A Coalition Takes Power

The New Right and the Reagan Revolution

9-12.US2.38 "Analyze the rise of the New Right and the Reagan Revolution including the social, cultural, and economic policies it advocated for."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons the New Right gained support, circle one economic and one social goal, and write 1 beside a tension in its policies.

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1 In the late 1970s, Americans faced high inflation, slow growth, and doubts about the federal government's ability to solve problems. The New Right brought together business conservatives who wanted lower taxes and fewer regulations, religious conservatives who opposed abortion and supported school prayer, and voters who disliked the size of government. Conservative organizers used direct mail and television to connect these groups. Ronald Reagan's 1980 victory over President Jimmy Carter gave this coalition a chance to put its ideas into national policy.

2 Reagan called for a smaller federal role in the economy. In 1981, Congress passed major income tax cuts that he argued would encourage investment and work. His administration also eased some business regulations and backed cuts to several domestic programs. Yet Reagan supported a large military buildup, and federal deficits grew during his presidency. This mix reveals a tension: the goal of limited government did not mean cutting every kind of federal spending.

3 Social and cultural goals also shaped the Reagan Revolution. Reagan opposed abortion and endorsed a constitutional amendment to permit prayer in public schools, though the amendment did not pass. His administration opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, which would have banned sex discrimination in law. These stances appealed to many religious conservatives but drew opposition from feminists and abortion-rights supporters. The coalition's successes thus came with sharp disputes over whose values public policy should reflect.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did economic conditions and conservative organizing help the New Right rise?

2. How did Reagan's tax and domestic spending policies reflect the New Right's economic goals?

3. Why did Reagan's social positions attract some Americans and draw opposition from others?

4. How did military spending complicate Reagan's goal of limited government?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence briefing for someone studying Reagan's presidency. Explain what drove the New Right's rise, connect one economic and one social goal to its supporters, and assess one conflict or limit in its plans.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.38

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons the New Right gained support, circle one economic and one social goal, and write 1 beside a tension in its policies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did economic conditions and conservative organizing help the New Right rise?	**Inflation and slow growth increased doubts about government, while direct mail and television helped organizers unite groups with different conservative goals.**
2	How did Reagan's tax and domestic spending policies reflect the New Right's economic goals?	**Tax cuts and cuts to several domestic programs reflected its goal of a smaller federal role in the economy.**
3	Why did Reagan's social positions attract some Americans and draw opposition from others?	**His positions on abortion, school prayer, and the Equal Rights Amendment appealed to many religious conservatives but drew opposition from feminists and abortion-rights supporters.**
4	How did military spending complicate Reagan's goal of limited government?	**He supported a large military buildup even as he sought to reduce the government's role elsewhere, and federal deficits grew.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Inflation, slow growth, and doubts about government helped the New Right gain support. Business conservatives favored lower taxes because they wanted less federal involvement in the economy. Many religious conservatives supported Reagan's opposition to abortion because it matched their beliefs. His call for limited government had a limit, however, since he also supported a large military buildup.

Accept other passage-supported links between a group's concerns and a policy. For the final task, look for a clear explanation of the coalition's rise and a supported assessment of a conflict or limit.