

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about technological advances. In this section, you will find out about events during President Clinton's administration.

Main Idea

- President Clinton took office in 1992 with plans for improving health care, reducing the federal deficit, helping families, and strengthening gun control. (p. 936)
- Republican victories in Congress set the stage for battles between the executive and legislative branches. (p. 937)
- Riding the tide of economic prosperity, Clinton won reelection over Senator

Bob Dole and third-party candidate

Ross Perot. (p. 938)

- Clinton tried to focus the domestic agenda on the needs of children, but personal problems marred his second term. (p. 939)
- During Clinton's second term, the United States became more involved in world events. (p. 940)

Content Vocabulary

perjury, ethnic cleansing

Academic Vocabulary

modify, stress, submit

People and Terms to Identify

AmeriCorps, Contract with America, Kenneth Starr, Dayton Accords

Reading Objectives

- **Describe** the difficulties and successes of Bill Clinton's two terms as president.
- **Discuss** the nation's involvement in world affairs during the Clinton presidency.

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read about the administration of President Clinton, use the major headings of the section to create an outline similar to the one below.

The Clinton Years
I. Clinton's Agenda
A.
B.
C.
D.
II.

Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.9.6 Describe U.S. Middle East policy and its strategic, political, and economic interests, including those related to the Gulf War.

11.11.2 Discuss the significant domestic policy speeches of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton (e.g., with regard to education, civil rights, economic policy, environmental policy).

11.11.3 Describe the changing roles of women in society as reflected in the entry of more women into the labor force and the changing family structure.

11.11.6 Analyze the persistence of poverty and how different analyses of this issue influence welfare reform, health insurance reform, and other social policies.

11.11.7 Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities,

The Big Idea

Societies change over time. President Clinton was able to push through laws to help families and strengthen gun control, but he also raised taxes and failed to reform health care. During the 1994 mid-term elections, dissatisfied voters gave Republicans a majority in both houses of Congress. Although Congress and the president battled over the budget and legislation, they were able to approve reforms for health insurance and welfare. With a prospering economy, President Clinton won reelection in 1996. Personal scandal and impeachment, however, marred his second term. During this time, the president worked to end a crisis in Haiti, sent peacekeeping troops to Bosnia and Kosovo, and attempted to negotiate between Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

Clinton's Agenda

Main Idea President Clinton took office in 1992 with plans for improving health care, reducing the federal deficit, helping families, and strengthening gun control.

Reading Connection Do you know anyone who has worked for Americorps? Read on to learn about the beginnings of this program.

President Clinton's first years in office were filled with grandiose plans and the difficult realities of politics.

★ An American Story ★

Bill Clinton was the third-youngest person ever to serve as president and the first of the "baby boom" generation to reach the Oval Office. Clinton brought with him a team of young, energetic advisers. In the early weeks of the administration, Clinton's team spent many hours at the White House adjusting to their new life. In early 1993, they began discussing plans for Clinton's new economic strategy for paying down the deficit and reducing interest rates. George Stephanopoulos, an aide to the president, remembers their inexperienced beginnings:

“The president presided over the rolling Roosevelt Room meetings in shirtsleeves, with glasses sliding down the end of his nose. . . . Clinton let everyone have a say, played us off against one another, asked pointed questions, and took indecipherable notes. But the reminders of who we were and what we were doing was never far away. Late one night, we ordered pizzas. When they arrived, the president grabbed a slice with the rest of us. . . . [b]ut just before he took his first bite, [a secret service] agent placed a hand on his shoulder and told him to put it down. The pie hadn't been screened. . . .”

—quoted in *All Too Human*

The new president put forth an ambitious domestic program focusing on five major areas: the economy, the family, education, crime, and health care.

Raising Taxes, Cutting Spending As he had promised in his election campaign, Clinton focused first on the economy. The problem, in the president's view, was the federal deficit. Under Reagan and

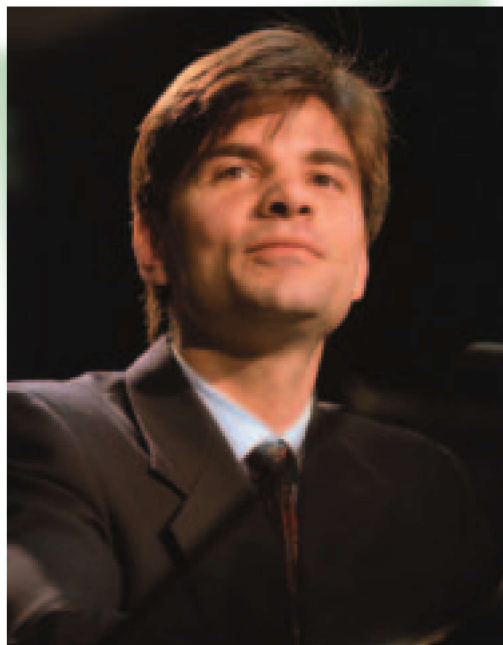
Bush, the deficit had nearly quadrupled, adding billions of dollars annually to the national debt. High deficits forced the government to borrow large sums of money to pay for its programs and helped to drive up interest rates.

Clinton believed that the key to economic growth was to lower interest rates. Low interest rates would enable businesses to borrow more money to expand and create more jobs. Low rates would also make it easier for consumers to borrow money for mortgages, car loans, and other items, which in turn would promote economic growth.

One way to bring interest rates down was to reduce the federal deficit. In early 1993, Clinton sent Congress a deficit reduction plan. In trying to cut the deficit, however, Clinton faced a serious problem. About half of all government spending went to entitlement programs, such as Social Security, Medicare, and veterans' benefits. Entitlement programs are very hard to cut because so many Americans depend on them.

Faced with these constraints, Clinton decided to raise taxes, even though he had promised to cut taxes during his campaign. Clinton's plan raised tax rates for middle- and upper-income Americans and placed new taxes on gasoline, heating oil, and natural gas. The tax increases were very unpopular, and Republicans in Congress refused to support them. Clinton pressured Democrats, and after many amendments, a **modified** version of Clinton's plan narrowly passed.

George Stephanopoulos ▼



Stumbling on Health Care During his campaign, Clinton had promised to reform the U.S. health care system. An estimated 40 million Americans, or roughly 15 percent of the nation, did not have private health insurance. The president appointed a task force headed by his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton—an unprecedented role for a first lady. The task force developed a plan that guaranteed health benefits for all Americans, but it put much of the burden of payment of these benefits on employers. Small-business owners feared they could not afford it. The insurance industry and doctors' organizations also opposed the plan.

Republicans opposed the plan as being complicated, costly, and reliant on government control. Congressional Democrats were divided. Some supported alternative plans, but no plan had enough support to pass. Faced with public opposition, Clinton's plan died without ever coming to a vote.

Families and Education Clinton did manage to push several major pieces of legislation through Congress. During his campaign, he had **stressed** the need to help American families. His first success was the Family Medical Leave Act. This law gave workers up to 12 weeks per year of unpaid family leave for the birth or adoption of a child or for the illness of a family member. Clinton also persuaded Congress to create the **AmeriCorps** program. This program put students to work improving low-income housing, teaching children to read, and cleaning up the environment. AmeriCorps volunteers earned a salary and were awarded a scholarship to continue their education.

Crime and Gun Control Clinton had promised to get tough on crime during his campaign. He had also strongly endorsed new gun-control laws. Despite strong opposition from many Republicans and the National Rifle Association (NRA), the Democrats in Congress passed a gun-control law known as the Brady Bill. The bill imposed a waiting period before people could buy handguns. It also required gun dealers to have police run a background check on a person's criminal record before selling them a handgun. The following year, Clinton introduced his first anticrime bill. The bill provided states with extra funds to build new prisons and put 100,000 more police officers on the streets.

 **Reading Check Explaining** Why did President Clinton's proposed health care plan fail?



Picturing History

High Hopes The Clintons entered the White House in 1993 determined to change the United States for the better. It took time for them to adjust to life in Washington, and many of their ambitious plans were defeated in Congress. [What legislative proposal was given to the First Lady to oversee?](#)

The Republicans Gain Control of Congress

 **Republican victories in Congress set the stage for battles between the executive and legislative branches.**

Reading Connection Have you ever refused to back down or give in when you believed you were right? Read on to find out how President Clinton's resolve led to better cooperation in Congress.

Despite his successes, Clinton was very unpopular by late 1994. Instead of cutting taxes, he had raised them, and he had not fixed health care. Although the economy was improving, many companies were still downsizing. Several personal issues involving President Clinton further weakened public confidence in him. These factors convinced many Americans to vote Republican in 1994.

The Contract With America As the 1994 midterm elections neared, congressional Republicans, led by Newt Gingrich of Georgia, created the **Contract with America**. This program proposed 10 major changes, including lower taxes, welfare reform, tougher anti-crime laws, term limits for members of Congress, and



Picturing History

Republicans Triumphant As a result of the 1994 midterm congressional elections, the Republican Party gained control of the House and the Senate for the first time since the 1950s. Newt Gingrich (at podium) helped lead a group of young GOP congressional representatives in passing the Contract with America legislation. [How successful was the Contract with America legislation? Explain.](#)

a balanced budget amendment. Republicans won a stunning victory—for the first time in 40 years, they had a majority in both houses of Congress.

In their first 100 days in office, House Republicans passed almost the entire Contract with America, but they soon ran into trouble. The Senate defeated several proposals, including the balanced budget amendment, while the president vetoed others.

The Budget Battle In 1995 the Republicans lost more momentum when they clashed with the president over the new federal budget. Clinton vetoed several Republican budget proposals, claiming they cut into social programs too much. Gingrich believed that if Republicans stood firm, the president would back down. Otherwise, the entire federal government would shut down for lack of funds. Clinton, however, refused to budge.

By standing firm against Republican budget proposals and allowing the government to shut down, Clinton regained much of the support he had lost in 1994. The Republicans in Congress realized they needed to work with the president to pass legislation. Soon afterward, they reached an agreement with Clinton to balance the budget.

In the months before the 1996 election, the president and the Republicans worked together to pass new legislation. In August Congress passed the Health Insurance Portability Act. This act improved coverage for people who changed jobs and reduced discrimination against people with preexisting illnesses.

Later that month Congress passed the Welfare Reform Act, which limited people to no more than two consecutive years on welfare and required them to work to receive welfare benefits. Welfare reform had become a major issue by the mid-1990s because of growing evidence that welfare programs trapped people in poverty by giving them incentives to stay unemployed and to have children without getting married. Despite all the money spent on antipoverty programs, the percentage of Americans in poverty had changed very little. Both the Republican-led Congress and President Clinton agreed that the welfare system needed reforms to encourage people to go back to work.

Reading Check **Identifying**

What two reforms did Clinton and Congress agree to support?

The 1996 Election

Main Idea **Riding the tide of economic prosperity, Clinton won reelection over Senator Bob Dole and third-party candidate Ross Perot.**

Reading Connection How important is the unemployment rate during an election year? Read on to discover how low unemployment, inflation, and crime rates helped Clinton win the 1996 election.

As the 1996 campaign began, Clinton took credit for the economy. The economic boom of the 1990s was the longest sustained period of growth in American history. Unemployment and inflation fell to their lowest levels in 40 years. The stock market soared, wages rose, crime rates fell, and the number of people on welfare declined. With the economy booming, Clinton's popularity climbed rapidly.

The Republican Party nominated Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, the Republican leader in the Senate, to run against Clinton. Dole promised a 15 percent tax cut if elected and tried to portray Clinton as a tax-and-spend liberal.

H. Ross Perot also ran again as a candidate. This time he ran as the candidate of the Reform Party, which he had created. Once again Perot made the deficit the main campaign issue.

President Clinton won reelection, winning a little more than 49 percent of the popular vote and 379 electoral votes. Dole received slightly less than 41 percent and 159 electoral votes. Perot won about 8.4 percent of the vote—less than half of what he had received in 1992. Despite Clinton’s victory, Republicans retained control of Congress.

Reading Check **Explaining** Why do you think President Clinton won reelection in 1996?

Clinton’s Second Term

Main Idea Clinton tried to focus the domestic agenda on the needs of children, but personal problems marred his second term.

Reading Connection What president in the 1800s was threatened with impeachment? Read on to learn about Clinton’s impeachment trial.

During Clinton’s second term, the economy continued its expansion. As people’s incomes rose, so too did the amount of taxes they paid. At the same time, despite their differences, the president and Congress continued to shrink the deficit. In 1997, for the first time in 24 years, the president was able to **submit** a

balanced budget to Congress. Beginning in 1998, the government began to run a surplus—that is, it collected more money than it spent.

Putting Children First During his second term, Clinton’s domestic agenda shifted toward children’s issues. He began by asking Congress to pass a \$500-per-child tax credit. He also signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act and asked Congress to ban cigarette advertising aimed at children. In August 1997, Clinton signed the Children’s Health Insurance Program—a plan to provide health insurance for children whose parents could not afford it.

Clinton also continued his efforts to help students. “I come from a family where nobody had ever gone to college before,” Clinton said. “When I became president, I was determined to do what I could to give every student that chance.” To help students, he asked for a tax credit, a large increase in student grants, and an expansion of the Head Start program for preschoolers.

Clinton Is Impeached The robust economy and his high standing in the polls allowed Clinton to regain the initiative in dealing with Congress. By 1998, however, he had become entangled in a serious scandal that threatened to undermine his presidency.

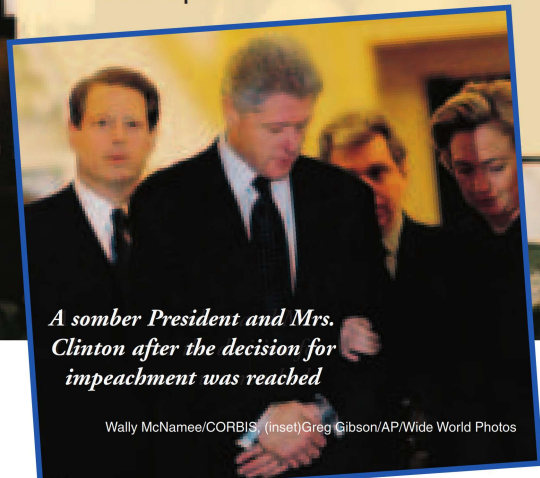
The scandal began in Clinton’s first term, when he was accused of arranging illegal loans for

Impeaching the President



Chief Justice William Rehnquist being sworn in for the impeachment trial in the Senate

The Constitution gives Congress the power to remove a president from office “upon impeachment for and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other High Crimes and Misdemeanors.” The House of Representatives has the sole power over impeachment—the formal accusation of wrongdoing in office. If the majority of the House votes to impeach the president, the Senate conducts a trial. A two-thirds vote of those present is needed for conviction. When the impeachment proceeding involves a president, the chief justice of the United States presides.



A somber President and Mrs. Clinton after the decision for impeachment was reached

Wally McNamee/CORBIS (inset) Greg Gibson/AP/Wide World Photos

Whitewater Development—an Arkansas real estate company—while he was governor of that state. Attorney General Janet Reno decided that an independent counsel should investigate the president. A special three-judge panel appointed **Kenneth Starr**, a former federal judge, to this position.

In early 1998, a new scandal emerged involving a personal relationship between the president and a White House intern. Some evidence suggested that the president had committed **perjury**, or had lied under oath, about the relationship. The three-judge panel directed Starr to investigate this scandal as well. In September 1998, after examining the evidence, Starr sent his report to the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives. Starr argued that Clinton had obstructed justice, abused his power as president, and committed perjury.

After the 1998 elections, the House began impeachment hearings. Clinton's supporters charged that Starr's investigation was politically motivated. Clinton's accusers argued that the president was accountable if his actions were illegal.

On December 19, 1998, the House of Representatives passed two articles of impeachment, one for perjury and one for obstruction of justice. The vote split almost evenly along party lines, and the case moved to the Senate for trial. On February 12, 1999, the senators cast their votes. The vote was 55 to 45 that Clinton was not guilty of perjury, and 50–50 on the charge of obstruction of justice. Although both votes were well short of the two-thirds needed to remove the president from office, Clinton's reputation had suffered.

 **Reading Check** **Examining** What events led to the impeachment of President Clinton?

Clinton's Foreign Policy

 **During Clinton's second term, the United States became more involved in world events.**

Reading Connection When and why was NATO created? Read on to find out how the United States and NATO worked to resolve a crisis in southeastern Europe.

While attracting worldwide attention, the impeachment drama did not affect world affairs. The collapse of the Soviet Union virtually ended the struggle between communism and democracy, but small bloody wars continued to erupt around the world. On several occasions President Clinton used force to bring an end to regional conflicts.

The Haitian Intervention In 1991 military leaders in Haiti overthrew Jean Bertrand Aristide, the country's first democratically elected president in many decades. Aristide sought refuge in the United States. The new rulers of Haiti used violence, even murder, to suppress the opposition. Seeking to restore democracy, the Clinton administration convinced the United Nations to impose a trade embargo on Haiti. The embargo created a severe economic crisis in that country. Thousands of Haitian refugees fled to the United States in small boats, and many died at sea.

Determined to put an end to the crisis, Clinton ordered an invasion of Haiti. Before the troops arrived, however, former president Jimmy Carter convinced Haiti's rulers to step aside.

Peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo The United States also was concerned about mounting tensions in southeastern Europe. During the Cold War, Yugoslavia had been a single federated nation made up of many different ethnic groups under a strong Communist government. In 1991, after the collapse of communism, Yugoslavia split apart.

In Bosnia, one of the former Yugoslav republics, a vicious three-way civil war erupted between Orthodox Christian Serbs, Catholic Croatians, and Bosnian Muslims. Despite international pressure, the fighting continued until 1995. The Serbs began what they called **ethnic cleansing**—the brutal expulsion of an ethnic group from a geographic area. In some cases, Serbian troops slaughtered the Muslims instead of moving them.

The United States convinced its NATO allies that military action was necessary. NATO war-planes attacked the Serbs in Bosnia, forcing them to negotiate. The Clinton administration then arranged peace talks in Dayton, Ohio. The participants signed a peace plan known as the **Dayton Accords**. In 1996 some 60,000 NATO troops, including 20,000 Americans, entered Bosnia to enforce the plan.

In 1998 another war erupted, this time within the Serbian province of Kosovo. Kosovo has two major ethnic groups—Serbs and Albanians. Many of the Albanians wanted Kosovo to separate from Serbia. To keep Kosovo in Serbia, Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic ordered a crackdown. The Albanians then organized their own army to fight back. Worried by reports of Serbian violence against Albanian civilians, President Clinton convinced European leaders that NATO should again use force to stop the fighting. In March 1999, NATO began bombing Serbia. The bombing convinced Serbia to pull its troops out of Kosovo.

Peacemaking in the Middle East Despite the overwhelming defeat Iraq suffered in the Persian Gulf War, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein remained in power and continued to make threats against Iraq's neighbors. Hussein's threats eventually escalated into action. In 1996 Iraq attacked the Kurds, an ethnic group whose homeland lies in northern Iraq. To stop the attacks, the United States fired cruise missiles at Iraqi military targets.

Relations between Israel and the Palestinians were even more volatile. Many believed progress was being made in achieving peace. In 1993 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat reached an agreement. The PLO recognized Israel's right to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians. President Clinton then invited Arafat and Rabin to the White House, where they signed the Declaration of Principles—a plan for creating a Palestinian government.

Opposition to the peace plan emerged on both sides. Radical Palestinians exploded bombs in Israel and in 1995 a right-wing Israeli assassinated Prime Minister Rabin.

In 1998 Israeli and Palestinian leaders met with President Clinton at the Wye River plantation in Maryland to work out details of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This agreement, however, failed to settle the status of Jerusalem, which both sides claimed.

In July 2000, President Clinton invited Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to reach an agreement, but these talks failed. Beginning in October, violence started to break out between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. The region was as far from peace as ever.



Picturing History

Middle East Conflict The struggle over control of the Israeli/Palestinian areas intensified in the 1990s. Although President Clinton directed many negotiations to attempt to resolve the conflict, the region remained a very dangerous place. [Which leaders agreed to a framework for peace in 1993?](#)

Clinton Leaves Office As he prepared to leave office, President Clinton's legacy was uncertain. He had balanced the budget and presided over the greatest period of economic growth in American history. Clinton's presidency was marred, however, by the impeachment trial, which had divided the nation and widened the divide between liberals and conservatives. In the election of 2000, that division would lead to the closest election in American history.

 **Reading Check Identifying** In what three regions of the world did Clinton use force to support his foreign policy?

HISTORY *Online* **Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Vocabulary** Define: modify, stress, submit, perjury, ethnic cleansing.
- People and Terms** Identify: AmeriCorps, Contract with America, Kenneth Starr, Dayton Accords.
- Explain** why the federal government shut down in 1995.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Evaluating** What government policies helped create the U.S. prosperity of the 1990s?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** Why was President Clinton able to win reelection in 1996?
- Categorizing** Complete a chart similar to the one below by explaining the foreign policy issues facing President Clinton in each of the areas listed.

Region	Issue
Latin America	
Southeastern Europe	
Middle East	

Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Photographs** Study the photographs on page 939 of Clinton's impeachment trial. What elements in the photograph reflect the seriousness of the occasion?

Writing About History

- Persuasive Writing** Take on the role of a member of Congress. Write a letter in which you attempt to persuade other lawmakers to vote either for or against the impeachment of President Clinton. Provide reasons for your position.

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