The Electronic 1990s

Events and Policies

- GEORGE H. W. BUSH (b. 1924, in office 1989-1993, 41st President)
- BILL CLINTON (b. 1946, in office 1993-2001, 42nd President)

Gulf War (1990-1991)
- Iraq under SADDAM HUSSEIN invades Kuwait, a former province of Iraq, to get hold of the Persian Gulf oil fields
- Operation Desert Shield: the US army transported to the border of Saudi Arabia to defend it if Hussein attacks it
- Operation **Desert Storm**: Hussein did not respond to the UN demand to withdraw and to economic sanctions, the US Congress authorized the offensive operation, bombing of Kuwait and Baghdad and a field operation, succeeded
- the US forces remained in Saudi Arabia, the launching pad for the operations, regarded as occupants by Saudis
- the war was supported by public opinion, was broadcast live, there were relatively small casualties
- dubbed Nintendo War, became the basis for a number of computer games

Balkan Wars (1991-2001)
- after the fall of communism in the area a civil war broke out over ethnic and religious rivalry
- Bush ignored the conflict, Clinton engaged the US as peace-keepers but later ordered bombing on Bosnia (1995)
- **Dayton Agreement** (1995) purported to bring peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed by the Serbian President SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ who promised to create a multiethnic state
- Albanians started a guerilla war against Serbians in Kosovo, a part of Serbia before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, NATO authorized an air strike in Kosovo (1995) and US joined the forces

Somali Civil War (1991-present)
- Battle of Mogadishu (1993): an unsuccessful US raid aiming to capture Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid

Society

- European Union established in 1993
- **World Trade Organization** (WTO) established in 1995 to supervise and organize international trade
- a massive anti-globalization demonstration occurred during the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999

Bombings and Shootings
- World Trade Centre, 1993: an Al-Qaeda bomb exploded in the underground garages, the first terrorist attack from outside the US and the first attack on the WTC
- Waco Massacre, 1993: FBI raided a farm of sectarians on the basis of unfounded suspicions, killed 76 civilians
- Oklahoma City, 1995: a bomb by disaffected US army veteran TIMOTHY MCVEIGH killed 168 in a federal building
- Atlanta Summer Olympics, 1996: a bomb laid by a recidivist in the Centennial Olympic Park killed 1 person
- Columbine High School Massacre, 1999: two Colorado students killed 1 teacher, 12 students, and themselves

Culture

- mainstream population starts using information technology
- introduction of web, email, e-commerce, etc.

Music

- introduction of CD burners, downloading and sharing music online
- **grunge**: an alternative rock genre inspired by hardcore punk and heavy metal (NIRVANA, SOUNDGARDEN, PEARL JAM)
- gangsta rap: a new hip hop genre reflecting the violent city lifestyle (ICE-T, BEASTIE BOYS, N.W.A.)
- industrial metal: inspired by industrial rock, noise rock, or trash metal (NINE INCH NAILS, MINISTRY, GODFLESH)
- boy bands

Film

- Oscar films: *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Unforgiven* (1992), *Schindler's List* (1993), *Forrest Gump* (1994), *Braveheart* (1995), *The English Patient* (1996), *Titanic* (1997), *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), *American Beauty* (1999)
- cult films: *Thelma & Louise* (1991), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Scream* (1996)

- topical: *Black Hawk Down* (2001), on the Battle of Mogadishu

Television

- TV series: *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Baywatch*, *Friends*, *Cheers!*, *X-Files*, *Twin Peaks*

Literature

- postmodernism: JOHN CHEEVER ('The Swimmer', 1964), PHILIP ROTH (*Zuckerman* novels, 1979-1985), DON DELILLO (*White Noise*, 1985), TONI MORRISON (*Beloved*, 1987), TIM O'BRIEN (*The Things They Carried*, 1990), CORMAC MCCARTHY (*No Country for Old Men*, 2005), THOMAS PYNCHON, JOYCE CAROL OATES, RAYMOND CARVER, PAUL AUSTER
- after 9/11 writing: ART SPIEGELMAN's *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004), JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), JOHN UPDIKE's *Terrorist* (2006), DON DELILLO's *Falling Man* (2007)