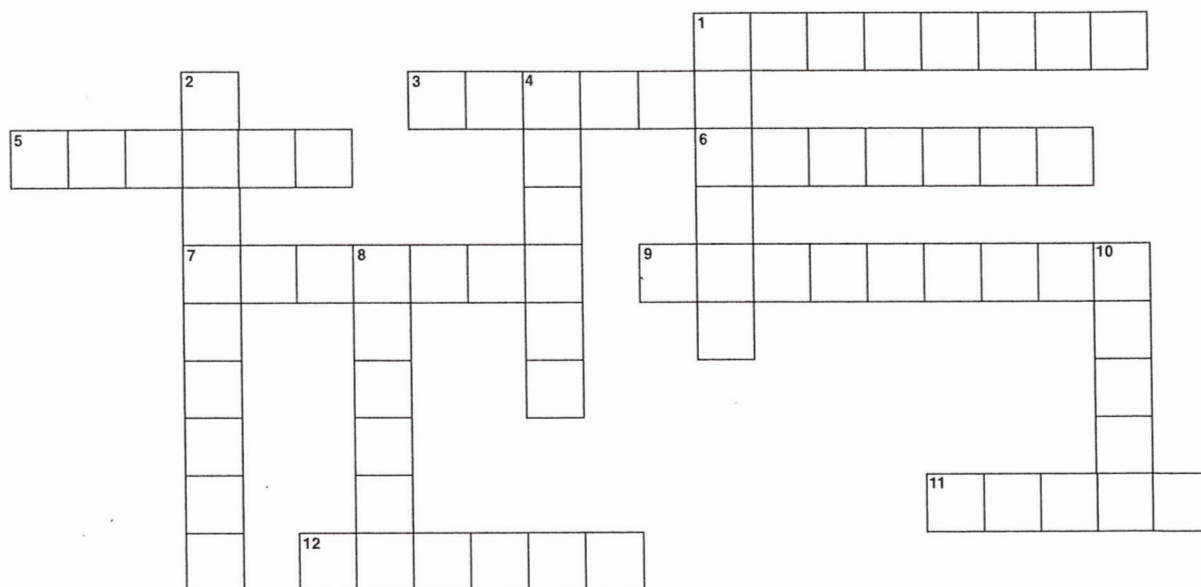
consumer—someone who buys and uses goods and services

inflation—a sharp rise in how much goods cost and a drop in the value of money, that is, in how much the same amount of money will buy

alien—a person who lives in a country but was born in another country and is not a citizen of the country of residence

CROSSWORD PUZZLE: THE UNITED STATES IN THE 1970s

Match each clue below with a word used in discussing the United States in the 1970s. Then use the words to complete the crossword puzzle.

**Across**

1. two or more nations make and store large numbers of weapons
3. a nation that met with Egypt and the United States for peace talks in 1978
5. an agreement between two nations
6. to order a U.S. president to stand trial
7. a refusal to ship goods to a nation
9. when rising prices cause money to drop in value
11. a nation visited by President Nixon in 1972
12. a nation that agreed to take over the Panama Canal

Down

1. people in a nation who are citizens of another nation
2. the name of a building that became associated with President Nixon and his aides
4. Guerrilla wars are often a _____ against an unpopular government.
8. the state crossed by a huge oil pipeline
10. the first American president to resign from office