

AP U.S. History Examined – Common Themes

Colonial Era

- Northeast American Indian tribes of the time of the first European colonization were hindered in united opposition to the Europeans by political and linguistic differences
- Most Puritans who emigrated to seventeenth-century New England considered themselves non-Separatists
- In the 17th century, slavery in British North America increase slave numbers rapidly in the last quarter of the century
- Married women lost control of personal property upon marriage
- The Navigation Acts were part of the British policy known as mercantilism
- The North American colonies took advantage of Great Britain's policy of salutary neglect to work out trade arrangements to acquire needed products from other countries
- Settlers who established the British colony of Virginia during the 17th century were primarily seeking to profit economically
- The Dutch settled New Netherland primarily to expand their commercial and mercantile network
- The First Great Awakening resulted in divisions within both the Congregational and Presbyterian churches
- All of the British North American colonies had legally established slavery by the early 1700's
- Africans brought as slaves to America maintained cultural practices brought from Africa
- By the 1750's, the British colonies on the North American mainland were characterized by many religious denominations, a society without a hereditary aristocracy, a growing number of non-English settlers, and acceptance of slavery as a labor system

French and Indian War Era

- *Proclamation of 1763 – created a settlement boundary along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains prohibiting westward movement
- *The primary purpose of the Proclamation of 1763 was to avoid conflict with the trans-Appalachian Indians

Revolutionary War Era

- Greatest contribution to American victory – French military and financial aid
- Stamp Act – main purpose – raise money to support British troops stationed in America
- Declaration of Independence – appealed to the philosophy of natural rights, appealed to the sympathies of the British people, criticized the Quebec Act of 1774, and accused King George III of tyranny
- By the time of the American Revolution, most patriots had come to believe that, in republican governments, sovereignty was located in the people
- France negotiated a treaty of alliance with the new American nation in 1778 following the defeat of General Burgoyne at Saratoga
- Discontent among soldiers in the Continental Army was caused by the soldiers fear for the welfare of families back home, the army had inadequate arms and ammunition, the army paid soldiers in depreciated paper money, and the army was inadequately fed and clothed

The Articles of Confederation

- The greatest achievement of the government under the Articles of Confederation was its establishment of a system of orderly settlement of the West

Constitutional Era

- Bill of Rights – motivation for passage – protect rights unspecified in the Constitution
- As originally ratified, the US Constitution provided for an electoral college
- As adopted at the Constitutional Convention, the United States Constitution was built on a series of compromises
- *The Federalist* papers challenged the conventional political wisdom of the eighteenth century when they asserted that a large republic offered the best protection of minority rights

Federalist Era

- Washington's Neutrality Proclamation of 1793 was issued in response to French diplomatic overtures to invoke the Franco-American Alliance
- Alexander Hamilton's financial programs included funding the national debt at par, taxes on distilled liquor, establishment of the Bank of the United States, and assumption of all state debts
- Between 1790 and 1830, the West was opened to settlement and trade by turnpikes and canals
- After the Revolution, the concept of the "republican mother" suggested that women would be responsible for raising their children, especially their sons, to be virtuous citizens of the young republic
- In the United States, the Haitian rebellion of the 1790's prompted increased fear of slave revolts in the South
- Alexander Hamilton's financial program was most favorable to eastern merchants
- Pinckney's Treaty with Spain is considered a diplomatic highlight of Washington's administration because it allowed the United States to use the port city of New Orleans

Jeffersonian Era

- “We are all republicans – we are all federalists” – meant principles of American government were above party politics
- To restore republican ideals, the Jefferson administration advocated reducing the scope of activities of the federal government
- *Jefferson’s primary desire in the purchase of Louisiana was to acquire a port to provide an outlet for western crops
- *Jefferson’s purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France was significant because – 1) it opened the Mississippi River permanently to western farmers, 2) it was made possible by the failure of Napoleon’s troops to suppress a slave revolt in Haiti, 3) it showed Jefferson’s considerable flexibility in dealing with foreign policy, and 4) it violated Jefferson’s own views concerning the strict construction of the Constitution
- 18th century Deists believed that God created a universe governed by natural law
- *In *Marbury v. Madison*, the US Supreme Court affirmed its right to determine the constitutionality of congressional enactments
- *In the case of *Marbury v. Madison*, it affirmed the principle of judicial review
- The most unpopular and least successful of President Jefferson’s policies was his adherence to neutrality in dealing with France and England

War of 1812

- Hartford Convention was a manifestation of New England Federalist opposition to the War of 1812

Monroe Doctrine

- The issuance of the Monroe Doctrine asserted American independence in the realm of foreign policy
- President Monroe articulated the Monroe Doctrine in his 1823 address to Congress primarily in order to warn European nations against further colonial ventures in the Western Hemisphere

Jackson Era

- Jacksonian Democracy was distinguished by the belief that political participation by the common man should be increased
- President Jackson resisted the admission of Texas into the Union in 1836 primarily because he feared that debate over the admission of Texas would ignite controversy about slavery
- “American System” – designed to meet the nation’s need for economic progress and self-sufficiency (Henry Clay)
- Andrew Jackson supported Indian removal, the removal of federal deposits from the Bank of the United States, annexation of new territory, and the use of presidential veto power
- *In the early 1830’s, the majority of workers in the textile mills of Massachusetts were young unmarried women from rural New England
- * Prior to the Civil War, a transformation occurred in the workforce of New England textile mills as New England farm girls were replaced by Irish immigrants
- During the first half of the 19th century, Ireland supplied the greatest number of immigrants to America
- The immediate effect of Andrew Jackson’s attack on the Second Bank of the United States in 1834 was an expansion of credit and speculation

Antebellum Era (Pre-Civil War)

- The Missouri Compromise allowed Maine to enter as a free state
- In the antebellum period, free African Americans were able to accumulate some property in spite of discrimination
- The Compromise of 1850 created the greatest controversy by strengthening the Fugitive Slave Law
- In 1840, the American Antislavery Society split into factions because William Lloyd Garrison’s advocacy of women’s rights and pacifism alienated some members
- The goals of antebellum education reformers included compulsory attendance laws, use of state and local tax money to fund public education, establishment of teacher-training schools, and a standardized length for the school year
- The Republican party originated in the mid-1850’s as a sectional party committed to opposition to the further extension of slavery into the territories
- The Wilmot Proviso specifically provided for the prohibition of slavery in lands acquired from Mexico in the Mexican War
- The majority of White families in the antebellum period owned no slaves
- The American Colonization Society was to return freed slaves to Africa
- The Dred Scott decision established the principle that national legislation could not limit the spread of slavery in the territories
- The growth of the free African American population in the United States in the early nineteenth century was attributable to the gradual emancipation laws of individual states, manumission (granted freedom) granted for Revolutionary War service, manumission granted by slaveholders’ wills, and natural increase among free African Americans
- The Compromise of 1850 enacted a stringent fugitive slave law
- Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, women reformers were most active in the cause of temperance
- “Let Southern oppressors tremble...I shall strenuously contend for immediately enfranchisement...I will be as harsh as the truth and as uncompromising as justice.” - William Lloyd Garrison

Civil War

- Reason for war – North – Preserve the Union
- When the Emancipation Proclamation was issued at the beginning of 1863, its immediate effect was to strengthen the moral cause of the Union – no slaves were freed in the border states or the Union – only in the Confederacy
- African American Union soldiers during the Civil War were paid less than White soldiers of equal rank

Reconstruction

- A serious constitutional question after the Civil War was the political and legal status of former Confederate states
- Freedmen in the decade following the Civil War saw a majority enter sharecropping arrangements with former masters or other nearby planters
- Congress imposed Radical Reconstruction measures because of the enactment of Black Codes by southern legislatures, the outbreak of race riots in New Orleans and Memphis, election of former Confederate leaders to Congress, and the negative response by southern legislatures to the 14th Amendment

Transcendental Movement

- Ralph Waldo Emerson – stressed the importance of individual inspiration, self-reliance, dissent, and nonconformity

Unions

- “Bread and butter” unionism – demands for higher wages, shorter hours, and improved working conditions – endorsed by the American Federation of Labor

Late 19th Century

- Description of the clothing industry – sewing machine made mass manufacturing of clothing possible and lowered prices of pre-made clothing
- Nativists vs. “New Immigrants” – “New Immigrants” discriminated against because they practiced different religions, had different language/culture, were willing to work for lower wages than native-born Americans, and were not familiar with the US political system
- Leading reason for declining rate of deaths in American cities at the end of the 19th century – cities built sewers and purified water for citizens
- Helen Hunt Jackson’s book, *A Century of Dishonor* was significant because it aroused public awareness of the wrongs that the federal government had inflicted on American Indians
- The era from the end of the Civil War to the outbreak of the First World War was characterized by periodic economic panic and depression
- Between 1890 and 1930, area of residence in cities increasingly became an indicator of social class
- The Dawes Act of 1887 intended to assimilate American Indians into the mainstream of American culture
- The Sherman Antitrust Act (1890) had little immediate impact on the regulation of large corporations
- The occupation and pacification of the Philippines after the Spanish American War was more costly than the war itself
- Higher education in the US from 1865-1917 saw many states establish new institutions under the provisions of the Morrill Act, saw an increasing number of institutions of higher learning admit female students, saw graduate education based on the German model become widespread, and saw many new scientific and engineering institutions established.
- The only states to grant women the right to vote before 1900 were west of the Mississippi River
- The farmers’ protest movement lost momentum at the end of the 1890’s because of the following: the failure of the People’s Party in the 1896 election, massive immigration to urban areas led to higher prices for agricultural products, crop failures in Europe led to higher prices and larger exports, and the 1898 Yukon gold strike increased the US government’s supply of gold and eased farmer’s access to credit
- The Supreme Court decision of Plessy v. Ferguson sanctioned separate but equal facilities for African Americans
- In 1890, the most important source of revenue for the federal government was customs duties from tariffs
- William Jennings Bryan’s “Cross of Gold” speech was primarily an expression of his advocacy for the free and unlimited coinage of silver
- *W.E.B. DuBois and the Niagra Movement had integration rather than Black separatism as a goal
- *W.E.B. DuBois emerged during the Progressive Era as the most influential advocate of full political, economic, and social equality for Black Americans
- The leaders of the Progressive movement were primarily middle-class reformers concerned with urban and consumer issues
- Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives* is a study of immigrant urban poverty and despair in the 1890’s
- Margaret Sanger is best known for her advocacy of birth control
- From the 1880’s to the beginning of the New Deal, the dominant American Indian policy of the United States government sought to break up tribal landholdings
- The precipitating factor in the 1894 Pullman strike was Pullman’s cutting wages without proportionate cuts in company housing rents
- In his Atlanta Compromise speech, Booker T. Washington called for support for African American self-help
- In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, American agriculture was characterized by an increase in acres under cultivation

19th and 20th Century Foreign Policy

- The Open Door policy called for open access to China for American investment and commercial interests
- *Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine was issued because of American fear that financial instability in the Dominican Republic would lead to European intervention
- *The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine expanded America’s role in Central America and the Caribbean

Early 20th Century Technology

- The assembly line production of Henry Ford’s Model T resulted in the widespread purchase of automobiles by average American families
- DW Griffith’s epic film, *Birth of a Nation* (1915) became controversial because of its depiction of Ku Klux Klan activities as heroic and commendable

The Progressive Era

- Constitutional amendments enacted during the Progressive era included imposition of an income tax, extension of suffrage to women, prohibition of the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages, and procedures for electing US senators.
- Progressive reformers rejected Social Darwinism because they believed that conflict and competition did not necessarily improve society

WWI

- Wilson hardened Senate opposition to the Treaty of Versailles by refusing to compromise on the issue of absolute adherence to the charter of the League of Nations
- Committee on Public Information issued propaganda to persuade the American people that the US was fighting for freedom and democracy, the US was fighting a barbarous nation, buying war bonds was important to support the war effort, and German invasion of the US was a possibility
- Wilson's Fourteen Points incorporated open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, creation of an international organization to preserve the peace and security of its members (League of Nations), and national self-determination
- The first massive migration of Black Americans from the South occurred during and immediately after the First World War

1920's

- The passage of the 18th Amendment legislating Prohibition in 1919 was caused by continued efforts of the Anti-Saloon League, the fervor of the First World War lending patriotism to the cause of prohibition, the Progressive belief in social reform, and the cumulative impact of state prohibition laws
- The flappers of the 1920's challenged traditional American attitudes about women by supporting greater freedom of dress and moral behavior
- The Republican Presidents of the 1920's favored tax cuts for wealthy Americans
- Harlem Renaissance – outpouring of Black artistic and literary creativity
- *Sinclair Lewis and F. Scott Fitzgerald characterized writers associated with the flowering of literature in the 1920's in their criticism of middle-class conformity and materialism
- *The writings of American authors F. Scott Fitzgerald, e.e. cummings, and Sinclair Lewis are characterized disillusionment with modern American society
- Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon's policies reduced income-tax rates on the wealthy to release money for private investment

Great Depression

- During the 1930's, the Great Depression led to a mass internal migration of Americans looking for work
- President Hoover approached the task of caring for unemployed workers during the Great Depression by emphasizing the importance of public charities
- *During the Great Depression, the federal government responded with force when the Bonus Expeditionary Force encamped in Washington
- *Bonus Expeditionary Force – marched on Washington DC in 1932 demanding payment of a promised bonus due WWI veterans in 1945
- During the 1930's, the Roosevelt Administration formally renounced the right to intervene in Latin America
- Tennessee Valley Authority – built dams to allow rural electrification
- The "Hundred Days" addressed concerns of the New Deal including bank regulation, unemployment relief, agricultural adjustment, and homeowner mortgage support
- In the 1930's, the movement led by Dr. Francis Townsend contributed to congressional approval of a law implementing a federal program of old-age benefits
- President Hoover attempted to fight the Great Depression by the establishment of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation

WW II

- Japanese Americans – forced from their homes and businesses on the West Coast into detention camps
- The greatest difference in conscription policies between WWI and WWII was that in WWII, the draft began before the US entered the conflict
- The American home front in the Second World War is best described as economically invigorated by military spending
- College-level education in the twentieth-century US saw the GI Bill finance the education of male students during the post-Second World War era
- The atomic bombs were dropped on Japan to keep the Soviet Union out of a war with Japan, save American lives, demonstrate American superiority in weaponry to the Soviet Union, and to force the unconditional surrender of Japan

Cold War

- Harry S. Truman proposed through the Fair Deal to continue and expand the aims of the New Deal
- In negotiating to end the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy agreed to refrain from a military invasion of Cuba in return for Soviet withdrawal
- In his farewell address, President Eisenhower warned Americans of the dangers of the military-industrial complex
- The policy of containment, justified by George Kennan's 1947 analysis of the international situation, called for blocking the expansion of the Soviet Union's influence
- The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), expanded trade with Soviet Union, and President Nixon's visit to the People's Republic of China were all facets of the policy of détente
- The principal reason for the formation of the Dixiecrat party in 1948 was the opposition of dissident Democrats to President Truman's proposal for civil rights legislation

- Major domestic developments in the United States during President Eisenhower's two terms included a rise in the gross national product (GNP), the peaking of the post-war baby boom, the exodus of Black families from the rural South, and the beginning of construction of an interstate highway system
- Influential critics of the 1950's, such as David Reisman, were most concerned with alienation and conformity in modern society following the Second World War

Civil Rights Movement

- In the decade following the Second World War, the Supreme Court decision that had the most widespread consequences concerned the rights of minority groups
- Greensboro, North Carolina – 1960 – Black students staged a sit-in to protest segregation of public facilities
- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1957) – directly contradicted *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) – Separate facilities for races was inherently unequal
- The primary power granted to the Civil Rights Commission created in 1957 was the authority to investigate on cases involving discrimination
- Civil Rights Movement Organizations and Leaders – Black Panthers – Huey Newton National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Roy Wilkins Black Muslims – Malcolm X Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee – Stokely Carmichael

Vietnam Era

- *Accounts of North Vietnamese torpedo-boat attacks on US destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin during the summer of 1964 were used to justify escalation of the American war effort
- *The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution allowed the President to deploy combat troops in Vietnam
- An immediate consequence of the Tet offensive in 1968 was that popular support for the war declined in the United States

1960's, 1970's and 1980's

- Betty Friedan started the women's rights movement with her book *The Feminine Mystique*
- The high inflation rates of the late 1960's and early 1970's were primarily the result of spending on social-welfare programs and the Vietnam War
- The 1970's and 1980's saw an increase in all of the following : influence of Christian fundamentalists, the average age of Americans, support for consumer and environmental movements, and the number of women holding political office
- The economy under the Carter administration suffered from high interest rates, inflation, increased government spending, and rising unemployment
- Carter and Reagan were similar as presidential candidates in that both capitalized on their status as Washington outsiders
- The support for former Alabama governor George Wallace in the 1968 presidential campaign best illustrates the exploitation of race as a national political issue
- Richard Nixon's 1968 political comeback to win the presidency can be partly attributed to dissension within the Democratic party over Vietnam
- During his presidency, Richard Nixon ended American participation in the war in Vietnam
- "Reaganomics" or supply-side economics, led to large increases in the incomes of wealthy Americans