

# Limits and Conservatism

*Contemporary United States  
(1968–Present)*



Political fallibility

Energy and economics

**Social concerns**

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about social concerns during the rise of conservatism and be able to answer these key questions:

- What stances did conservative politicians take on social issues?
- How was education affected?
- What happened to the populations of U.S. cities during this time period?



# The rise of neo-conservatism



During this period, the Republican Party gained much support by speaking to issues at the heart of religious conservatism, such as abortion, gay marriage and family values.



In so doing, the Republicans attracted many small-town working class voters. However, much of the legislation enacted by Republican politicians actually favored big businesses and the rich, at the expense of the working class.

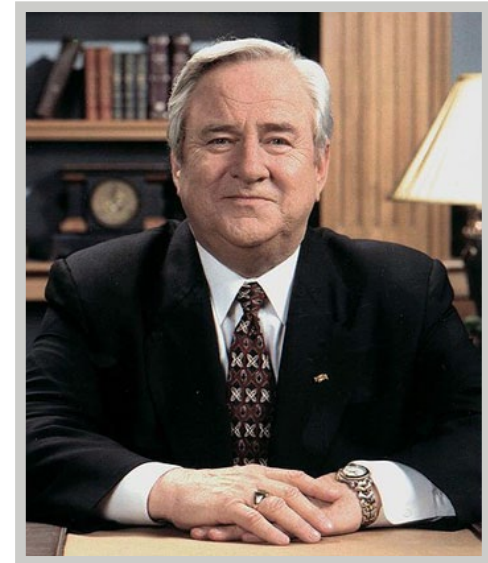
Why did people continue to vote for the Republicans?



The strength of conservatism increased partly as a result of the religious revival in the 1970s and the actions of religious groups, such as evangelical Christians.

One important evangelical Christian group was called the **Moral Majority**.

Founded by the **televangelist** Jerry Falwell, the group believed that the Bible should be interpreted literally.



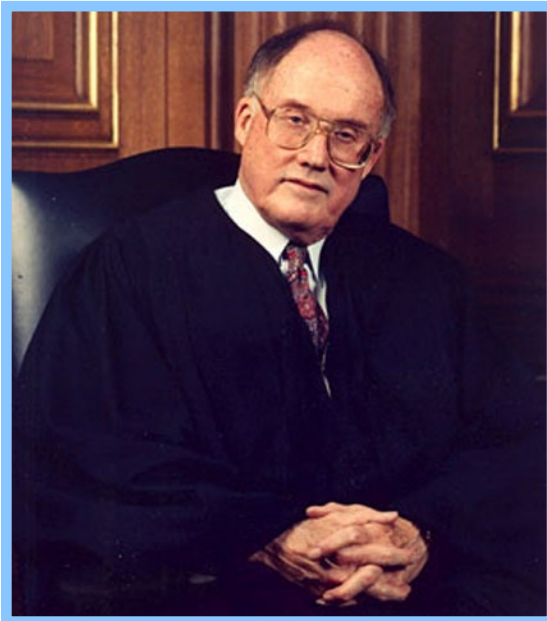
They supported traditional moral values and lobbied politicians with the aim of seeing their views reflected in policies.

What do you think this group campaigned for?



From the 1950s to the 1970s, the Supreme Court was led by **Earl Warren** and then Warren Earl Burger.

Both made liberal rulings in cases such as ***Brown v. Board of Education*** on desegregation, and ***Roe v. Wade*** on abortion.



Then in the mid-1980s, President Ronald Reagan appointed **William Rehnquist** as Chief Justice.

Both he and his successor, John Roberts, moved the Supreme Court in a more conservative direction.

Why was the court's move to conservatism important?



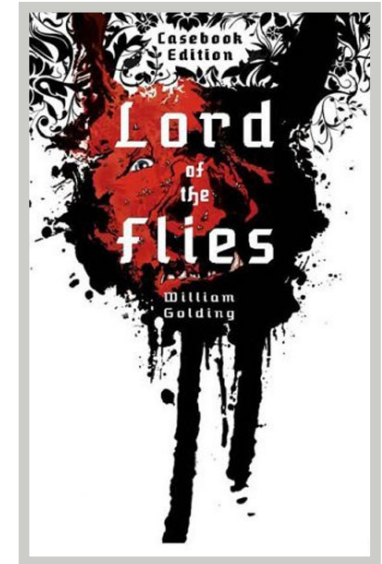


Education was another area that was affected by the strengthening of the conservative movement.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk*. This report stated that standards had declined due to inadequacies in the education system.

To improve education, national standardized testing and key subjects were promoted.

The door was also opened for religious groups to influence public education. This led to religious conservatives banning certain books from many schools and libraries.



What other educational changes were proposed?



Reagan promoted "back to basics" as part of his educational policy. This promoted key subjects and cut those deemed less important. Drag each school subject to the correct place, depending on whether it was considered a basic subject or not.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Do you think it is fair to cut the non-basic subjects?





Read the following opinions about banning books and discuss how much you agree or disagree with them. When you have decided, drag the marker to the appropriate place on the slider scale.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**



Why do you think people ban books?



During the 1980s, health and fitness became new obsessions that began spreading through the U.S.

In particular, society became more proactive about exercise. New trends included:

- new, fancy fitness clubs and spas becoming increasingly popular
- **Jane Fonda** leading a home exercise routine and fitness video craze
- commercials increasingly advertising home exercise equipment.



How else did health become important at this time?



Over the course of the twentieth century, the population of the U.S. had shifted. This is especially noticeable when looking at the population of cities. Watch this animation to find out more about heavily populated cities.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Why do you think the population shifted?



As the population of the U.S. shifted to the South and West, it also became more diverse. In particular, **immigration** from Latin American and East Asian countries grew sharply.

This led to many governmental debates on topics such as:

- language difficulties in schools
- immigrant assimilation
- basic services for immigrants
- penalties for illegal immigration
- immigration quotas
- the granting of **citizenship**.



Why do you think immigration increased?





Test your knowledge of the period of limits and conservatism with this quiz. Choose the correct answer to each question to see how much you can remember about conservatism.

Press **start** to begin.

start







Test your understanding of limits and conservatism by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary. Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**

