

1980's

Introduction

This unit emphasizes writing and critical thinking. There are three types of activities. The news stories, writing exercises and telegrams require students to evaluate, prioritize and write about historical events. They must **use** the information, rather than just memorize it.

The chronology and data analysis activities require students to detect trends and draw conclusions.

The viewpoints and issues activities present different views of the same event rather than just the single view often presented by textbooks. The critical thinking exercises that accompany these units require the students to evaluate the information.

Many of the activities deal with popular news stories of the decade that are usually not covered in textbooks.

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Creative Activities for Teaching Critical Thinking and Writing U.S. History: 20th Century

There are nine units in this series.

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Critical Thinking

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Public Debt of the U.S.

Year	Debt (billions)	Per Capita (dollars)	Interest Paid (billions)	Pct. of Federal Outlay
1970	370.1	1,814	19.3	9.9
1971	397.3	1,921	21.0	10.0
1972	426.4	2,037	21.8	9.4
1973	457.3	2,164	24.2	9.8
1974	474.2	2,223	29.3	10.9
1975	533.2	2,475	32.7	9.8
1976	620.4	2,852	37.1	10.0
1977	698.8	3,170	41.9	10.2
1978	771.5	3,463	48.7	10.6
1979	826.5	3,669	59.8	11.9
1980	907.7	3,985	74.9	12.7
1981	997.9	4,338	95.6	14.1
1982	1,142.0	4,913	117.4	15.7
1983	1,377.2	5,870	128.8	15.9
1984	1,572.3	6,640	153.8	18.1
1985	1,823.1	7,598	178.9	18.9
1986	2,125.3	8,774	190.2	19.2
1987	2,350.3	9,615	195.4	19.5
1988	2,602.3	10,534	214.1	20.1

Directions

1. What trends do you see in this chart?

2. Make a line graph showing the change in the debt from 1970 to 1988.

Direct Foreign Investment in the U.S.
(billions of dollars)

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1986	1987	1988
All countries	13.2	27.6	83.0	184.6	220.4	271.7	328.8
Canada	3.1	5.3	12.1	17.1	20.3	24.0	27.3
Europe	9.5	18.5	54.4	121.4	144.1	186.0	216.4
Netherlands	2.1	5.3	19.1	37.0	40.7	49.1	48.9
Switzerland	1.5	2.1	5.0	10.5	12.0	14.6	15.8
United Kingdom	4.1	6.3	14.1	43.5	55.9	79.6	101.9
W. Germany	0.68	1.4	7.5	14.8	17.2	20.3	23.8
Japan	0.229	0.591	4.7	19.3	26.8	35.1	53.3
Middle East	—	—	—	—	—	4.9	5.8

Directions

1. Make a line graph comparing the investments of Japan, United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

2. What trends do you see in foreign investment in the U.S.?

Directions

Below is a series of statements about the 1980's. There are four types of statements. 1. True facts which are well-documented. 2. Arguable facts which are not well-documented but can be proven true or false with further research. 3. Purely opinion which are statements judging the facts. 4. Mixed fact and opinion in which the facts are interpreted with a person's opinion. Decide which statements are factual and which are opinions. Mark an F for truly factual statements, AF for an arguable fact, O for opinion and FO for statements that contain an interpreted fact.

1. ____ Ronald Reagan punished the poor.
2. ____ Ronald Reagan increased the defense budget at the expense of social programs.
3. ____ The U.S. and the Soviets agreed to ban intermediate range missiles.
4. ____ Unemployment was reduced during the Reagan years.
5. ____ Reagan cut social programs to build up the military.
6. ____ Reagan cut social programs because he does not care for poor people.
7. ____ Vice-President Dan Quayle is incompetent.
8. ____ The media does not give Dan Quayle a "fair shake."
9. ____ A stronger U.S. military during the Reagan years forced the Soviets to negotiate for arms reduction.
10. ____ There was much corruption during the Reagan administration.
11. ____ Libya supported terrorists.
12. ____ Reagan ordered the bombing of Libya.
13. ____ Reagan picked on small weak countries such as Libya.
14. ____ Reagan knew about the secret, illegal deal to sell arms to Iran to support the Contras in violation of Congress' wishes.
15. ____ Reagan called for a space-based missile defense system called Star Wars.
16. ____ Star Wars is a good idea.
17. ____ Star Wars is impractical.
18. ____ Reagan officials claimed that environmental groups were infiltrated by communists.
19. ____ The 1980's were very prosperous.
20. ____ The 1980's were very prosperous because unemployment and inflation went down.
21. ____ Reagan's policies encouraged business fraud.
22. ____ Reagan reduced the amount of regulation on business which in turn led to business fraud.
23. ____ Reagan was a racist.
24. ____ Reagan was a racist because he opposed sanctions against the white South African government.
25. ____ Reagan enjoyed high popularity throughout his two terms in office.