**Unit 12: Modern Politics Guided Reading Packet**

***SSUSH22 Analyze U.S. international and domestic policies including their influences on technological advancements and social changes during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations.***

***a. Analyze the international policies and actions taken as a response to the Cold War including the opening and establishment of diplomatic relations with China, the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the War Powers Act, the Camp David Accords, and Carter’s response to the 1979 Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis.***

**Richard Nixon’s Presidency: Visits China**

The Cold War conflicts in Korea and Vietnam during the 1950s and 1960s gave way to efforts for deescalating the tension with world rivals. Nixon's two terms as President were marked by tremendous highs and lows. Nixon won the election in 1968 based on promises to end the war in Vietnam and to restore law and order in the United States. His efforts to secure more peaceful diplomacy with China and the Soviet Union helped to win him a second term as President. However, shortly after he was reelected in 1972, the Nixon administration fell amid domestic controversy surrounding the Watergate scandal. Under the Carter administration, the emphasis in world affairs began to shift to the Middle East.

The anti-war movement regained some support following Nixon's escalation of the Vietnam War in 1970. Instead of ending the war as he promised in the 1968 Presidential campaign, it seemed as though the war was actually expanding. President Nixon invaded Cambodia in 1970, which touched off widespread protests. One such protest was at **Kent State University** in Ohio. Four students were killed and several other students were wounded by the **Ohio National Guard**. The Vietnam anti-war movement was a key factor in the United States' decision to withdraw from Southeast Asia.

Nixon's foreign policy goal was to establish cordial relations with the world's leading nations. The major sticking point that stalled improved relations with these other countries was the Vietnam War. In an effort to end the fighting in Vietnam, Nixon worked at normalizing relations with the **People's Republic of China**. Initially, China ignored the United States' overtures, but continued conflict between the Soviet Union and China over their shared frontier led the Chinese to secretly approach the Nixon administration.

In February 1972, Nixon, **National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger**, key advisors, and the Nixon family visited China in a well-publicized trip. Nixon and Kissinger met with Communist Party **Chairman Mao Zedong** and **China's Premier Zhou Enlai**. The United States agreed to a **One China Policy**, which meant that Taiwan was part of China and not a separate entity. The United States would assist in seeking a peaceful solution to the China-Taiwan issue. In addition to opening China up for future business relations, Nixon's visit led the Soviet Union to abandon support for North Vietnam. The Soviets also agreed to negotiate a new nuclear disarmament treaty. North Vietnam, having lost the support of both the Soviet Union and China, concluded a peace treaty with the United States in early 1973.

**Richard Nixon Presidency: War Powers Act**

One key action taken in the United States following the Vietnam War was to redistribute power concerning military action among the federal branches of government. The President had been given immense unilateral power through the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to take any measures he deemed necessary to protect the United States. The Congress had been powerless through much of the Vietnam War to adjust the level of troop commitment to the region because of the Gulf of Tonkin's unlimited provisions. Once the war was over, the Congress passed the **War Powers Act** in 1973. The provisions of the new policy require the Congress to authorize troop commitments within a certain time frame. The measure redistributed power to conduct military operations between the executive and legislative branches.

**Richard Nixon’s Presidency: The Watergate Scandal**

Richard Nixon was reelected to a second term as president in 1972. Over the course of the next few years information began to slowly come to light that illegal activity was emanating from the highest levels of government. The Nixon re-election campaign took illegal campaign contributions from corporations who had in turn sought special favors from the President. An even bigger scandal emerged when evidence came out that Richard Nixon authorized (or at least knew about) the burglary of the offices of the **Democratic National Headquarters** in the Washington D.C. **Watergate Complex**. The burglars were trying to find out Democratic campaign strategies and to leave eavesdropping equipment in the office. The Nixon White House tried to cover-up its involvement and obstructed the Congressional investigation. When Nixon’s level of involvement in the situation became apparent through investigative news reporting, the House of Representatives began to draw up articles of **impeachment** against the President. Based upon the opinions of both the House and Senate, Congressional Republican leaders informed the President that he would be convicted during an impeachment trial. As a result, Nixon resigned from office on August 9, 1974 to avoid being the first President removed from office.

**Document Analysis 1**

**Gerald Ford’s Presidency**

Upon Nixon’s resignation, his Vice President was sworn in as the new President to finish out the term. **Gerald Ford** was the new President. He was a well-respected thirteen term Congressman from Michigan and had replaced **Spiro Agnew** as Vice President when Agnew had been forced to resign over tax evasion charges.

The on-going issues surrounding the Watergate scandal maintained their hold on the government once Ford became President. Rather than continue to drag out the criminal portion of Watergate, Ford **pardoned** former President Nixon of any federal criminal wrong-doing. Despite harsh criticism of his action, Ford believed that it was time to put what he described as the national nightmare behind the country and focus on the issues at hand.

The Watergate scandal had a number of implications. Most significantly, there was increased cynicism and distrust of the government, which led to fewer Americans voting in elections and fewer candidates seeking office. The two-party system was also weakened, as the reputation of the Republican Party was damaged. The Democratic nominee for President in 1976, **Jimmy Carter**, campaigned as an outsider who would bring integrity and transparency to the office. He won a convincing victory. A few positive outcomes came from the Watergate crisis. The media was credited with doggedly working to expose the problems of the President. The Constitutional protection afforded to the media allowed the press to do their job as gatherers and disseminators of information, even as it was revealed that threats and intimidation were leveled at them. Another positive outcome was that the crisis demonstrated the effectiveness of the United States’ democratic system, especially the success of checks and balances.

Ford also was in office when the South Vietnamese government collapsed. The communist North Vietnamese successfully took over South Vietnam in 1975, only a few years after the peace terms had been negotiated. Thus, the efforts of the United States to stop the spread of communism were unsuccessful in protecting South Vietnam from takeover. Ford was not re-elected.

**Jimmy Carter’s Presidency: The Camp David Accords**In 1976, James (Jimmy) Earl Carter was elected President. Carter based his foreign policy on human rights. In 1978, Carter brokered a deal known as the **Camp David Accords** to end the Israeli-Egyptian conflict. **Egyptian President Anwar Sadat** and **Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin** ultimately signed a peace treaty. The two adversaries had been at the Presidential retreat known as Camp David in Maryland for almost two weeks of negotiations led by President Carter. In the resulting treaty, Israel agreed to withdraw from the **Sinai Peninsula** and Egypt agreed to recognize the legitimacy of Israel.

**Jimmy Carter’s Presidency: Iran Hostage Crisis**While the Camp David Accords were viewed by many to be a diplomatic success in setting the Middle East on a path toward peace, Carter's administration was rocked by other challenges in the region. The United States supported the authoritarian regime of the **Shah of Iran**. This led to a break in **U.S.-Iranian** relations. **Islamic fundamentalists** overthrew the Iranian government in a 1979 revolution. The revolt marked the beginning of a new era in the region. The fundamentalists hated the United States for its support of Israel and for what was perceived as a corruption of the Islamic World by western ideology.

At this time, Iranian-backed terrorist groups increasingly targeted the United States and U.S. interests abroad for terrorist attacks. As a part of the revolution, the Iranians seized control of the **U.S. Embassy** in Tehran, Iran in November 1979. The embassy staff was held hostage until January 1981. After negotiations failed to obtain the hostages' release, a rescue attempt was made, but it also failed. The failure of President Carter to obtain the release of the hostages in Iran was a major reason for Carter's re-election loss in 1980.

***b. Connect major domestic issues to their social effects including the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the emergence of the National Organization for Women, Nixon’s resignation due to the Watergate scandal, and his pardon by Ford.***

**Document Analysis 2**

**“***There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example—where had they gone? Many people spoke of them, puzzled and disturbed. The feeding stations in the backyards were deserted. The few birds seen anywhere were moribund [dying]; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.…*

*The roadsides, once so attractive, were now lined with browned and withered vegetation as though swept by fire. These, too, were silent, deserted by all living things. Even the streams were now lifeless. Anglers [fishermen] no longer visited them, for all the fish had died.*

*In the gutters under the eaves and between the shingles of the roofs, a white granular powder [DDT] still showed a few patches; some weeks before it had fallen like snow upon the roofs and the lawns, the fields and streams.”*

Source: Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, Houghton Mifflin, 1962 (adapted)

**Creation of the Environmental Protection Agency**

The modern environmental movement gained momentum during the 1970s as a result of two events. The earlier publication of **Silent Spring** by **Rachel Carson** grabbed the attention of Americans who became concerned about pollutants and the harm they were doing to the environment. Rachel Carson was an ecologist and naturalist. She wrote on nature for the United States government during the Great Depression. Concerned over the effects of the widespread use of **synthetic pesticides** during World War II, she wrote Silent Spring. Her simple examples helped readers to understand how all life was interrelated. Her study prompted local communities to monitor the effects of spraying or dusting for harmful insects. Her work was also instrumental in founding the modern environmental and subsequent government actions to protect the environment.

The second event, which prompted greater public awareness of the nation and world's environmental issues, was the creation of **Earth Day** in 1970. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, who wanted to start an environmental movement similar to the on-going anti-war movement, created the Earth Day movement. Twenty million Americans took to parks, streets, and auditoriums across the United States to rally for a healthy, sustainable environment on April 22, 1970.

The massive support for environmentalism brought on by the publication of Silent Spring and the development of Earth Day led to the creation of the United States **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** and the passage of the **Clean Air**, **Clean Water**, and **Endangered Species Acts**. The EPA was the executive branch agency responsible for monitoring the environment, pollutants emitted by industrial facilities, and enforcing the laws passed by Congress to protect the environment.

**National Organization for Women**

Another issue that gained attention during the modern era was the **Women’s Movement**. Although women acquired suffrage in 1920, there was still disparity between men and women in terms of economic and social equality. The passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 included **Title VII**, which forbade the discrimination of women and formed the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)** to enforce the provisions of Title VII**.** However, when the EEOC allowed continued gender segregated job postings, **Betty Friedan** (feminist author) and **Dr. Pauli Murray** (Yale University law professor) decided to organize a women’s rights movement similar to the other civil rights movements. The new effort was devoted strictly to women’s causes. Friedan and Murray, along with 300 other men and women, created the **National Organization for Women (NOW)** in October 1966.

According to NOW’s 1966 Statement of Purpose, the organization’s goal was “to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.” The following year, NOW set as its national goals the promotion of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the repeal of all abortion laws, and the creation of publicly funded child care. Further goals included the ending of sexual discrimination in the areas of hiring, promotion, and wages.

***SSUSH23 Assess the political, economic, and technological changes since 1981.***

1. ***Analyze challenges faced by recent presidents including the collapse of the Soviet Union, Clinton’s impeachment, the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the war against terrorism.***
2. ***Examine economic policies of recent presidents including Reaganomics.***

**Ronald Reagan’s Presidency: Reaganomics**

The economy of the United States has experienced highs and lows during recent presidential administrations. To address the 1970s stagnant economy, President Reagan instituted what became known as **Reaganomics**. The economy grew during the Reagan years of the 1980s but the growth came with large federal budget deficits. The later economic challenges that George H.W. Bush experienced during his term in office were taken on by President Clinton in his 1990s effort to end the budget deficit through tax cuts and reduced federal spending. During the War on Terror, President George W. Bush increased spending in the wake of the September 11th attacks. President Obama entered office with the economic recession of the early 2000s. His economic policy included a stimulus package to increase jobs and economic growth. Overall, the modern Presidents experienced significant economic growth and decline. Each approached economic policy differently.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President by campaigning against what was cast as a weak and ineffective Carter presidency. Reagan pledged to restore the United States' economy and prestige at home and abroad. One basic principle of his domestic policy was the belief in **supply-side economics**, often referred to as Reaganomics. President Reagan held that if Americans had more money to spend, then the economy would improve.

There were four key components to Reaganomics:

1. Reduce government spending

2. Reduce income tax and capital gains tax

3. Reduce government regulation

4. Control the money supply to reduce inflation

In general, the United States experienced a sustained period of economic growth during the period. However, federal deficits also increased dramatically, which led to economic problems in the 1990s.

**Document Analysis 3**

**Ronald Reagan’s Presidency: Collapse of the Soviet Union**

The modern Presidencies of Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama all dealt with challenges. Some challenges were more significant than others. The Reagan years in the White House began with the continuation of the Cold War division of international power and influence between the United States and the Soviet Union. The nuclear weapon capability of both sides was massive. Over the course of Reagan's two terms in office, the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The events leading up to the collapse were rapid and surprising.

The Soviet Union built up its military arsenal in the late 1970s and early 1980s but the United States still maintained a qualitative edge. President Reagan began modernizing U.S. forces and contemplating a new anti-ballistic missile shield called the **Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI),** which was sometimes referred to as "Star Wars". The Soviets could not respond to this modernization because the cost was beyond their resources. The Soviet Union's economy was in great decline after years of failure in agricultural and industrial production. Reagan put further pressure on his Cold War rivals by persuading the Saudi Arabians to lower the price of crude oil, thereby undercutting the Soviet Union's chief source of revenue - oil exports. The Soviet President, **Mikhail Gorbachev**, decided to begin a policy of **Perestroika** (economic rebuilding) and **Glasnost** (political reform).

President Gorbachev set up policies allowing free speech, free press, and other reforms. The changes put the Soviet Union on a path to democratic government. President Reagan played on these changes and began open dialogue with Gorbachev. The more cooperative relationship between the Cold War rivals resulted in a **nuclear arms agreement** between the United States and the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's reforms led to a collapse of the Soviet Union through a reduction in the Kremlin's control over the various states that comprised the Soviet Union. The Eastern European nations, which had been satellite states of the Soviet Union since the close of World War II, also rebelled against their oppressor and established their own democratic states. By 1989, the Cold War was over. The effort of President Reagan to foster the relationship with Gorbachev helped to end the Cold War and was a highlight of his presidency.

After Ronald Reagan served two terms as President, his Vice President **George H.W. Bush** was elected in 1988. He served one term, which included a costly economic downturn and the successful use of military resources in the 1991 **Gulf War** against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. President George H.W. Bush lost his reelection bid to the Democratic Candidate, **Bill Clinton**, in 1992.

**Bill Clinton’s Presidency: Impeachment**

Like George H.W. Bush, Clinton's presidency had successes and challenges. One of Clinton's highlights was the end of the national budget deficit, which resulted in a **budget surplus**. This economic success was achieved through tax cuts and reduced government spending. However, Clinton's presidency was challenged by a scandal that led to his impeachment.

Bill Clinton became the second president in United States history to be impeached. The House of Representatives charged him with **perjury** and **obstruction of justice**. The impeachment charges were based on accusations of improper use of money from a real estate deal and allegations that Clinton lied under oath about the improper relationship he had with a White House intern. Clinton denied the charges and the Senate **acquitted** him, allowing the President to remain in office and finish his second term. Clinton's second term ended with the 2000 election of the Republican candidate **George W. Bush.**

**Document Analysis 4**

*“On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks----but never before on thousands of civilians.*

*Americans are asking: Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda…. its goal is remaking the world---- and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.”*

 Source: George W. Bush, Address to Congress and the American people following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks,

 September 20, 2001.

**George W. Bush’s Presidency: Terrorist Attacks on 9/11**

George W. Bush entered the White House after a tumultuous 2000 Presidential Election that ended with legal challenges of the result. The Democratic Candidate was Clinton's Vice President, **Al Gore**. Although Bush won the Electoral College vote, Gore won the popular vote in the election. The contested vote centered on Florida's election results. The margin of victory in Florida was so close that a mandatory recount occurred. Gore requested a hand count of questionable ballots. All of these processes ran afoul of Florida election law and resulted in lawsuits filed in both state and federal courts over the appropriateness of vote recounts. Ultimately, the Supreme Court ruled that a statewide vote recount would be unconstitutional and Bush was declared the winner in Florida. The nation was greatly divided moving forward to the 2001 inauguration of George W. Bush.

The political division caused by the controversial election quickly came to an end with the national tragedy experienced on **September 11, 2001**. On that fateful day, an Islamist terrorist group launched a series of attacks on the United States using airplanes as weapons. The **World Trade Center Twin Towers** in New York City and the **Pentagon** in Washington D.C. were hit and another airliner crashed after passengers and crewmembers forced the terrorists to crash prior to reaching an unspecified Washington D.C. target.

**George W. Bush’s Presidency: War on Terrorism**

In response, and with overwhelming support of both Congress and the American people, Bush quickly signed the **Patriot Act**. The law allowed the United States government to hold foreign citizens suspected of being terrorists for up to seven days without charging them with a crime. The law also increased the ability of American law enforcement agencies to search private communications and personal records to thwart future terrorist attacks. The Patriot Act later came under scrutiny as questions of privacy emerged. Bush's administration also created the **Department of Homeland Security** in the wake of the terrorist attack and tasked the agency with protecting the United States from terrorist attacks and responding to natural disasters. Most of these responses to the 9/11 attack were supported by Americans at the time.

In October 2001, Bush took another step in his response to the September 11th attack. He authorized **Operation Enduring Freedom**, which was an invasion of Afghanistan by the United States military and allied forces. Afghanistan's **Taliban** government was harboring the **al-Qaeda** leadership. The allied forces quickly defeated the Taliban government and destroyed the al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan; however, al-Qaeda's leader **Osama bin Laden** escaped.

The invasion of Afghanistan was part of President Bush's larger **War on Terrorism**, for which he built an international coalition to fight the al-Qaeda network and other terrorist groups responsible for the attack on the United States. In March 2003, American and British troops invaded Iraq in **Operation Iraqi Freedom**. Iraq's president, **Saddam Hussein**, went into hiding while U.S. forces searched for **weapons of mass destruction**. Bush feared Hussein had the weapons and could supply them to terrorists for use against the United States. No weapons of mass destruction were found during the operation. However, Hussein was captured, convicted of crimes against humanity, and executed in 2006. Bush's presidency was challenging from the beginning. He had the support of most Americans immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks but lost some support when no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq.

***c. Examine the influence of technological changes on society including the personal computer, the internet, and social media.***

**Technological Changes**

Technology in the late Twentieth Century dramatically changed society. The efficiency of new technological innovations led to greater productivity in business, industrial, and personal sectors. Communication was revolutionized as new platforms took hold at the start of the new millennium.

Scholars at the University of Pennsylvania designed the first computer in 1946. Their device was known as **ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer)**. While it was the first step into the new technological age, it was not practical for widespread consumer use. ENIAC was enormous and had a limited capacity for output. The next step was to reduce the size of the computer's hardware in order to make the technology viable for business and eventually personal use. That development came about in 1971 with the invention of the **microprocessor**. The power of ENIAC was thus harnessed and contained in a silicon chip the size of a postage stamp. The capability of computers was growing very quickly with computation and word processing functions. Technology innovators were also improving the speed at which computers were able to process data.

As computer technology improved, a vast new world of instant, global communication arose. During the 1980s and 1990s, **Internet** was developed as a conglomeration of computer networks from around the world. **Personal computers** became popular as the Internet became more accessible to individuals. No longer was computer technology used solely in business and manufacturing settings. Home computers became more affordable and practical in their capability for individual use.

A new platform for communication emerged from the development of the Internet. The term **Email** is short for electronic mail. In the mid-1990s, the use of Email started to become a popular mode for sending messages instantly over the Internet. No longer did commercial companies or individuals have to wait for written documents, messages, or information to be physically transported. Instead, Email is an immediate method of information transfer. Email changed the way business communication is conducted and the way individuals often communicate.

**Social Media** is another recent technological phenomenon in which individuals share information in online communities. Popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Individuals create accounts and share or post messages, photos, and videos to the online community they create. The popularity of social media has dramatically increased in the first few decades of the Twenty-first Century. Social media is becoming a source for news and instant information sharing. While popular, there are growing concerns about the credibility and reliability of some information disseminated through social media. **Cyber bullying** is another problem that has resulted from the advent of social media.

Technological changes in the Twenty-first Century have been dramatic. Businesses and individuals rely heavily on computers, the Internet, and social media for communication and productivity. While innovation has increased global connectivity and efficiency, there have been some negative consequences that came along with the new technology. Privacy, trustworthiness of information being presented, and cyber security risks are all challenges that must be addressed as technology continues to evolve.

***d. Examine the historic nature of the presidential election of 2008.***

**Presidential Election of 2008**

The candidates in the Presidential Election of 2008 campaigned on the issues of the lagging economy and the war to fight terrorism. Trillions of dollars had been spent on the war in Iraq, the economy was weakening, and unemployment was on the rise. It was a politically charged campaign that led to the historic outcome of the election in which the first person of color was elected to be President of the United States.

Many Americans and journalists thought Hillary Clinton would be the Democratic nominee for the 2008 Presidential Election. Instead the Democratic Party nominated **Barack Obama**. His platform of "Hope and Change," delivered with skilled oratory, captured the attention of his party and many Americans. Obama was relatively new to national politics having only served one term as a Senator from Illinois. Barack Obama was a 47 year old, Harvard educated lawyer when he was elected President. He was the biracial son of a White woman from Kansas and a Black man from Kenya.

Obama's Republican opponent in the 2008 Presidential Election was Senator **John McCain** of Arizona. In contrast to Obama's youth and lack of national political experience, McCain was a veteran on both counts. He was 72 years old during the campaign in 2008, had served in the United States Congress for 25 years, and was a Vietnam War veteran who was shot down and captured as a Prisoner of War. The campaign between McCain and Obama was hard fought. Ultimately, Obama won with an Electoral College victory of 365-173.

Barack Obama was reelected in 2012 over the Republican nominee, **Mitt Romney**. Obama served two terms as President. One of the major outcomes of his presidency was the controversial passage of **Healthcare Reform (Obamacare)** in 2010. His foreign policy effort was highlighted by the elimination of Osama bin Laden, who was America's prime target in the War on Terror after the September 11th attack. A **Navy SEAL team** killed bin Laden on May 11, 2011. Throughout Obama's historic presidency there was a growing conservative movement that opposed the efforts of the President and the Democratic Party. The result was a deep political divide in the United States that pitted Democrats and Republicans in bitter state and national elections.

**Document Analysis 5**

