

Teaching the 20th



We see the past through the filter of the present. How does that filter change perceptions as the distance between past and present widens? Date the following textbook excerpts—two on the women's movement in the later 20th century and two on Ronald Reagan's presidency—and consider the change in how writers interpret the present as it becomes the past.

1. *A steadily growing number [of women] were entering the professions of medicine, law, education, religion, and the various fields of science and engineering. More and more were occupying positions of leadership in business and government formerly held only by men.*

The above textbook excerpt on feminism and the post-World War II women's movement dates from:

- 1966
- 1978
- 1995
- 2001

2. *In some ways, the position of women in American society was worse in the 1960s than it had been in the 1920s. After forty years, there was a lower percentage of women enrolled in the nation's colleges and professional schools. Women were still relegated to stereotyped occupations like nursing and teaching; there were few female lawyers and even fewer women doctors.*

This textbook excerpt on feminism and the women's movement dates from:

- 1966
- 1978
- 1995
- 2001

3. *With his great popularity and shrewd handling of Congress, Reagan soon got much of his economic program passed. The final bill included \$39 billion in tax cuts and a 25 percent cut in income taxes. The results of Reaganomics, however, were not quite what the President*

had hoped. Spending cuts, together with high interest rates, brought inflation down, but at first the cure was painful.

This textbook excerpt on Ronald Reagan's presidency dates from:

- 1982
- 1999
- 2003
- 2008

4. [Reagan] promised economy in government and a balanced budget, and he committed himself to "supply-side" economics, or tax reductions to businesses to encourage capital investment. But while he planned to slash federal spending, Reagan also pledged to cut income taxes and boost the defense budget—a feat John Anderson said could only be done with mirrors.

This textbook excerpt on Ronald Reagan's presidency dates from:

- 1982
- 1999
- 2003
- 2008

Sources:

Ward, Kyle. *History in the Making: An Absorbing Look at How American History has Changed in the Telling over the Last 200 Years*. New York: New, 2006.

<http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/quiz>