

CHAPTER 20
SECTION 1

Section Summary
THE COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTIONS

READING CHECK

What is globalization?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

Find the word *access* in the underlined sentence. What does *access* mean? Circle any nearby words or phrases that help you figure out what *access* means.

READING SKILL

Categorize Which technological change mentioned in this section has had the greatest effect on the American economy? Explain.

Technological change sped up rapidly in the twentieth century. New technology, particularly computers, changed many aspects of life. The first modern computer was developed in 1946. As technology improved, **personal computers** small enough to sit on a desk were introduced. By the 1980s, personal computers were changing the way people worked and communicated. So many people had access to new technology and information that the times were called the “information age.”

Computers and new developments in **biotechnology** helped improve healthcare. **Satellites** orbiting Earth increased the speed of communications. Cellular telephones enabled people to communicate away from their homes. By the 1990s, the **Internet** made access to information almost instantaneous and changed commerce, education, research, and entertainment.

These technological changes had a dramatic effect on the American economy. Today, most workers need to have some computer skills even for low-wage jobs. Satellites and computers have made **globalization** much easier, so societies and economies around the world are linked. **Multinational corporations** operate in many countries at once, providing similar products and services to people around the world.

Some economists say that the United States now has a **service economy**. Rather than producing things as they once did, American workers provide services. Jobs in the service sector vary widely, from lawyer to fast-food worker. This radical change in the economy has taken power away from labor unions, and the average wages of workers have fallen.

Review Questions

1. How have recent developments in communications changed the way people live?

2. How has the rise of the service sector changed the American economy?
