

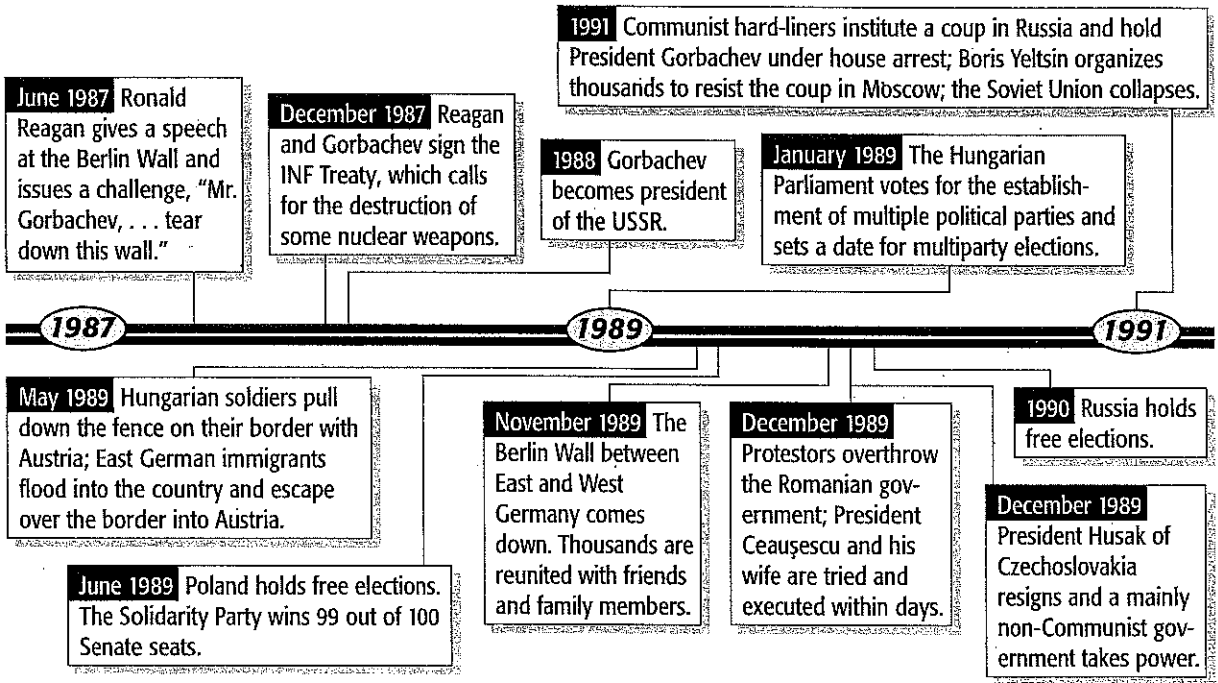
★ Time Line Activity 22

The Fall of Communism

Background

The fall of communism was a series of events that took place in many different countries within a relatively short period of time.

DIRECTIONS: Use the time line information to describe how revolution and the fall of communism took place in the countries listed below.



Hungary: _____

Poland: _____

Czechoslovakia: _____

Romania: _____

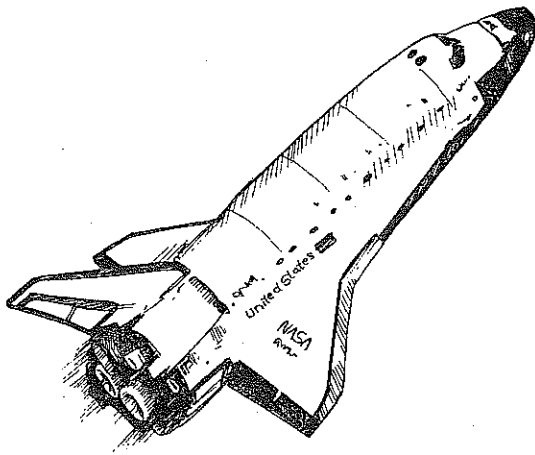
Germany: _____

Russia: _____

The year 1989 is known as "The Year of Victory" because of the number of Communist governments that fell during that year. List the countries that rejected communism in 1989.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Challenger Tragedy



In the early 1980s, NASA's space shuttle program was very active. By the end of 1985, 24 missions had been successfully completed.

In January 1986, NASA prepared to send *Challenger* into space. For the first time, one member of the crew was not a trained astronaut. She was Christa McAuliffe, a history teacher.

Seventy-three seconds after takeoff from the Kennedy Space Center, the U.S. space shuttle *Challenger* exploded, killing everyone on board.

President Reagan formed a special commission to investigate the cause of the accident and develop corrective measures. They found the disaster had been caused by the failure of a sealing ring in

one of the shuttle's solid-fuel rockets. Faulty design of the seal and the unusually cold weather had allowed hot gases to leak through. Flames inside the booster rocket escaped and burned through the shuttle's external fuel tank. Liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen fuels mixed and began to burn, causing the shuttle to tear apart.

The commission also claimed officials at NASA had allowed the launch to take place in spite of concerns voiced by NASA engineers.

Following the *Challenger* disaster, the shuttle launch program was halted for two years until the commission's investigation was completed and designers had made several modifications. NASA implemented stricter regulations for quality control and safety.

Christa McAuliffe had been chosen to join *Challenger's* crew from among 11,000 applications to NASA's Teacher in Space Program. She planned to teach two classes from space, keep a journal of her trip, and use that information to tour the country teaching students about the space program.

In her application, she wrote, "I would like to humanize the Space Age by giving the perspective of a non-astronaut. I think the students will look at that and see that an ordinary person is contributing to history. If they can make that connection, they are going to be excited about history."

1. Explain what you think Ms. McAuliffe meant and why you agree or disagree.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reaganomics and Foreign Affairs

President Reagan's economic policies tended to be conservative, favoring the interests of big business and the wealthy. He reduced or ended many federal programs in an effort to cut government expenses. If the government spent less money, taxes would be lower.

Reagan believed that if taxes were lower, people, especially the wealthy, would invest more money in corporations. As a result, businesses would prosper, producing more jobs and higher wages for workers. He claimed this would create a "trickle-down" effect that would help poor people.

Referred to as "**Reaganomics**," his policies were extremely popular among many, including yuppies and business people. They believed this would help the nation achieve a new level of prosperity. Others criticized him for ending programs to help needy people.

Foreign affairs became another major focus of the Reagan administration. The president took a strong stand against terrorism in 1983 by sending 800 U.S. soldiers as part of an international peacekeeping effort to Lebanon where Christians and Muslims were at war.

Reagan called the Soviet Union a "great evil" and believed it was necessary to prevent the spread of communism. In 1983, he also sent 1,900 U.S. soldiers to Grenada, an island in the Caribbean to prevent the Cuban government from establishing a communist government there.

Relations between the United States and Libya were also tense because of Libya's support of terrorist groups. In 1986, Reagan sent U.S. military planes in a surprise attack on two Libyan cities.

During his second term as president, Reagan met with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The two leaders signed a treaty reducing the number of nuclear missiles and decreasing the tension between the two countries.

1. What is your opinion of "Reaganomics"?

2. Do you think the United States should get involved in the politics of other governments? Why or why not?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Iran-Contra Scandal

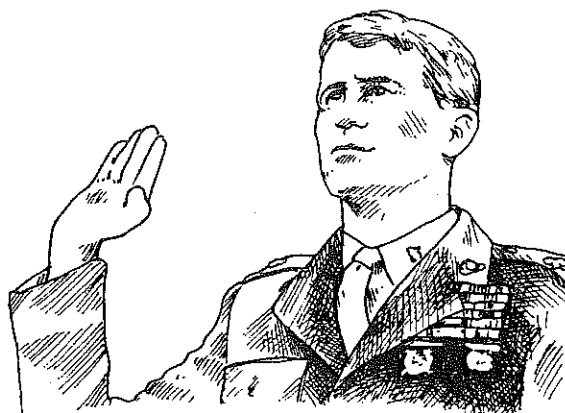
In 1981, President Reagan had directed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to help guerilla forces in Nicaragua overthrow Daniel Ortega's Sandinista government. Soldiers fighting against the communist government of Nicaragua were called Contras.

In 1986, details of what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal came to light. High-ranking members of the Reagan administration had arranged for the secret sale of arms to Iran, in direct violation of current U.S. laws. Profits from the \$30 million in weapons sales were channeled to the Contras to supply them with arms for use against the Sandinista government—also a violation of U.S. policy.

The chief negotiator of these deals was Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a military aide to the National Security Council, who set up a covert network to provide the Contras with their own ships, airplanes, airfields, and secret bank accounts.

Following investigations by the Tower Commission in 1987, a report censured President Reagan and his advisors for not controlling the actions of the National Security Council.

Although the commission claimed the president had the ultimate responsibility for implementation of his administration's policies, they found no firm evidence that he had known about the diversion of funds to the Contras.



Oliver North

Colonel North was tried and convicted of obstructing Congress and unlawfully destroying government documents, but his conviction was later overturned.

A final report in 1994 concluded that although there was no evidence that Reagan had broken the law, the president may have participated in, or known about, a cover-up.

1. Use a dictionary. What does *guerilla* mean? _____

2. Use a dictionary. Define *censure*. _____

3. Do you think a president has the right to break a law or allow others to do so, even if he believes the results are justified? Why or why not?
