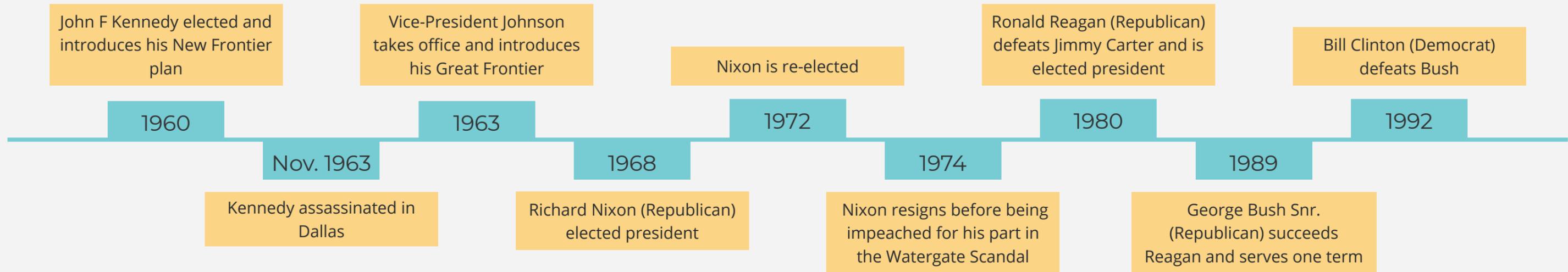


Key Question 4 : What were the main political developments in the USA between 1960 and 2000?

Timeline of events



Key words

New Frontier	the reform policies of Kennedy in the early 1960s
Budget deficit	a countries overspending
National Debt	monies owed by a country
Recession	a general slow down in economic growth
Reaganomics	nickname given to Reagan’s economic policies
CREEP	campaign to Re-elect Pres. Nixon in 1972
Watergate Scandal	the “dirty tricks” campaign which led to Nixon’s resignation
Impeachment	to bring the president to trial for treason
Indirect taxes	taxes levied on goods rather than income

Important concept

The early 1960s was a time of optimism but this was shattered by the assassination of Kennedy. The nation lost confidence in politics and politicians after Watergate but political credibility began to be restored with Reagan’s presidency.

The greater our knowledge increases, the more our ignorance unfolds. - JFK

Nixon and Watergate

Richard Nixon (Republican) was elected president in 1968 and re-elected in 1972 but was forced to resign as a result of the **Watergate Scandal**.

- 1970 – Nixon set up the **Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP)** with permission to use any means necessary.
- June 1972 – five members of CREEP were arrested for a break-in at the Watergate offices of the Democrat Party.
- Nixon denied any knowledge of the incident, ordered a cover-up and was re-elected.
- January 1973 – the Watergate “burglars” were convicted.
- Nixon refused to cooperate initially but taped recordings confirmed his involvement.
- July 1974 – Congress decided to **impeach** Nixon.
- Aug. 1974 – Nixon resigned and was replaced by **Gerald Ford**.

The experience of Watergate led to a drop in public confidence in the government and president.

The domestic policies of Kennedy

November 1960 – John F Kennedy (Democrat) becomes president and introduces his **New Frontier** programme. The aim was to eradicate the evils of poverty, inequality and deprivation.

Civil Rights - Kennedy aimed at make America a fairer society by granting equal rights for black Americans. In February 1963 he presented a Civil Rights Bill to Congress but it was rejected.

The Economy - He purposely decided not to **balance the budget** to stimulate the economy and introduced tax cuts in order to boost spending and reduce unemployment. He introduced a public work programme on roads and buildings and offered grants to companies to invest in new equipment.

Social Reform - Kennedy proposed an affordable system of health insurance (Medicare). He planned to increase the minimum wage. In 1963, his **Social Security Act** offered help to the elderly and unemployed, however he faced opposition in Congress and many of his initiatives were rejected.

The Reagan Years

Ronald Reagan (Democrat) was elected president in 1980 and was re-elected in 1984.

- He became president at a time of recession with high inflation and rising unemployment.
- He introduced an economic policy called “**Reaganomics**” which advocated tax cuts to encourage spending as part of “**trickle down**” thinking.
- He cut welfare payments including Medicare and slashed taxes
- he introduced the **Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI)** known as “**Stars Wars**” at huge cost which involved a nuclear umbrella to stop Soviet nuclear bombs from reaching America.
- In 1987 there was a severe stock market collapse due mainly to Reagan’s policies.
- In 1988 he created the Office of **National Drug Control Policy** as part of his “war on drugs” programme.
- In 1989 the federal government was spending massively on research into AIDS.

Changes under Bush Senior and Clinton

- **George Bush Senior** (Republican) succeeded Reagan as president in 1989 and served one term in office at a time of economic problems.
- **The budget deficit** had trebled.
- Bush was forced to increase indirect taxes with increased taxation on the wealthy.
- He passed two important acts:
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)** which banned discrimination in employment, public accommodation and transportation.
- **The Clean Air Act (1990)** which aimed to reduce smog, acid rain and pollution.
- **Bill Clinton** (Democrat) was elected in 1992 and served for two terms. He increased government spending, increased taxes and reduced the **national debt**. In 1996 he introduced a minimum hourly rate and proposed a **Health Security Bill**.
- There were moves to **impeach** Clinton over his indiscretion with an official.