AP US History

A Crash Course Study Guide

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Introduction

Thank you for downloading, *AP US History: A Crash Course Study Guide*. These posts are a compilation from our site, where we provide hundreds of practice questions and review to know for a variety of AP exams, including AP English Language. You can check out more pointers, including our Ultimate List of AP US History Tips, at our blog. We hope you find this short collection helpful in your preparation for AP US History!

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Period 1 (1491-1607): Pre-Columbian Native Life

Although the majority of the AP US history test will focus on the formation and development of the United States, it is important that you know a little bit about life in the Americas before Europeans came to the continents, or the “Pre-Columbian Period.” An estimated 54 Million people lived in the geographic areas later referred to as the Americas by the time that Christopher Columbus landed in Hispanola in 1492. These Native People had complex societies that would take years of study to understand fully, but, luckily, you will only need to know a fraction of this history for the AP test. In the rest of this post I will go over the most important of these: Spread of Maize Cultivation, the Diversity of Native Cultures, and the particularities of Algonquin life.

Spread of Maize Cultivation

Maize, or corn, served as the staple crop for many Native American tribes. For the AP test, it is important that you understand just how crucial Maize was to the agricultural development of various Native American societies. Originally grown and cultivated in the Southern area of what is now Mexico, by 1200 Maize spread to the Southwest part of the United States, where it transformed the Pueblos from a hunter-gatherer society into an agricultural based society. This distinction is an important one, and one that I will go over more in the next section. After the introduction of Maize, many Native Americans moved away from the roaming hunting and gathering type of society into permanent settlements where they constructed elaborate irrigation techniques to grow maize and other such crops.

Why this is Important

Now that they did not have to worry as much about the daily struggle of finding food, Native Americans had the time to develop more sophisticated agricultural techniques and infrastructure. This is the most important thing you should know about maize going into the test. In order to get a better sense of how far New World Maize spread, check out our sample questions [here](#).

Diversity of Native People

While some societies, like the previously mentioned Pueblo people, settled into large established communities, a large number of Native Tribes continued to live in mobile communities that were reliant on hunting and gathering. For the test, you should know that these were the two general models for Native Americans in Pre-Columbian America. For the most part, we can separate these two styles of
living geographically. South America was home to the famous and advanced Mayans in Central America, Incas in Peru, and Aztecs in Central Mexico—three groups of people with socially complicated and technologically advanced societies that created structures that still stand to this day.

In North America, by contrast, the vast majority of Native People lived in tribes that roamed the region they called home. Out of the estimated 54 million people living on the two continents before Columbus, only an estimated 4 million lived in North America. This means that there was an extremely low population density in the area, which resulted in hundreds of tribes that never interacted with each other, creating a system in which almost every tribe had a unique language and customs. Some of the most important tribes to know for the test are the Cherokee of the Southeast, the Cheyenne of the Great Plains, the Iroquois of the Atlantic Seaboard, and the Navajo of the Southwest. The Iroquois proved to be an exception to the general rule that I laid out earlier, as, led by a man named Hiawatha, they formed the Iroquois Confederacy—a confederacy of five tribes in the Northeast that banded together in order to better survive. This, paired with other geographic factors, led to the development of Native American villages and settlements on the Atlantic Seaboard that, while not nearly as expansive as the great nations in South America, still defied the typical North American trend.

Geography played a large role in determining how certain Native American tribes developed. You should go into the test understanding that tribes based in the Great Plains had to move around often to follow and hunt buffalo, while tribes in the east had fertile soil in which they could grow crops to sustain themselves. If there is a question on the test about a tribe that you maybe are not aware of, if they provide you with enough basic information, you should be able make inferences about other aspects of that tribe’s life that will help you correctly answer the question.

The AP test writers often like to ask questions that present first hand accounts of Native American life, such as these questions on our site. As you will notice, the passage in the questions highlights differences between life in the New World and life in Europe. These types of questions are common on the exam. Obviously there are a lot of differences, so it is important to understand the general trends behind the differences as they can help to guide you to the correct answer. One of the largest differences, and one that pops up on almost every test about Native American Life ever given, is the difference between how Native Americans and Europeans typically viewed the Earth. I am sure that you have heard this before, but you have heard it so often because it is crucial to effectively analyzing Pre-Columbian life in America. Native Americans did not treat the land like they owned it because the concept of ownership was foreign. While this has many implications, it is most important that you recognize that this is reflected in the way that the Native Americans lived. Instead of trying to change the land to make it most conducive to their lifestyle, Native Americans changed their lifestyles in accordance with their geography.
Algonquin Village Life

Other than the Iroquois, the Algonquin people constituted one of the most important groups of Native People in North America. While the Iroquois Confederacy was limited to the Northeast, the Algonquin community spread across the entire country, encompassing tribes such as the Blackfeet and Ottawas. While this is useful information, and you very well may be tested on it, when tested on the Algonquin people you should generally assume that the testers are referring to the Algonquin people of the Atlantic Northeast. Just as the Iroquois relied on agriculture to support their way of life, the Algonquin people lived in established villages that relied on division of labor and agriculture, planting crops such as tobacco and maize for both subsistence and trading purposes.

Why this is Important

As I mentioned before, you almost certainly will not be tested on the particular leaders of the Algonquin people during specific times, so you should not spend too much time memorizing this information. Instead, focus on the general trends. So if you are presented with a question about the Algonquin people, you should be able to answer it correctly based on your knowledge of Native American Life on the Atlantic Seaboard. See if you can answer some of these questions based on this knowledge and the diagram presented.

The Wrap Up

As I mentioned at the beginning of this entry, most of the AP US test will not focus on this time period, but you should be comfortable with the information because it is a crucial part of the story of the United States. It is important to understand what life was like before European contact so that you have a better grasp on how radically Columbus changed the Americas.
Period 1 (1491-1607): European Interactions

There is enough information about life in America before European contact, or Pre-Columbian life, to fill an entire AP test, but luckily, very little of that information will make it onto your APUSH test. Instead, the bulk of the APUSH questions will focus on, not surprisingly, the history of the United States. Colonization was essential to the formation of the United States, and the AP testers expect you to be familiar with the history of colonization in the Americas and how it impacted the continents. In this section, we will highlight the major aspects European colonization, especially focusing on the Atlantic Slave Trade, World Trade Patterns and some major figures during the time.

Impact of European Contact

Before Christopher Columbus arrived at Hispaniola in 1492, the Native people of the Americas had a way of life that, while not as technologically advanced as their European counterparts, was complex and diverse in its own right. European contact drastically changed this way of life by decimating the population and fragmenting what was left. It may sound like an exaggeration to say that European contact nearly wiped out the Native American population, but historians estimate that between 50 and 100 million indigenous people died after European contact. While it is true that the European explorers and settlers did commit terrible acts of physical violence against the Native People the main cause of death was not physical violence, but disease. When European settlers came into the Americas they brought a whole range of diseases that, while common in Europe, were not present in the “New World.” Similarly, Native American’s introduced a number of new diseases to Europe as well.

Europeans introduced: Smallpox, Measles, Malaria, Yellow Fever, influenza, and chicken pox. Meanwhile, the Old World introduced: Syphilis, Polio, and Hepatitis.

You may be wondering why the new diseases affected the Native American population so much while the diseases that the South Americans introduced to Europeans did not have nearly as large of an effect. This is a smart question, and there are two main answers. Firstly, the type of diseases that Europeans introduced to the New World spread rapidly because they are the types of diseases that are easy to spread and pass on by either air or touch. Contrast this with Syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection that the New World sent back to Europe, which is much more difficult to catch. Couple this ease of spreading with the fact that Native Americans simply did not have immune systems that were
prepared to deal with these new diseases and you have a good explanation for why an ailment as common as influenza wiped out large groups of people.

We will talk more about this type of exchange, known as the “Columbian Exchange” later, but for now it is important that you just keep in mind that disease killed more Native American’s than any other European force.

**Atlantic Slave Trade**

The AP test will definitely include questions about the United States’ role in and relationship with slavery throughout its history, but it will also almost certainly test you on slavery in Pre United States America. You should know the structure of the slave trade, the motivations, and the consequences of this early slave trade.

As you likely already know, slaves in the Americas came from the Western Coast of Africa, across the Atlantic, to the Americas where they were sold to local landowners. In terms of understanding the structure of the slave trade, you should know about the major players, the Middle Passage, and the Triangle Trade.

First let’s go into the Triangle Trade because it will give us a lens with which to view the other aspects of the trade. The Atlantic Slave trade was part of a larger trading system referred to as triangle trade because of its three main parts, that when drawn on a map, look like a triangle. First, European merchants would come into the West coast of Africa with manufactured goods from Europe, such as weapons or textiles. Once in Africa, the merchants would trade their goods for slaves who the merchants would then sail across the Atlantic in a harrowing process that I will go into later known as the Middle Passage. Once in the New World, these merchants would sell the slaves into the market. Then these merchants would take natural goods harvested using slave labor and bring these raw materials to Europe where they would turn the material from the New World into manufactured goods to sell to Africa. Though the process was much more complicated than this in practice, for the test if you understand this basic layout you should be able to reason through the questions dealing with this topic. For a specific example, consider rum. Slaves harvested sugar in the Caribbean, which was shipped to Europe and turned into rum, which was then traded in Africa in exchange for more slaves. Although the Triangle Trade was a prominent feature of the system, it is important to remember that more than a small amount of slaves were outright kidnapped from their homes and were not traded for goods.

Next you should be familiar with the major players in the Atlantic Slave Trade. Portuguese slave traders first brought African Slaves to the New World in the 16th century, to work on the sugar plantations of Brazil. During this time period, only a small number of African slaves were brought into the New World. Throughout the 16th century only an estimated 3% of slave trade from Africa to
the New World took place. For a period of time in the 16th century, Portugal was the only real slave importer for the New World, but when Portugal and Spain briefly united, Portugal adopted Spain’s more restrictive rules on Slavery and decreased their trading activity for long enough for other countries like England and France to take part in the trade.

As the 16th century turned into the 17th century and more European countries were competing for land in the New World the slave trade increased as well to accommodate this land grab. Portugal, no longer restricted by Spain’s comparatively strict slave laws, was able to resume their profitable slave trade. Quite successfully too, as Portugal imported the most slaves to the New World, followed by Britain, France, Spain, The Dutch Empire, and the Thirteen Colonies.

We often solely focus on the Atlantic slave trade in the America’s and neglect to think about Africa’s role in the system. African Slaves came predominately from the Gold Coast of Africa, and Central West Africa. This intuitively makes sense because the West Coast of Africa borders the Atlantic Ocean, where slave traders took the captured African Slaves to the New World.

This voyage from Africa to the Americas was referred to as the Middle Passage because it was the middle part of the previously discussed Triangle trade. As I am sure you have heard before, the Middle Passage was a hellish experience in which slave traders crammed the slaves into boats in inhuman conditions. This trip could last anywhere from 1 month to 6 months depending on weather. An estimated 2 million deaths are attributed to the Middle Passage alone. This is half of the estimated 4 million African deaths attributed to the slave trade between 1500 and 1900, which breaks down to roughly 2,800 deaths per day. It is well worth your time to read or reread any first hand accounts of the Middle Passage as nothing can convey the horrid conditions of travel as well as those accounts.

You should also be familiar with a few of the more common motivations for bringing African slaves into the Americas, as it seems to come up often. At the time, Europeans in the Americas claimed that they imported slaves from Africa because they had stronger immune systems than the Native Americans the colonists had attempted to use as laborers before. This was coupled with the fact that countless indigenous people were dying or had already been killed by European settlers, and as a result there was a shortage of labor. Because the Americas did not yet have enough power to generate enough income to pay for labor at the rate at which they wanted to expand, they looked to Africa for slave labor.

Why this is Important

As a consequence of the Atlantic Slave Trade, African slave labor became an omnipresent feature of life on the Americas for centuries. For the AP US test you should understand the origins of slavery in the Americas and how it came to be a
key feature of the United States later in history. The AP test will likely ask you to think critically about slavery because it is such a prominent part of this time period, so you should be prepared to answer questions that ask you to think about slavery in a new light, such as this set of questions on our site.

Agricultural Impact of Trade

Remember when I mentioned the “Columbian Exchange” earlier during the first section? You will most likely encounter that term on the test when referencing the Agricultural Impact of Trade, or the effects of the massive exchange of agriculture that took place during the first century of European and American contact. It is crucial that you have a strong understanding of the “Columbian Exchange” for the test, as it will almost surely be either the premise or the answer to a question, and will definitely be of use when answering other questions. Basically, the modern system of globalism started with the Columbian Exchange and its ensuing complex trade patterns. More on that later. In terms of Agriculture you should know a few of the key items that were exchanged between the New World and the Old World. The Americas did not have any horses or goats or cows or really any of the animals that are now everyday sightings not only in the United States but across both continents. And Europe did not have sweet potatoes, or crucially, maize, that were abundant in the Americas.

New World Food

We covered a lot of this in the Agricultural Impact of Trade, just above, but I wanted to reserve a specific place to list out more completely the items that were exchanged in the Columbian Exchange.

The Old World brought: cats, chickens, geese, goats, honey bees, horses, rabbits, horses, pigs, rats, stone fruits like apricots and peaches, apple, coffee (its especially important to remember that coffee originally came from the Old World because via Starbucks it is easily associated with the Americas), lettuce, watermelons, and lots of other assorted foods.

The New World introduced: alpacas, turkeys, avocado, Cocoa, peanut, rubber, strawberries, and tomatoes and tobacco.

For this topic you should definitely check out the chart on the practice exam for this section. It is really informative and it gives a great indication of just how influential New Crops were for the Old World.

World Trade Patterns

The Columbian Exchange did not just have an effect on Europe and the Americas. Its impact was felt across the entire world because of the complex trade networks
that defined commerce during the age of colonialism. European merchants would use raw materials harvested in the New World to furnish textiles that they would then sell to China in exchange for fine silverware or silks. Similarly, a land owner in the Americas had to buy manufactured goods from Europe as they did not yet have any manufacturing facilities.

Why this is Important

For the test it is important to understand how the introduction of the New World opened up the entire world to a global market. In fact, a lot of countries at the time considered their colonies like investments. Use this information and your cartographic abilities to try and answer our practice questions for this section.

Hernando De Soto

Hernando De Soto was not the biggest name explorer or conquistador by any means, but he is probably the most important one to know for the AP US test. Why? Because he the first European explorer to really explore the United States, near Florida. Before he explored what is current day United States he was a member of the Spanish government in what is now Nicaragua. He even invaded Peru at one point. All in all he had an interesting prior life, but for this test you really just need to know his route and, more so, his significance more generally in history.

Hernando de Soto landed in what is modern day Tampa Bay, Florida in 1539 and proceeded to trek north through Georgia and South Carolina, across the Appalachians in North Carolina and West through Tennessee. By 1541 De Soto and his party had reached the Mississippi and were the first documented Europeans who crossed the river. They ended up in Arkansas where De Soto died of a fever in May of 1542. The expedition continued on and returned to Spanish Mexico as a failure, bringing neither gold nor any other colonies. Even though De Soto was the first explorer to really penetrate what is now the United States, he did not leave much of an effect and Spain did not end up attempting to colonize any of the land that he explored.

This type of behavior is indicative of a very important AP US concept: God, Gold, and Glory. These three G’s are essential for understanding European colonization of the Americas. Any European action in the Americas can be attributed to the pursuit of one of those three goals.

Spreading the word of God was important to the European explorers who sent missionaries with the explorers to convert indigenous people to Christianity. This concept of doing God’s work will stick around for a bit in AP US. Watch out for it during Westward Expansion and Manifest Destiny.
Once these new lands were discovered, European nations realized there was a newly abundant supply of wealth in the form of gold, and whoever had control of the most land had the most wealth as well, which in turn fueled more power.

With more land came more prestige during a time when more colonies equated more global significance. The countries like France and England and Spain benefitted greatly from sending out explorers and in turn gained more power to conquer more.

**Christopher Columbus**

Obviously known as the discoverer of the New World, Christopher Columbus has become an incredibly controversial personage in our modern viewpoint. An Italian explorer, Columbus launched Spain’s imperialistic period with his voyage to Guanahani—now the Bahamas. This was the first of four voyages across the Atlantic, all financed by the crown of Spain, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. During these expeditions, Columbus made the first lasting contact with the indigenous people of the Americas.

This contact consisted of claiming several settlements for the Spanish crown, including societies in the Greater and Lesser Antilles and the Caribbean coasts of Venezuela and parts of Central America. His efforts led to sustained communities of European colonists, inaugurating an epoch of European exploration, conquest and colonization.

He set off on his first voyage to Guanahani on August 3, 1492 in the Santa María and two smaller caravels. In his accounts of the first encounter with the indigenous people, Columbus describes them as having potential to be skilled servants for the Spanish. Columbus also said he would bring six back so that they may learn his language. His later explorations exhibited the European attitude towards the indigenous people of the Americas that would continue for the several centuries, characterized by violence and continual conflict.

Columbus’ self-described motivation for colonizing the Americas was the proliferation of the Catholic faith. He believed he was doing God’s work, a then modern crusader to many. Another reason for the costly expeditions was the economic opportunities that waited across the ocean. The monarchs wanted a return on their investment, which galvanized Columbus to put the indigenous people to work, for no wages, to capitalize on the natural resources of the New World. He passed away at the age of fifty-four from a preexisting condition.

**Bartolomé de las Casas**

The original human rights activist of the New World, Bartolomé de las Casas is lauded to this day for his vigor and commitment to the protection of the
indigenous peoples’ natural rights. His father immigrated to Hispaniola from Seville when Las Casas was eighteen. There, Las Casas the senior became a plantation owner and slaveholder. Eight years later he was ordained a priest, the first to be so in the Americas. Shortly thereafter, a group of Dominican priests visited his community, and they refused confession for slaveholders, including Las Casas. Later, he participated in campaigns to colonize other settlements, some of which ended bloodily. During these efforts, Las Casas had a change of heart and, while reading a passage from the Bible, realized what the European’s actions have been unjust, inhumane and illegal. Here on after, Las Casas championed the indigenous’ peoples’ cause.

Throughout his career as public defendant, Las Casas presented his theological and ideological arguments, often abstract but always filled with pathos, to a succession of monarchs. During the rule of King Charles I, Las Casas was a catalyst for the passing of the New Laws. The New Laws helped commence a slow departure from the encomienda system—a system under which the Spanish colonists employed the indigenous people as slaves and profited from the labor—that held dominate in the New World.

In 1550, Las Casas brought his philosophies and morals in front of a Junta, what we would consider a jury and consisted of esteemed doctors and theologians, formed by the king. He debated Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in what became known as the Valladolid debate. Sepúlveda was a humanist scholar and upheld the belief that the indigenous people should be punished for their inherent crimes to nature (not practicing Christianity). Though the debates proved inconclusive, Las Casas made some waves in the monarchy and the Church, which helped to pass the New Laws.

Las Casas has been remembered as the first activist in the Americas and has left a number of seraphic civil rights leaders in his wake. See if you can answer some of our practice questions based on this knowledge and the excerpt provided.

**The Wrap Up**

If you have a firm grasp on the above topics, you should do well on this section of the AP test. Just make sure that you understand the general patterns of New World Trade, focusing especially on the particularities of the Columbian Exchange. In terms of the important people we profiled, these are just three of the many people the AP test could potentially test you on or use as a first hand source. Luckily if you understand what each of the figures represents you should be able to answer any question that deals with patterns of the conquistadors.
Period 1 (1491-1607): Consequences of European Contact

Although your test will focus on the United States, it is important to have a foundation and basic understanding of the events that took place on the continent before the English arrived. In fact, Portugal and Spain had significant contact with the indigenous people of the Americas before England ever considered exploration and colonization. This following section depicts various pre-colony events and the consequences of early European exposure.

Las Casas vs. Sepúlveda

Upon arrival in the New World, the conquistadors were presented with an important problem, what to do with the indigenous people of the Americas. Many believed the Spanish had a claim on these people as slaves or serfs. Others, though certainly less than the former faction, believed the indigenous people should be treated as free men. This argument came to a climax in the Valladolid debate (1550), where Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a humanist scholar, argued for the enslavement and serfdom of the indigenous, while Bartolomé de las Casas, a Dominican friar, argued for the freedom of these people. Sepúlveda’s claimed that the natives must atone for their sins against nature (i.e. not practicing Christianity and acting in a completely foreign way to the European viewpoint) through the punishment of slavery. Las Casas contended that the natives were free people in nature and, according to Catholic theology, deserved the same treatment as all others.

Though originally a participant in the Spanish atrocities, Las Casas amended his views, gave up his slaves and began advocating for the natives’ rights. He spent fifty years of his life crusading against the culture of violence the Spanish conquistadors had adopted. He is often recognized as one of the earliest proponents of universal human rights.

As soon as the Spanish began colonization, the question of compulsory conversion of the natives arose. Las Casas fought hard for a number of years to challenge these forced religious doctrines. His efforts brought to fruition a number of pieces of legislature, certifying that the natives were rational beings. He also influenced the passage of the New Laws, or the Laws of the Indies, in 1542. These laws were conceived to bring the encomienda system. The encomienda system was the structure of the New World economy in which Spaniards took dominion over the indigenous people and forced them to do hard labor for free under threat of severe punishment and sometimes death. Though the New Laws did not completely subvert the system, they helped to weaken them
immensely. Las Casa’s actions caught the eye of King Charles V, and moved him, in 1550, to cease military expansion until further investigation of the situation could be conducted.

Charles then established the Valladolid Debate, and arranged for a jury of doctors and theologians to rule over the controversy. Sepúlveda’s arguments represented the interests of the colonists and landowners, in which demographics he found a large amount of support. Las Casas found some support within the Monarchy and the Catholic Church. Sepúlveda focused on the humanist side, arguing the Indians were predisposed to be slaves, while Las Casas maintained the Indians had reason, and thus were not inherent slaves.

While both men claimed to have won the debate, it appears that the jury never reached a verdict. Both sides’ arguments relied heavily on the theoretical and abstract definitions. In fact, they often relied on similar literature and authorities to back their positions. In the end, neither saw their desired result fulfilled. The Spanish continued to colonize the New World, and the New Laws were never nullified. Las Casas did, however, cement his position as champion of the indigenous people and helped weaken the encomienda system, though the Spanish treatment of Indians did not become significantly better.

Why this is Important

This debate is important because it demonstrates the drastically differing views that the colonizers had to the indigenous population. For the test, you should be familiar with Bartolome de las Casas because he was the most prominent, and one of the only, voices that spoke out against the cruel actions against Native Americans.

In order to get a first hand account of their differences, check out the practice test on our website.

Acoma Indians

The Acoma Native Americans lived in present-day New Mexico. During the early stages of Spanish colonization in this region, the Spaniards and the Native Americans were able to coexist relatively peacefully. This lasted for the first several decades after initial contact, which occurred around 1540. So what happened? Well, in 1598, the Acoma leader, Zutacapan, attained information into the Spanish plan to conquer Acoma Pueblo (Acoma town). After gaining this insight, they Native Americans in the region began preparing to defend their territory. However, after considering the Spaniards’ past conduct, the Acoma decided to try to reach a peaceful negotiation with the Spanish. The conquistador in charge of the conquest, Don Juan de Oñate, sent a representative, Juan de Zaldívar, to the Acoma to confer with Zutacapan. After Zaldívar arrived with a band of sixteen men, they demanded food from the Acoma. The Acoma refused,
leading the Spanish to attack some of the Acoma women. The Acoma did not take this lightly and killed eleven of the Spanish, including Zaldivar. After learning about the episode, Oñate dispatched a legion of seventy men to punish the Native Americans.

A battle lasted a few days with both sides trading minor blows, until the Spanish employed the use of a small cannon to breach the Acoma front. The Spanish opened fire with the cannon, destroying a number of houses and leading to the conquistadors assailing the town. Of an estimated six thousand natives living in the Acoma region, about five hundred warriors were killed in battle, excluding the estimated three hundred women and children killed. Another five hundred were taken as prisoners and given various punishments, the most common being slavery, though a small number had their right feet amputated. Oñate wanted to make an example of the Acoma and demonstrate how strong the Spanish resilience was to the rest of the New World. The surviving children under the age of twelve were given to various Spanish missionaries in and around the region to be raised. A number of the surviving women were sent to Spanish convents, though most of them were sold into slavery.

When word of the massacre made its way back to King Phillip II, the one who ordered Oñate to conquer the region, he exiled Oñate from New Mexico, citing Oñate’s cruelty towards the natives as the offence. Oñate later returned to Spain where he remained until his death. A number of Acomas escaped death and capture, and by 1601 had rebuilt their town, which still exists today.

**Why it is Important**

The significance of the massacre is still felt today among the Native Americans in the region. This is an important moment in Native American and Colonial relations that is indicative of the centuries mistreatment that would follow. To check if you have a god understanding of the material, see if you can answer the practice questions about this battle on our website.

**Brazilian Maroons**

The maroons were African refugees who had escaped the clutch of American slavery and settled throughout the Americas. These settlements became known as quilombos. Founded in the early 1600s, Palmares (translated as the Palm Nation), located on the western coast of present day Brazil in the region known as Pernambuco, was the most notable of the Brazilian quilombos. At its largest, the settlement boasted over thirty thousand free people. To test your understanding of these settlements, try to answer the questions about Quilombos on our website.

The inhabitants, both runaway slaves and native peoples, constructed their own society and government, which was derived from a number of Central African
examples. This shows the extent of diversity in the inhabitants’ origins. The government was confederate. The Palmares citizens would elect a chief who then unilaterally allocated land and appointed officials (nepotism often played a role in these appointments).

The Portuguese hoped to conquer and colonize the region, but had difficulty doing so. Many complained that their prisoners and slaves continuously ran away to an inaccessible area in the interior of the region, away from the coast and into the mountain ranges, and built small communities, which were burdensome and complicated to dislodge. Because of this, the Portuguese made many and frequent expeditions into the interior. In 1630, the Dutch West India Company sent an entire fleet to try to conquer Pernambuco, yet had little success in capturing the region. They held the city of Recife, which is located on the coast, and had little desire to expand their conquest into the interior regions, which upset the Portuguese and furthered the Dutch-Portuguese conflict.

Though at first the Dutch set out to ally themselves with the inhabitants of Palmares against the Portuguese, they later decided to send expeditions into the interior and began collecting information on the settlement. From these expeditions, we learned what we know about the Palmares civilization. There was a large, central, fortified town with population about six thousand. This town was surrounded by hills and valleys that contained small villages of fifty to one hundred people each. The central town held over two hundred buildings, including a council house and a church (many of the inhabitants had been Christianized by the Portuguese before escape).

In 1654, the Dutch were expelled. The Portuguese now began sending expeditions to uncover more information about the Palmares settlement and its inhabitants. During this period, Palmares underwent further consolidation. The Portuguese began attacking the settlements, and after an especially destructive attack, the kind of Palmares, Gana Zumba, sent a letter to the Portuguese governor of the region proposing peace. The Portuguese terms stipulated that Palmares must move closer to the Portuguese settlements in the region and that all escaped slaves not born in Palmares must be returned. Gana Zumba accepted the terms, but one of his strongest leaders, Zumbi, refused them. This created two factions and resulted in the poisoning of Gana Zumba and the subsequent takeover by Zumbi. By 1679, more military expeditions were sent into the interior. As this happened, many of Gana Zumba’s followers who had moved closer to the Portuguese settlements had been re-enslaved by sugar planters who broke the agreement.

For about two decades, Zumbi and the Portuguese waged constant war, as the violence waxed and waned throughout. Finally, in 1694 the Portuguese broke through and captured and executed Zumbi. The resistance continued after the leader’s death, but not for long as Palmares was ultimately destroyed, though a
number of smaller communities of runaway slaves continued to exist in the region.

**White Over Black**

Ideology played a large part in the proliferation of slavery in colonial America. As you could imagine, Europeans had a number of different justifications for the enslavement of Africans, including religion and economic prosperity. However, one of the most important justifications used was the doctrine of white supremacy. Europeans considered it their natural right as higher beings (this belief being entirely based on the difference in skin color between the two groups) to own and control the African peoples.

In the eyes of these white people, black people were nothing more than property. This general idea feeds into the American capitalist structure, as well; workers are seen as commodities that exist in the labor market. The logic of white supremacy translates this idea of workers as commodities into a racial hierarchy, thus commoditizing black people and leaving them at the bottom of the system.

Another part of the white supremacy ideology involves the idea of genocide, though this applies to the colonists’ treatment of Native Americans more so than Africans. Basically, for non-indigenous people to lay a claim on a piece of land, there can’t be any indigenous people already claiming to own said piece of land. Again, this idea can be fed into a racial hierarchy structure with Native Americans on the bottom and whites on the top.

White supremacy has been informed by various facets of the identity of whiteness including paranoia concerning the uprising of other races, white solidarity, exclusiveness and violence towards other racial groups. Paranoia of rebellions and general race equality (which would dismantle the structure under which whites prosper the most) ran rampant in colonial America, due in large part to the ever-growing population of slaves. As slaves began outnumbering whites in the South, slaveholders doubled-down their efforts of dominance and created an even greater disparity in the perception of blacks and whites. These slaveholders planted the idea of black inferiority in their slaves’ minds through constant vocal denunciations and physical punishment, thus leading the slaves to believe they truly were inferior.

*Why this is Important*

It is important to understand racial tensions during this period because it is indicative of the problems that would plague the United States for the duration of the material covered in the test. White supremacy then became not only a justification, but a way for the whites to maintain control of society, and black people in particular. The colonists relied on whiteness as an identity with which they can define themselves and the “others.” By creating a group of “others,” the
whites had effectively created a society of exclusion in which they could rule without significant interference. Be sure to take our practice exam to see a first hand account of this mentality.

The Wrap Up

These events, among numerous others, have informed our understanding of the relationship between Europeans (and their descendents) and the indigenous peoples (and theirs). When thinking about a particular instance in American history (e.g. Frederick Douglas’ crusade for human rights), it is important to keep in mind the factors preceding the instance that informed those involved (in this example, Las Casas’ similar crusade). History repeats itself, and you should be able to find the similarities between different periods of history when this occurs.
Period 2 (1607-1754): Patterns of Colonization

The timespan from 1607 to 1754 set the foundation for the birth of the United States. Europeans settlers came and started the process of New World colonization, bringing along with them new ideas and practices. Familiarizing yourself with the forces of colonization and mercantilism by the Europeans will help you better understand this period’s effects on the American Revolution and the years leading up to it.

These AP US History guides expand on the course outline provided by the AP College Board website. This particular guide focusing on Key Concept 2.1, which deals primarily with the effects of different European colonizers in creating different patterns of colonizations. Additionally, we have created practice questions, which will be referenced periodically to re-affirm your understanding of the material. Not only are these questions geared to aid your studies for Period 2 on the APUSH exam, but also to cement your understanding of how the forces at play in the 17th and 18th centuries affected the rest of US History.

Brief Overview

The British were not the only ones who colonized land in North America. In addition to the famous 13 British Colonies, other such settlements placed by the Spanish, French, and Dutch also shaped the imperial landscape of America in the 1700s. All of the European colonial powers had their own reasons to colonize land in America. Spain wanted to control the Western Hemisphere and spread their religion by converting Native Americans and Indians. Colonizers from France and the Netherlands married into the Native population and used those connections to export furs and other products back to Europe. Britain most famously sought new opportunities to establish agriculture, which led to land disputes with Native Americans. British colonies maintained a social hierarchy by not intermarrying with the Natives and sending white colonizers in droves to America. This social hierarchy, combined with an abundance of land and a lack of labor, meant that Britain eventually brought slavery to their colonies. Slavery differed by region; in this guide we will explore the differences between the South and the New England colonies.

The South

The Southern Colonies consisted of Virginia, Maryland (the Chesapeake Bay colonies) North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia (the Atlantic Coast colonies). These colonies differed from the New England colonies in various
ways, beginning with why they were founded. The first colony in the British Empire was the failed Roanoke colony. The first permanent settlement was founded in 1607 by the Virginia Company of London in Jamestown, Virginia.

Jamestown, and later colonies in the South, were founded by royal charter companies (such as the Virginia Company of London) to compete with the European powers and reinforce the British economy via agriculture. Colonies established later on followed suit. They were diverse, ethnically and religiously, and focused on staple crops such as tobacco (Chesapeake colonies) and rice (Atlantic colonies). Georgia, for example, was famously started as a penal colony (exile for prisoners) by James Oglethorpe.

As previously mentioned, the Southern colonies were established to make the British wealthier through agriculture. Britain sent hordes of white colonizers to claim land and begin establishing plantations to send crops back to England. Along with the white colonizers came indentured servants, ex-criminals and convicts from Britain who paid their passage to the New World by working contracts for plantation owners. However, there was more agriculturally viable land than the British anticipated, and tobacco was a labor-intensive crop. Soon, they realized there was not labor enough to efficiently work their crops. The British looked elsewhere: Africa. Soon, enslaved Africans nearly outnumbered white colonizers in parts of some Southern Colonies. Unlike other European powers, the Britain rarely intermarried with their African slaves, instead forming a rigid racial hierarchy. Strict laws were established to maintain their dominance over the slaves. Britain colonizers had unwavering belief in their racial superiority and imposed their own beliefs and practices onto their slaves. Where they could not enslave, they fought. British beliefs led to conflicts with the Native Americans. All of these factors combined, along with growing European demand for colonial products, to begin and perpetuate the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Since the British stepped foot in the Chesapeake Bay region, they were getting into disputes with Native Americans. The Jamestown colonists warred with the Powhatans over land and a British belief that they were superior. They eventually made peace thanks to John Rolfe, who famously married the Powhatan girl Pocahontas and brought tobacco to the region. The Chesapeake colonies were ravaged by conflicts between the British and the Native Indians. However, they were religiously free and ethnically diverse. More ethnic groups from Europe settled the region. Soon, the colonists established local governments, the first of which was the Virginian House of Burgesses. It was through these governments, and documents such as the First Charter of Virginia, that British rights were affirmed as limitless. That is, the British stepped off their ships believed themselves superior to anyone and now had the documents to prove it. Needless to say, the Native Indians and the African slaves alike were not pleased with this attitude, which lead to fighting and down the line, slave rebellions.

**Why This is Important**
Know the reason for the establishment of the Southern colonies, and be able to explain how this lead to slavery and racial differences. These practice questions should help you.

New England

The New England colonies consisted of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. These colonies were established by Puritans seeking religious freedom and escaping persecution at the hands of the British Anglican Church. Under the premise of religious freedom, these colonies grew and became close-knit, homogeneous societies. The initial focus was never agriculture here, due to the unfavorable conditions, and as such never saw the slavery that the Southern colonies did. New England economics were a mix of commerce and agriculture. Contracts such as the Mayflower Compact, written by pilgrims who came over on the ship Mayflower, established colonies as religiously free for their religions and theocratically controlled. Eventually, religious differences arose between Puritans and members of other Christian sects. Pilgrims came over seeking religious freedom and made colonies that were religiously intolerant. Men like Roger Williams fled, establishing truly religious free colonies like Rhode Island.

Why This is Important

Know the difference between the establishment of New England colonies and the Southern colonies. Explain how religious differences led to the rise of both new colonies and homogeneous ones.

Looking Ahead

European settlement in America resulted in the establishment of slavery at the hands of the British and the mistreatment of laborers. British Southern colonies saw a demand for labor that resulted in the facilitation of the Atlantic Slave Trade, an infamous trade network taking enslaved West African peoples. Slavery would lead to a world of political issues in the United States later on in its history. The Spanish married into the Native Indian population, and inadvertently wiped out sections of it by bringing diseases such as influenza and smallpox. Natives were forced to convert to Spanish Christianity by missionaries, leading to the creation of the mission system in the American Southwest. Elsewhere, the alliances with the Indians by the French would eventually come into play during the French and Indian War, where they teamed up and fought against the British. The different European colonizers all had differing intentions, and the effects of those intentions will make themselves clearer as you study the next chapters of American History.

Why This Is Important
Understand how the colonization process laid the foundation for effects in the later American landscape, such as slavery and the French and Indian War.

The concepts from this article will prove greatly useful to your understanding of how colonial powers shaped the landscape of America, and if you have a good grasp on these topics, you should do well on this portion of the AP test. British intentions for founding colonies differed radically from French or Spanish intentions. This was reflected in the atmosphere of their respective colonies. Britain founded the 13 colonies to compete with the other powers by way of agriculture, and eventually became desperate and enslaved Africans to populate the labor. A feature of this was that slavery was much more common in the South, due to the agricultural nature of its economies, than in the North, where there was a lack of labor-intensive “cash crops”. Northern colonies were established for various reasons, none of which were to further British economy in the New World by means of agriculture. Massachusetts was founded because the Puritans wanted to escape the oppressive Church of England. Rhode Island was founded by a refugee of the religiously intolerant Puritan Massachusetts. Whatever the case, Northern economies were more focused on shipbuilding and manufacturing, being that the soil was rocky and not very conducive to the mass planting of crops. As a result, racial interactions differed by region and this would create a host of issue and ultimately lead to a Civil War. Spain and France intermarried with the Indians in the hopes of gaining access to their fur trades and convert them to their religions. Those colonies were more naturally assimilated, and conflicts only arose when Indians felt oppressed, rather than the European side picking a fight. Indeed, the intention of the colonizer shaped the landscape of that colony, and affected the social issues of that region for generations to come.
Period 2 (1607-1754): Intercultural Contact and Conflict

While much of the inspiration for the Declaration of Independence came from the period between 1607 and 1754, this era also had a darker influence on racial relations within the nation. Due to the overabundance of workable land, there was a growing demand for labor in the British colonies, and colonizers shipped slaves from Africa to fulfill this need. This meant that there was no longer a need for indentured servants, and as such black populations began to outnumber their white counterparts. Also important to note is the relationship between European colonizers and American Indians, as alliances began to form with no end in sight for armed conflicts.

These AP US History guides expand on the course outline provided by the AP College Board website. This particular guide focuses on Key Concept 2.2, which deals with European contact with ethnic groups in the colonies, namely Native Indians and blacks. Additionally, we have created practice questions which will be referenced periodically to re-affirm your understanding of the material. Not only are these questions geared to aid your studies for Period 2 on the APUSH exam, but also to cement your understanding of how the forces at play in the 17th and 18th centuries affected the rest of US History.

Brief Overview

As the colonies began to expand and establish themselves, conflicts with the local Native Indian tribes also began to influence both parties in ways they never foresaw. Three main things were transmitted to the Indians by the Europeans: food, disease, and religion. While Native Indians got their hands on exotic European crops, they also experienced the brunt of new European diseases like smallpox and measles. These exchanges were common no matter which European power was involved. Religion, however, spread differently depending on the European nation. Spain made missionary influence a primary goal and set up various missions in the Southwest United States to spread Catholicism to the Natives. Meanwhile, a main objective of English settling was their own religious freedom. However, enough conversion did occur such that King Phillip’s War erupted between the English and the Wampanoag. This was not the only way that European colonizers differed. England was much less accepting of Indian customs, and this led to many conflicts over land and religion. Spain and France, however, were eager to marry in and gain influence in the local fur trading. They were more accommodating of existing local culture, and as a result experienced fewer conflicts.
Also worth noting is the relationship between blacks and whites during this time period. As the first few generations of enslaved Africans settled in America, Europe kept competing within itself, and this ultimately led to the expansion of the slave trade. English colonies saw more slaves on the Southern plantations, and there was a distinct hierarchy wherein slaves were always lower than the white plantation owners. This would create a host of problems for the South, especially in relation to the North where the economy was less focused on agriculture, and thus there were fewer slaves. Between slaves and Indians, English colonizers alienated entire groups of people easily, and this upset the colonists, who themselves had no real beef with the Indians or the blacks.

**Native Relations**

Interactions between Europeans and the Native Indians altered the cultures of both parties in irreparable ways. European powers realized the importance of Native Indian tribes in their colonizing efforts, and races were made between the powers to forge alliances with the tribes. This proved to be an extension of conflicts already happening in Europe. With the colonizing powers forming alliances with the Native Indian tribes, they also armed the Indians with manufactured weapons and contributed to the political instability of the New World. In the mid-1600s, a series of bloody conflicts known as the Beaver Wars erupted between the Iroquois Nation and the French, backed by the Algonquin Indian tribes of the Great Lakes. The Iroquois were backed by the Dutch and English, who encouraged them to aggressively expand, both for new land and new fur trades. The war ended when the Iroquois realized the true threat was English expansion, not French resistance. The war, both in its start and end, was demonstrative of the instability in the region caused by European alliances. English egging on of the Iroquois to expand westward allowed them to start colonizing in Pennsylvania and New York, formerly territories of the Iroquois.

While the Native Indian tribes gave European powers another outlet to compete among themselves, the Europeans did not influence the Native Indian tribes so favorably. As already mentioned, the colonial powers often influenced their trading partners to war against their colonial rivals and their trading partners, often for their own personal gain. In the case of the Beaver Wars, the English benefitted twofold, with the French weakened at the hands of the Iroquois and former Iroquois territory ripe for the taking. Additionally, Native Indians experienced new English diseases, to which they had no immunity and suffered greatly as a result. Smallpox and measles laid waste to Indian populations during this time in history.

A major factor of social change, beside diseases that crippled Indian populations in the years to come, was religion. The Spanish colonized in the New World with the express purposes of converting indigenous populations to Catholicism, setting up various missions in the Southwest United States. Religious conversion was initially extremely oppressive, but after the Pueblo Indians’ victory in Popé’s...
Rebellion, Spanish colonizers became more accommodating of Indian culture and this ultimately led to fewer conflicts. English religious conversion, on the other hand, was a byproduct of New England Puritans seeking religious freedom from England. They set up their own religiously free colonies, and established what were known as praying towns, wherein they forced Native Indians to move into them and convert to Christianity. While the Spanish changed their ways and became more accommodating of local cultures, the English stepped off their boats under the assumption that they were superior to the Indians and never looked back. This was the key difference between English relations with the Indians and Spanish/French relations; England never relented from their high horse and this bred resentment in both the colonists and the Native Indians.

Why This is Important

Know how European-Indian interactions affected both the Indians and the Europeans, and be able to explain how the differences in European colonizing led to different levels of assimilation. Know some of the details for the test about Native Indian conflicts, such as King Phillip’s War and the Beaver Wars.

Slavery and Servitude

As you should know by now, the practice of slavery began most notably when agricultural colonies had too little labor to work its labor-intensive cash crops of tobacco, rice, and cotton. Indentured servants working on contracts had previously been sent to work these fields, but there was an overabundance of land and England pressured the colonies to maintain a certain level of output. Europeans looked to Africa, enslaved local tribes, and packed them in small, moldy ships to be bought and sold in the colonies. Poor nautical conditions and rampant disease were characteristic of this practice. The stretch of the Atlantic used for the slave trade became infamously known as the Middle Passage.

When history considers such an awful and immoral practice as slavery, it becomes fruitful to ask, "who benefits from slavery?" Southern farmers, for one, because they no longer have to pay indentured servants. Labor was suddenly free and plentiful, and Southern plantations exploded as a result. England benefits as a direct result, because they now have more output to sell to the other European nations without any additional cost. From an economic standpoint, slaves were a huge boost to both the South and the North. While the North’s economic strengths were shipbuilding and manufacturing, collusion with the South benefitted both regions, and slaves were a big part of that. The slave trade, while not technically outlawed until 1808, ended long before that. Soon, the transplanted slave population grew and demand for external slaves decreased. By that time, however, the damage was done, and the racial stereotypes were ingrained in the minds of blacks and whites alike for decades to come.

Why This is Important
Know why the slave trade took place, how it continued, and who it benefitted. Grasp the economic advantages of slavery, and its effects on the South, North, and England.

**Phillis Wheatley**

Knowledge of famous slaves and African-Americans, such as Kunta Kinte and Phillis Wheatley may help you when discussing the moral issues of slavery. Phillis Wheatley was the first published African-American woman and poet. She, like others from West Africa, was enslaved and sent to the United States to work. However, she had the good fortune of being bought by a family from Boston. Northern slaveowners were much less strict than their Southern counterparts. Instead of working on the fields, she learned to read and write and continued her poetry at the behest of her master John Wheatley. She was emancipated after his death in 1778.

She was published for her work *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* in 1773. Her work shed some light on the ethical and moral issues of slavery, and highlights the negative effects of slavery on the African communities. She quickly jumped to the national spotlight, receiving praise from figures such as George Washington. She is also one of the founders of the abolitionist movement, and although that takes place mostly in Period 3, contributed her perspectives to the discussion. Slavery was still a very lucrative business when Wheatley wrote her poems, but at the very least her work brought the issues of familial destruction and moral tragedies for the slaves to the forefront of the discussion.

*Why This is Important*

Know who Phillis Wheatley was and what her poetry accomplished for abolitionist movements.

**Runaway Slaves**

Naturally, when you are in literal and figurative chains working against your will for an oppressive plantation owner, you will want to escape. A fairly obvious observation about escapes is that they either worked well, a slave went North where slavery is less accepted, or they were caught and punished. Kunta Kinte famously was caught on his third escape and forced to choose between his manhood and his right ankle, and chose the former. When the escape went successfully for a slave, all of a sudden they had to deal with the consequences. Either the plantation owner did not care enough to pursue a runaway, which was fairly uncommon, or they put out advertisements in an attempt to retain them. In addition to any search parties, the runaway also had to figure out where to go. There existed a possibility they would be caught by another, possibly stricter
planted owner, or worse, caught by their former master and punished, often severely.

However, regardless of the advertisements, some slaves did manage to escape and find their freedom. A famous example you will recall is Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, which is set to have helped hundreds of slaves to freedom. While the Underground Railroad was not around during this time period, external factors were present in helping runaways to freedom. The farther north Slaves went, the more sympathetic the people were. Northern states had less slavery, perhaps as a result of having less agriculture in their economy, but eventually became ‘free states’ and before that had abolitionist circles, so the precedent existed for runaway slaves to seek refuge. Some runaway slaves chose to go west and settle new, unexplored lands west of the Appalachians. Regardless, runaway slaves became a point of resentment for white plantation owners and a crucial outlet for the sharing of the sufferings experienced by blacks during this time.

*Why This is Important*

Know about advertisements about runaway slaves, the consequences of running away, and where they usually went.

**White and Black Populations**

A major consequence of English colonization that you are probably all too familiar with is a strict racial hierarchy. English settlers never intermarried with Indians or Africans, and a system of stereotypes developed wherein it was hammered into the minds of both whites and blacks that whites were superior. The slave trade began and then furthered this white mindset, especially as blacks were packed tightly into overcrowded ships and sent to work against their will. As such, black culture in the Americas developed with a sense of oppression. They worked tirelessly to keep their African customs alive in the Southern plantations, still practicing their usual traditions. Negro spirituals arose from these conditions, as slaves struggled to remain in solidarity in the face of unyielding oppression. Black families were split up as brothers and sisters were sold away to different plantations, and many never saw their family members again. White plantation owners were cruel to their slaves, often whipping them as they worked in the fields and enchaining them after the day’s work was done.

However, some plantation owners were kind to their slaves. Indeed, some interactions between white and black populations were positive. Runaway slaves were often aided by friendly white plantation owners and townspeople on their way to freedom. In the case of Phillis Wheatley, some plantation owners taught their slaves how to read and write and allowed them to stay in the plantation house. In this case, they were less slaves and more indentured servitudes or servants. This was more common in the Atlantic and New England regions were
plantsations were less focused on agriculture, since the land was less appropriated for it. Kindly plantation owners often freed their slaves when they believed they had no more use for the labor, and it was not uncommon for freed slaves to remain with their families even after being emancipated. However, even with the kindness of some plantation owners, there were far more owners that rigorously enforced the racial stereotypes in vogue. It is for this reason that interactions between white and black populations were largely negative for hundreds of years, through the Civil War and Civil Rights eras.

_Why This is Important_

Know of the types of interactions between white and black populations, and the difference by _region_ in terms of the moral side of slavery.

**Native American Conflicts**

Conflicts erupted between Europeans and Native Indians the moment that Jamestown was created and land became an issue. Later on, European powers began to use Indian tribes as pawns against both other tribes and other powers, and contributed to military instability by arming and encouraging conflict. We have already mentioned the Beaver Wars, was a quintessential example of Europe using Indian tribes for their own personal gain. We also talked about King Phillip’s War, which occurred when the Wampanoag tribe became upset with the rampant religious conversion in their tribe. In discussing Native American conflicts, it is also useful to consider the motivation and consequences when colonists go on the aggressive.

_Bacon's Rebellion_ happened in 1676, when farmer Nathaniel Bacon became disillusioned with the Indian threat in Virginia. Governor William Berkeley had a monopoly on the fur trade and refused to send troops to interfere with his cash flow. Bacon and other farmers then began raiding every Indian village in sight, peaceful or otherwise. Eventually, Bacon turned his sights on Berkeley, having been inspired by all the success he and his followers were having against the Indians. Bacon’s Rebellion failed after marching on Jamestown, but the damage was done. Native Indians became resentful of the colonizers and were more than happy to team against them when any of their European powers came knocking. Virginian landholders, meanwhile, started preferring slavery to indentured servitude. Having been scared by the possibility of further rebellions, they viewed slaves as easier to control. This further propagated the slave trade, and contributed to the establishment of racial stereotypes (that white landowners believed they could “control” black slaves).

_Why This is Important_
Know about Bacon’s Rebellion and its consequences, and about the other conflicts between European powers and Native Indians, including both larger scale wars and smaller conflicts.
Period 2 (1607-1754): Atlantic World
Political, Economic, and Cultural Exchanges

The timespan from 1607 to 1754 set the foundation for the birth of the United States. Europeans settlers came and started the process of New World colonization, bringing along with them new ideas and practices. Familiarizing yourself with the forces of colonization and mercantilism by the Europeans will help you better understand this period’s effects on the American Revolution and the years leading up to it. As Britain’s empire grew, it faced increasing internal pressure to maintain its imperial grasp on the United States, as well as external competition from other colonizers. This lead to British pressure on the colonists, as it further tried to strengthen this grasp, and led to the colonists resisting imperial control and fostering many of the resentment that led to the American Revolution.

These AP US History guides expand on the course outline provided by the AP College Board website. This particular guide focuses on Key Concept 2.3, which covers the exchanges, political and economic in nature, that shaped the cultures and ideas of the New World. Additionally, we have created practice questions which will be referenced periodically to re-affirm your understanding of the material. Not only are these questions geared to aid your studies for Period 2 on the APUSH exam, but also to cement your understanding of how the forces at play in the 17th and 18th centuries affected the rest of US History.

Brief Overview

This period in U.S. History was infamous for the Atlantic Slave Trade, as British colonizers looked to Africa to supply the growing demand for labor in its Middle and Southern colonies, as well as in Haiti and Jamaica. African slaves were taken from their homeland and shipped along the Atlantic Sea to the colonies, where many of them suffered from poor conditions aboard the slave ships and rampant disease. A large Atlantic economy grew from this, involving commodities such as rum, sugar, and molasses. This had two noticeable effects on the colonies. First, along with the autonomous growth of the colonies, the emergence of cross-Atlantic trade promoted “Anglicization” within the colonies. The second effect was the forming of a strict racial hierarchy as a result of the slave trade, in contrast to Spanish and French settlements that had more of a racial gradient due to encouraged intermarrying. Finally, important to note is the resistance of the colonists and Native Indians alike to continued British pressures to maintain imperial control, among them numerous armed conflicts and skirmishes.
Colonial Economies

The 18th century Atlantic trade economy created a shared labor market and facilitated the movement of ideas and commodities between Europe and North America. This was seen primarily in the African slave trade, where Europeans traveled to Africa and enslaved villagers to supply the growing demand for labor in the colonies. This was part of the European zeal to keep the economies in their colonies afloat, and was part of their larger desire to maintain a North American empire and compete with other colonial powers. This led to social changes featuring racial hierarchies and the preservation of cultures. Slaves transplanted into the colonies bonded together and kept their own culture alive in the face of white oppression on plantations. In this way, African culture traveled to the United States and was kept alive by slaves singing spirituals and telling stories from their homelands. At the same time, white plantation owners and black slaves rarely intermarried as per the culture of British colonies, and harsh racial stereotyping was the result. A strict hierarchy developed, in contrast to French and Spanish cultures were intermarrying was encouraged and resulted in racial gradation and the rise of the mestizo class.

The Atlantic slave trade was a subset of the larger trade economy which followed a classic mercantile system based on the exchange of raw materials and manufactured goods. British Colonies, including the West Indies colonies, shipped raw materials such as whales, oil, fur, lumber, sugar, molasses, silk, and tobacco to England, who had no other way to acquire these materials. England also received gold, ivory, and gunpowder from the African continent rich in those raw materials. England then made the colonies buy back these materials in their processed form, which included textiles, rum, and other manufactured products. This system was designed to promote British economic superiority over the colonies and the other colonial powers, who did not have a trade system of this magnitude.

Imperial commodity trade was one of the factors that led to promoted Anglicization in the colonies. In addition to the ideas and cultures of Africa being permeated across the boundaries of the Atlantic, so too were the ideas of the English shipped over to the colonies. British philosophers such as John Locke would come to influence the way the colonists viewed civil resistance and autonomy. He would also play a key role 100 years later when it came time to declare independence and begin the philosophical foundation of a new nation. Other ideas from the European Enlightenment also came to influence the philosophical atmosphere of the colonies, including Protestant evangelism and religious toleration. Some colonies, such as Pennsylvania and Rhode Island were founded on the premise of true religious toleration. That is, the Plymouth pilgrims fled the oppressive Anglican Church’s religious persecution, but started their own religiously intolerant colony. Fleeing oppressive religions is a British precedent set by the pilgrims and carried forth by William Penn and Roger
Williams. Atlantic trade also facilitated Anglicization by forming economic ties, strong or otherwise, between America and Europe.

*Why This Is Important*

Know the effects of the [triangular system](#) on the slave trade and racial tensions in the colonies and West Indies. Be able to explain how the Atlantic trade system came about and some of the long term effects, economically, socially, and politically.

**Conflict of Cultures**

Skirmishes between English settlers and Native Indians date back to the earliest settlements at Jamestown Initially, as was the case in Virginia and the New England colonies, the conflicts took place over land. European doctrines dictated that they could [justify land wars](#) under the guise of the Indians being aggressors. This also led to them stealing their crops and enslaving Indians to work in their labor-intensive plantation systems. The main accomplishment of this was slowing British attempts to integrate the colonies into their larger colonial empire. England viewed North America as an asset in the powers race against the other European colonizers, and passed the Navigation Acts in 1651 to ensure that no other powers, France, Spain, the Dutch, etc., would try to trade with their colonies. Numerous conflicts with the Native Indians prevented the English from having the infrastructure and logistical success necessary to incorporate the colonies into their larger mercantile network. As a result, the English turned their back on the colonies for about 50 years. A half-century of indifference led to the colonists developing ideas of “self-governance”. This newfound autonomy also contributed to the colonists resisting being colonialized further, along with the Indians.

The colonists ended up learning how to smuggle and trade with other European powers to circumvent the Navigation Acts. Founding Father Samuel Adams was noted for being a smuggler prior to his role in the American Revolution. This was part of their growing resentment and resistance against their English colonizers. Ideas from English philosophers, including self-governance and autonomy, came to shape the process of colonial rebellion. Under the 50 years of being abandoned by the English, the colonists tasted freedom and became used to their local concept of liberty. When the English returned to raise more money for their bankrupt empire, they were met with staunch resistance. The very ideas that had shaped England during this time, including the Enlightenment and Great Awakening, had spread to the colonies through the exchange economy of the Atlantic and influenced them to develop resistance against the English. The colonists sought liberty, self-governance, and religious freedom, and used the political thought of Enlightenment-era England to pursue them. This is where the famous phrase from the Declaration of Independence, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” has its roots.
Why This is Important

Know how and why the colonists began to resist British rule and the circumstances that enabled this. Know the roles of various concepts in England losing their grasp on the colonies, including conflicts with Native Americans, the Great Awakening, John Locke, and the Enlightenment. Refer to these questions for further practice.
Period 3 (1754-1800): American Independence and Colonial and British Conflicts

General Overview

The era lasting from 1754 to 1800 was a tumultuous time for the world. Europe had escaped the confines of the continent and had begun to extend its reach all over the globe. Britain had come into its own as a superpower, the world over knew fear in the form of a British flag waving boldly on the masts of the world’s strongest naval power. On top of all of this, there was a burgeoning new nation growing across the pond. They were a series of colonies along the eastern coast of North America that stemmed from the British crown. They were loyal to the crown but had grown without its suffocating influence due to its distance from the motherland. Here, people from all over Europe came together to seek a new life away from the traditions and institutions of Europe. As time wore on, however these American colonies began to chafe under British rule. They felt unrepresented in Parliament and saw the glimmer of their own destiny without decrees from across the Atlantic Ocean governing them.

It was during this time that America grew, first as British colonies and then as they saw their own potential as a nation. During this time the colonies would have to find common ground upon which to stand if they were to face the might of Britain. To gain their own independence, they would have to find allies in other European nations. Then to ensure their independence, they would have to draft and form their own government, a government based on democratic ideals. How does this all relate to the AP US History Exam? The College Board AP US History description describes the era as:

“The British imperial attempts to reassert control over its colonies and the colonial reaction to these attempts produced a new American Republic, along with struggles over the new nation’s social, political, and economic identity.”

To make it easier for you, we have divided this portion of American history into three parts. Not only will this make it easier for you to remember information about each distinct part of the period, but it will allow you to digest the information a little easier. The three portions of this period are: “American Independence and Colonial and British Conflicts”, “Democratic Ideas and Republican Governments”, “Internal Migration, Interaction, and Competition”.

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This in-depth AP US History study guide was written to further breakdown the first concept, “American Independence and Colonial and British Conflicts”. Now why don’t we get started?

On the continent of North America, the British and the French had been fighting for supremacy ever since the first colony was established. The native population had been taking advantage of this power struggle by siding with whichever European power benefited them the most. This fighting eventually culminated in the French-Indian War and would change how the American colonies would settle the new continent. Stemming from their newfound continental freedom from both a French and Indian threat, the colonists began to read about new democratic ideas with a government that was not headed by a king but found its power in the people. The idea of self-governance beyond the rule of a British monarch looked more appealing especially when the American colonies found British rulings intolerable. Finally, in the American colonies, we can see the beginnings of a multiracial nation, as immigrants from all over Europe cross the Atlantic Ocean and start a new life with people of different backgrounds, religions, and cultures.

**Colonial Unity**

For the AP US History Exam, a major point to keep in mind is that the American colonies, while all British colonies, had different cultures and philosophies. Ranging from their cash crops to the predominant religion, all the colonies had subtle but important differences that you need to remember for the exam. Most importantly, despite all their differences, the colonies came together and found British rule to be encroaching upon their rights.

**Colonial unity**, in the years leading up to the American Revolution, all stemmed from four main points: The Navigation Acts, the Stamp Act, the Townshend Duties, and most importantly the Intolerable Acts.

**The Navigation Acts**

After the French-Indian War, Britain was left in debt trying to protect its colonial interests in North America. Prime Minister William Pitt had decided to leave a contingent of the British Army in the colonies in order to further protect them but also keep an eye on their increasing unruliness. The result was an even larger chunk taken out of the British treasury. In order to pay for the soldiers’ wages, and what was considered a disastrous and unnecessary war, Parliament passed the Navigation Acts. The Navigation Acts stated that the American colonies were only allowed to trade with England. The American Colonies found this insufferable and this lead to an increase smuggling that left the Navigation Acts useless.

**The Stamp Act**
With the failure of the Navigation Acts, Britain’s new Prime Minister, George Grenville, along with Parliament, passed the Stamp Act. Since the colonies found it unreasonable that they could only trade within the domains of the English Empire, Parliament ruled that they would simply tax anything printed within the colonies instead. This included newspapers, pamphlets, legal papers, and even playing cards. In addition, in order to print anything, a colonist would have to purchase special stamps that they would then stick on what they printed in order to prove that what they did was legal. The American colonies found this inexcusable as well and argued that they could not be taxed without representation in Parliament. The colonies came together and formed the Stamp Act Congress and petitioned England to repeal the Stamp Act. When Parliament refused, the colonies prevented the Stamp Act from ever going into effect by harassing stamp distributors.

The Townshend Duties

Since the Stamp Act failed to tax the colonies as well, England passed the Townshend Duties, named after Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend who headed this new tax. The Townshend Duties would place a levy on items that the colonies imported the most which included: glass, lead, paint, paper, silk, and tea. In order to guarantee the success of the Townshend Duties, Parliament softened the effect by paying colonial governors’ salaries with money from the duties. They also reduced the military presence in the colonies in order to appear less threatening. While this worked for a time, the colonies also refused this duty and decided to boycott British importation. Britain, in an attempt to enforce the Townshend Duties stationed soldiers in Boston, which was deemed the center of this rebellion. This proved unwise and led to the Boston Massacre. A mob of American colonists harassed a soldier at a Custom House. The soldier lost his nerve and fired into the crowd. The resulting riot left five dead, among them is Crispus Attucks. Crispus Attucks was hailed as a martyr during the American Revolution.

The Intolerable Acts

Further tension in the colonies resulted in the Boston Tea Party and the dumping of hundreds of pounds of tea into the Boston Harbor. Due to this act of insubordination, Parliament passed the Intolerable Acts. The Intolerable Acts were comprised of four different decrees passed by Parliament. They were the Boston Port Act, the Administration of Justice Act, the Massachusetts Government Act, and the Quartering Act. The Boston Port Act closed all ship traffic coming and going from the Boston Port till all the money for the tea thrown overboard was paid for. The Administration of Justice Act was made so that all royal officials appointed by the crown were to be extradited to Britain in the event that the official committed a capital offense; colonists found this especially repugnant because they believed that no matter the crime, the official would simply be set free in England. The Massachusetts Government Act severely
reduced the power of local assemblies while simultaneously increasing the power of royal governors. Finally, the Quartering Act forced Massachusetts citizens to house British soldiers in the event that there was no proper housing for them.

**Why This Is Important**

These four proclamations by England and Parliament were key in binding the American colonies together. If England had been lighter in its treatment of the American Colonies, then perhaps there would not have been an American Revolution. However, these acts set the colonies on a course for sovereignty and self-governance. In 2007 you would have had to write about the effects the French-Indian War had on the American colonies and its relationship with Britain. Also in 2009 you would have had an FRQ on the effects British decrees had on Americans flocking to the independence movement.

**British and Indian Relations**

When Britain was settling the eastern coast of the North American continent, they did not account for the native people that were already living there. As result of this oversight, the two cultures clashed often and lead to conflict that left many dead on both sides. The English settlers, especially the Puritans, saw the new continent as their God-given land and quickly set about colonizing it and forming their own government. The native population’s reaction ranged from tolerance and acceptance to anger and cry in an aim eliminate the new white-skinned invaders.

The two main points to take away from study of British and Indian Relations for the AP US History Exam is the Iroquois Confederacy, the French-Indian War, and the Proclamation of 1763.

**Iroquois Confederacy**

The Iroquois Confederacy was an alliance of Native American tribes in North America. The Alliance was comprised of the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora tribes. These tribes were friendly towards the British and while originally mistrusting them, came to be allies during the French and Indian Wars. The Iroquois Confederacy believed that by indulging the British, they could keep them confined to the coastline and prevent them from moving further inland and then encroaching on Native American territory. Through this union, the English were able to get valuable furs from North America while the Iroquois received guns, horses, and other valuable goods. When the age-old rivalry between the English and the French began to heat up in North America, the Iroquois Confederacy sided with the British against the French together with the Huron and Algonquin tribes.

**The French-Indian War**
Beginning in 1754 and ending in 1763, with the Treaty of Paris, the two European empires of England and France went to battle once more, but this time on the North American continent and deciding who would be supreme in the New World. The conflict began when a young Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army by the name of George Washington was sent by the Virginia colony to prevent the French from building forts in the fertile Ohio River Valley. Lieutenant Colonel Washington was repelled but the French-Indian War commenced in full after his defeat. War swept across the continent and the colonies met in Albany, New York to discuss their mutual defense. This intercolonial meeting set the groundwork for the United States of America as the impending war brought the colonies together to discuss how they might best defend themselves. The war itself raged until 1758 and 1759, when Fort Duquesne was taken by the British and the French surrendered Quebec. The two European empires met in Paris and France gave up its colonial holdings in North America. The main result of the war, however, was that the American colonies were given their first taste of unity and it would not be their last.

The Proclamation of 1763

Parliament passed the Proclamation of 1763 after the French-Indian War. It forbade American colonists from settling west of the Appalachians and confined them to the coast. The first reason for this was England wanted to keep a tighter leash on its colonial holdings. The second reason was that England’s treasury was depleted after the war and by keeping the colonists close to the coast, they would be much easier to tax. Unfortunately, for the English government, the American colonists were not inclined to keep to this new proclamation and rushed westward in order to expand colonial influence. The colonies were furious that England would try to keep them along the coast and continued west despite the proclamation forbidding them. The Proclamation of 1763 further proved to the colonists that Parliament did not have their best interests in mind and perhaps they were no longer Englishmen but Americans.

Why This Is Important

British relations with Native Americans affected the colonies deeply. Through British alliances with the Iroquois and enmity against the Algonquin, the American colonies were forced to defend themselves against a war on their very doorstep. Then, despite their victory over both the French and their Algonquin allies, the British sought to confine them on the Atlantic seaboard.

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*

In 1775 and 1776, Thomas Paine published a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. This pamphlet is cited as being one of the major reasons the Americans broke away from the English Empire. Within it, Paine listed in vernacular and quite simply, why the American colonies should have self-governance. The pamphlet
itself sold about 500,000 copies and is still one of the most popular American
titles of all time. The reason for its popularity lies in the fact that it did not use
formal language. It gave the reasons for American independence plainly. Due to
its uncomplicated language and ideas, the pamphlet was further disseminated by
public readings in town squares, at public gatherings, and in taverns. The average
colonist was able to relate and understand because, instead of using elite
literature based on Enlightenment thinking, it simply read like a sermon and was
filled with Biblical references. The usage of Biblical references is especially
important when you consider the Puritan background of most colonists at the
time. The basic arguments of the document include:

- It does not make sense for an island (England) to rule a continent
  (America).
- The American colonies themselves were not solely English but composed
  of influences from all over Europe.
- If America is the “child” and Britain the “mother country”, then its
treatment of America could be considered abuse.
- If America continued being a part of Britain, it would get embroiled in
  further wars instead of being able to trade freely.
- Britain and America were so far away that it made governance
  inconvenient and cumbersome. America would have to wait months to
  hear a reply from the British government.
- The Puritans who were among the original founders of colonies and
  represented a large religious body saw that America was a God-given gift
to reform the Church of England.
- The colonists were never consulted in what may have been best for them
  and Britain merely saw the colonies as another source of income, further
  fueling the “no taxation without representation” argument.

Why This Is Important

Common Sense stoked the fire that was building underneath American anger at
British injustice. Its simple language gave a voice to concerns all Americans at the
time were feeling. As a result, its popularity in publication spread among all the
colonies and showed them that mostly everyone shared the same sentiment.
British rule was vexing at best and unfair at worst. Many colonists decided that
American independence was their only path as a result of the document.

American Independence

The American Revolution was a hard-fought battle. The American colonies were
outmanned and outgunned against one of the most powerful forces in Europe.
Their navy was paltry compared to the might of the British fleet. Britain had a
standing army comprised of seasoned veterans who had fought in several
campaigns. On top of this, Parliament was willing to hire German mercenaries in
order to put this Rebellion down. The American colonies only had a small militia
and whatever arms they could scrounge together. They were known as “minute men” for they trained to be ready in a minute’s notice. The war itself began at Lexington and Concord when British soldiers received the order to capture the rebel leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock. With the “shot heard around the world”, the Revolutionary War had begun.

The first Continental Congress met to figure out how to organize an army to defend themselves. It was at this first meeting that George Washington was appointed as Commander-in-Chief. The first Continental Congress also met in order to see if they could avoid conflict with England. They drafted the “Olive Branch Petition” and the “Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms”. The former asked King George III to rethink the war and they wanted to see if they could prevent any unnecessary bloodshed. The latter listed all the real and perceived grievances the colonists felt they had received at the hands of the British. Parliament and King George rejected both documents and the colonies committed themselves to war with Great Britain.

The war for American independence was not an easy battle. One of the first major conflicts, the Battle at Bunker Hill was an American victory with British casualties numbering over 1,000 soldiers. The Continental Army was forced to evacuate however due to lack of gunpowder. The British seeing that we meant business sent in General William Howe with a contingent of 30,000 men. General Washington was only able to gather 18,000 men and so was constantly on the run for fear of being outnumbered. It was only until Christmas night in 1776, that General Washington and the Continental Army finally retaliated by crossing the frozen Delaware River. The Continental Army captured 1,000 Hessian mercenaries which further bolstered American morale.

At this point, the American colonies realized that they would need allies. They found friends in the French and Spanish. The French were not so much allies of the Americans as they were enemies of the English, and the same can be said for the Spanish. Both the French and the Spanish realized that they could weaken the English by aiding the American Colonies during their revolt. French and Spanish contact with the Americans was originally a secret; the French did not want anyone to know that they were trading with the upstart American colonies. However, they provided the Continental Army with much needed supplies in the form of food, arms, and gunpowder. Despite aid from the French and Spanish, the Continental Army was hard-pressed on all fronts. Often, they were starving and running from a better-armed and better-supplied British force. A winter at Valley Forge almost destroyed the Continental Army as hunger, disease, and discontent spread among the ranks. Yet, despite the hardship, the Continental Army stayed together under General Washington who began training them into a professional fighting unit.

It is only with the master planning of General Washington and the support of the French navy that the war is decisively ended. General Cornwallis fortified his
army at Yorktown and planned to recuperate before entering the fighting once more. He did not think General Washington would besiege him since he was so far away and there was no doubt in his mind that the English controlled the coastline. This mistake was be fatal as Cornwallis underestimated the tenacity of General Washington and the Continental Army who marched 300 miles to lay siege to Yorktown. On top of this, the French navy had taken control of the water around Yorktown forcing General Cornwallis and his 7,000 men to surrender.

General Cornwallis’ defeat sealed the fate of the British army and while the war carried on till 1783. The English people no longer had any spirit to maintain the fight. Peace was brokered in Paris and the United States won its freedom and right to self-governance.

**Why This Is Important**

The War for Independence or the American Revolution led to the establishment of the United States of America as a sovereign power. It proved that the former British colonies had the capability to function not only as a nation-state, but as a contender in world politics as well. By defeating one of the greatest political and naval powers at the time, the American colonies became the United States of America. Furthermore by completing this section you would be able to answer a comparable FRQ like the one from 2010 that asked how United States was able to emerge victorious.

**Ensuring Independence**

The United States had just won its independence from Great Britain, but that did not mean everything was smooth sailing. America had left the protective wing of England in order to stand on its own two feet, but that left it prey to hungry European powers looking to expand their own influence on the North American continent. The most pressing concern was their lack of central government. The United States, for a brief period of time, had no central power to bond the former colonies together. It could not remain this way, however, for if they could not come to an agreement, they would be consumed once again by Europe.

When you consider how the United States ensured its liberty for the AP US History Exam, just remember these central topics: the Articles of Confederation and the Philadelphia Convention.

**The Articles of Confederation**

The Articles of Confederation were the first legal document binding the fates of the American colonies together. They detailed the responsibilities and obligations of the federal government. In addition, the Articles of Confederation clearly outlined what the federal government could and could not do which included levying taxes, providing for the national defense, nominating judges to preside
over court, and the right to vote on matters that affected the whole nation. The Articles of Confederation was the first step towards the federal government we know today, but it was imperfect. It left too much room for discussion and prevented the Continental Congress from acting efficiently. Nonetheless, the document was derived from the constitutions of each individual state and each within it, we see concepts that appear in the U.S. Constitution and continue to be evoked to this day. They include:

1. Ratification by a two-thirds vote
2. A bill of rights that recognized the importance of fairness, due process, rotation in office, right to a speedy trial, etc.
3. The freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and petition
4. Separation of powers

The Philadelphia Convention

In spite of the formation of the United States under the Articles of Confederation, the new nation was still mostly divided. The Articles of Confederation only united the former colonies in name and prevented the new federal government from executing any of its new duties. Britain cut America off from the lucrative trade routes they had used when they were still a colony. Spain had expanded into colonial territory and prevented Americans from using the Mississippi River. Even France, America’s staunchest ally during the war, was calling for repayment of debts incurred during the war. Within the newborn country, the economy was in poor health. Veterans were returning from the war to farms that were being confiscated due to defaulted loans. Merchants could not compete with the trading power of England. Worst of all, the Continental Congress could do nothing to solve the international problems or domestic issues. Thus, the states agreed to meet in 1786 and so formed the Constitutional Convention. This convention was attended by delegates from all thirteen states and many important men were in attendance. Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and James Madison would all attend and play a role in the foundation of a new government.

It was at the Philadelphia Convention that the Articles of Confederation were thrown out. In its place, they crafted the US Constitution while addressing several important issues. These issues included:

- The founding of a bicameral legislative body that would come to be the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- The exact powers of the President of the United States
- Commerce regulations and how the United States would deal with tax, international trade as well as protect domestic industry
- The decision to count slaves as only three-fifths of a person and to postpone the question of the abolishment of slave trade till 1807

Why This Is Important
The United States was on the verge of collapse because of the Articles of Confederation. The Founding Fathers realized that in order to save the union, they would have to get rid of the Articles of Confederation entirely. The Founding Fathers decided that they would have to ensure the union stayed together by drafting a new document. This new document was the US Constitution.

Additionally once you’ve completed this section, you would be able to write an answer to an FRQ in 2005 that asked how the Constitution improved upon the Articles of Confederation.

**Washington’s Farewell Address**

*George Washington* had served the United States for 20 years before giving his final farewell. He had guarded the nation before America had even conceived the idea of being an independent country. He helped guide and fight for it during the tumultuous years of the Revolution. As his final act of service, he had stood at the helm of the nation as President for two terms. After his second term, George Washington decided to retire, both for his own health but mostly because he believed that the nation no longer needed him. He had watched it grow up before his very eyes and realized that it was time to part ways. He also realized that by only sitting for two terms he would set the trend and help cement the idea of a true republican nation. In his farewell address, George Washington spoke of America as if it were a friend from whom he would be parting ways, but in his wake he offered several pieces of advice to the people of the United States. *Specifically in his speech he covered:*

1. The importance of unity and the threat of sectionalism
2. The danger of political parties
3. The true weight of the US Constitution and that it must be followed, but only until it no longer serves the people
4. Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances would help guide the American people and prevent any man from gaining too much power
5. The value of religion and education as a tool to help shape the republic into the dream that they had fought for
6. That a balanced budget and good credit are lifelines for the young nation
7. Finally, he spoke of avoiding “foreign entanglements” and that the United States should turn its gaze inwards to prevent being tied up in international conflicts

**Impact of French Revolution**

*The French Revolution* was an uprising with brutality that was unheard of in recent history. The revolution challenged the foundation of a system that has been in place for centuries. It resulted in the execution of a king, which shook all the European monarchies as they realized that they were not as untouchable as they believed themselves to be. The French Revolution challenged the notion of
the divine right of kings and began a bloody series of executions that numbered in the tens of thousands. During this time, the United States was torn between supporting the Revolution which threatened to swallow all of Europe or continue the policy of neutrality and remain trade partners with Britain. Thomas Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans were Pro-French and supported the Republican ideals behind the French Revolution. On the other side were the Federalists headed by Alexander Hamilton. They believed that embroiling the nation in the radical movement taking over France would only serve to earn the enmity of other European nations and threaten to spill into American lands. Both parties did come to a consensus and realized that partaking in European affairs would only serve to weaken the United States and further drain their already depleted treasury. Yet, when French citizens and officials had moved to America to escape the bloodbath, they began to agitate the colonists. Because of this, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts. Its purpose was to make it more difficult for immigrants to spread political discord. The act was initially meant to prevent French demonstration in the states but the backlash in Congress was enormous. The Federalist-controlled Congress lost their majority to the Democratic-Republicans and Thomas Jefferson gained the presidency.

Why Is This Important

This event in European history was the first major international affair that had some bearing on the United States. The United States also had the ability to affect the French Revolution had it decided to interfere in European concerns. In the end, America proved it was a power of some significance and showed that the republican, federal government that the Founding Fathers had established worked as authority shifted peacefully from the Federalists to the Democratic-Republicans. Plus you can use the knowledge in this section to answer an FRQ similar to the one from 2011 that asked how political parties affected national unity.

European Rivalry

Since the United States was no longer under the protection of the British Empire, other major European powers started seeing the North American continent as up for grabs. While England had originally defended the American colonies from any foreign interference, the new nation was now on its own and had to deal with aggressors on all fronts. Primary among them was post-Revolution France. Furious that the United States was dealing with their hereditary enemy, they demanded that American explain itself.

When the United States began to open peaceful talks with Great Britain, the French saw it as betrayal. The French believed that the United States was beginning to conspire with the English during their peaceable talks about opening up trade relations once more. The United States was merely looking to smooth things over with its former mother country but the amicable, pro-British
sentiment seemed like treachery to the French. In response, they sacked and plundered 300 American ships.

Americans were shocked that their old allies would commit such a crime so President John Adams sent a committee composed of Charles Pinckney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry to see if they could find the reason for these attacks and try to get them to stop as well. President Adam’s committee originally tried to reach French Foreign Minister Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord but was relegated to dealing with his agents instead. They demanded a $250,000 bribe and a $12 million loan if they wanted to meet with Talleyrand. These outrageous demands were met with ridicule and the United States refused to pay it. At home, the United States was gearing up for another war. President Adam never believed war was a viable option but in order to pacify his countrymen, he expanded the army and created the Navy Department. This force would go on and capture 90 French ships. It was only after the French saw that the United States meant business and wasn’t going to be pushed around that Foreign Minister Talleyrand offered to meet with the original committee to broker a peace.

Why This Is Important

Even though the United States and France had a history together, one of unity against Great Britain, the United States was its own nation now and was unwilling to commit to a conflict that it saw as pointless. While France may have helped them earn their independence and committed to their mutual defense, an alliance with post-Revolutionary France did not seem quite that appealing. When France caught wind that the United States struck a deal with the English, they did not hesitate to begin raiding American ships. President John Adams was forced to expand US military forces and strike back against the French. This proved that the United States had committed to being a world power.

American Indian Relations

The US Constitution was a document ahead of its time. Its authors, in an effort to cover all their bases, created a government on the basis that no one man should be able to dominate politics and power was to be separated among the people. The central government received its power from the people and due to this; the United States was a democratic, republican experiment in a world dominated by traditional European monarchs. Unfortunately, they did not think to include how the new nation was to deal with the native population already living in the lands they wished to occupy. At best, American and Native American relations were characterized by a mutual respect; and at worst, the Native Americans saw the new American population as encroaching upon their ancestral land and should be made to pay for it.
In the end, the Native Americans could not keep up with the expansionist nature of the United States. Treaties were signed constantly that demarcated where United States territory ended and where Native American land began. Yet, as more and more citizens of the United States pressed westwards in search of their own destiny, the Native Americans were pushed further till they could move no more. Territorial disputes led to constant skirmishes that the Native Americans could not stand up to. They were outgunned and most importantly, they had no resistance to American diseases which decimated their populations.

Why This Is Important

In order for America to achieve her dream of Manifest Destiny, she would have to continue rolling further and further westward. However, she did not account for the native population already living there. Instead, Native Americans were displaced either due to war, disease, or plain economic trouble. While Native Americans resented their dislocation, there was not really much they could do. This eventually set the precedent for how all interactions with Native Americans would go.

The Wrap Up

The era lasting from 1754 to 1800 was a tumultuous time for North America. In the beginning, British colonies were content to remain part of the crown as long as they were granted self-governance. However, animosity between the French and Native American population forced the American colonies to reconsider their position. The colonies found Parliament’s decrees to be unjust and the tension eventually broke with the beginning of the Revolutionary War. It was a war fought not only about the right to land but it was an ideological war as well. The United States of America was going to prove that a republican government was viable and it did. Interactions with British, French, and Native American rule solidified the young nation as a power about to enter into its own. For a briefer introduction to everything covered in this outline, simply turn your attention to the AP United States History Course and Exam Description. If you turn to Period 3 of the course and exam description for the AP US History exam, you will find that every major subheading here is covered in much briefer manner. Don’t forget to practice for the AP US History exam with these practice questions afterwards!
Period 3 (1754-1800): Democratic Ideas and Republican Governments

General Overview

When we think of the beginnings of the United States of America, our minds often travel to the Revolutionary War. We imagine the feats of George Washington as he led the Continental Army to victory despite being outmatched and outgunned. We envision the fiery patriotism of the men like Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry, charging the people to take control of their fate. We even picture the cunning statesmanship of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson as they forged the political foundations of our nation. Yet, we never consider what led the Founding Fathers to consider splitting from Britain. The path to liberty began before even the Founding Fathers and continued past the Revolutionary War. America wasn’t just born in the fires of the battle, but in the meetinghouses, assemblies, churches, and taverns that were common to every town in some form or another.

This particular guide focuses on the how the United States was first conceived, beginning with the ideals developed during the Enlightenment and how they were applied to colonies. It also covers the time just after the Revolutionary War when the government as we know it today was being designed and what measures were taken to protect the individual rights and liberties of the people. Once you’ve finished this guide remember to refer to these practice questions! They correspond with Section 4.2 of the AP US History Course and Exam Description.

Enlightenment and Religious Fervor

Many of the original colonists who fled to America were Puritans who were prosecuted in England. They believed in a strict interpretation of the Bible and that the Anglican Church had become impure. They fled to the New World so that they would be able to practice their religion freely and away from the corrupting influences of England and Europe. While you can still see the effects of Puritanism in New England today, the effects of religion waned as future colonists began to see both the danger and profitability of this new land. Spirituality and faithfulness waned in the face of commerce and the arrival of a new way of thinking from Europe. The Age of Reason or the Enlightenment had begun in Europe and spread to North America. There was a weakening of religious influence as people began believe in the tenets of the Enlightenment. This period is marked by a belief that the natural world and its phenomena could be explained by scientific means or logical reasoning. The most important effect
of the Enlightenment, however, was the influence new political thinking had on the American colonies.

**John Locke**

The Declaration of Independence asserts the rights of man in *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*. But did you know that particular guarantee came from the Enlightenment? When the Declaration of Independence was being drafted, it had many philosophical influences drawn from the Age of Reason. One of those influences was the work and writings of John Locke. John Locke was an English philosopher whose ideas played a great deal into the development of both the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. John Locke came up with the social contract theory. This concept states that kings or monarchs do not have the divine right to rule but government exists based on a social contract between the people and the king. In essence, the king derives his authority from the people. His other radical ideas include religious tolerance and the complete separation of church and state. One of his principles that was deemed especially extreme was the idea that the people had the right to revolution. In the event that a government encroaches upon the people’s liberties, the people are free to revolt and replace the government.

**Baron Charles Montesquieu**

Another important philosopher who played a major role in the development of the foundation of the United States was Baron Charles Montesquieu. Montesquieu was a French lawyer and nobleman. He also wrote the Spirit of the Laws which contributed greatly to the thoughts of the Founding Fathers as they were drafting the Constitution. Baron Montesquieu’s main contribution comes from his theory of separation of powers. He pioneered the idea that in order for a nation to be run justly and fairly, no one part of the government should have too much power. In order to guarantee this, the duties of the government should be divided between three branches, the legislative to draft laws, the executive to pass and protect them, and the judicial to determine whether laws infringed upon the natural rights of the people. Baron Montesquieu gave the Founding Fathers the idea for the government that exists today in the United States which we can see in Congress, the presidency, and the Supreme Court.

**Why This Is Important**

The United States guarantees its citizens' rights in both the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. The government derives its power from both those documents and if the rights listed within them were not guaranteed then the United States of America might have been a much different place.
Independence Movements

The American Revolutionary War inspired movements outside of the United States. Colonies the world over were stirred by the actions of the American colonies and soon revolutions spread across the rest of the globe in France, Haiti, and Latin America.

France

The French Revolution that started in 1789 happened almost directly after the American Revolution. The French commoners were tired of having to support the aristocracy and the clergy. Its beginnings were rooted in the Enlightenment thinking era that influenced the United States as well. However, the movement itself was catalyzed by other events that affected France. After the American Revolution, the French people find their country debt-ridden and the treasury empty. This was compounded by the fact that French soil was depleted and poor harvests contributed to growing poverty. French farmers and peasants suffered the worst because they still had to support the French nobility and clergy. Then when food began to run out, the aristocracy was blamed. Upheaval seized the country and after the dust cleared, the French monarchy had been executed and abolished. Most importantly France established itself as a democracy.

Haiti

Another important revolution influenced by the American Revolution was the one that occurred in Haiti. Haiti was a French colony with a majority of black slave population and a minority of white population. Most slaves were of African-descent, they were kidnapped and forced to work on the lucrative sugar plantations of the white colonists. Death was a common feature of working on these plantations and plantation owners consistently imported slaves. This lead to an imbalance in the population and white slave owners lived in constant fear of a slave revolt. In order to prevent this, they used fear and violence tactics. They would often torture runaway slaves in public to induce compliance in other slaves. The slave population withstood this persecution until its rebellion in 1791. Lead by General Toussaint L’Ouverture, the slave revolt began in the northern portion of the island and eventually spread to the rest of Haiti. The Haitian Revolution is probably the most successful slave revolt in history and is the only slave revolt that ended with the birth of a nation.

Latin America

A major development that happened, as a result of the American Revolution, was the series of colonial uprisings in Latin America. Motivated by the success of the United States and tired of European oppression, many colonies in South America revolted in order to free themselves of their shackles. From these colonies many nations were founded like Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Argentina.
These revolutions were led by charismatic figures like Simon Bolivar of Venezuela and José de San Martin of Argentina. Each of these countries saw the success of the American Revolution and the strength of the United States’ new republican government and emulated it in their creation of their own governments.

**Why This Is Important**

The revolutionary spirit from the American Revolution swept the world. It influenced many countries and colonies that would eventually become allies of the United States. These new nations would base their new regimes on the American example and become democracies and republics.

**Critical Period**

Just after the American Revolution, the United States had a brief respite. This would not last long however because new problems arose in the wake of its victory. The United States seemed to be united only in name and conflict was rising between the individual states over commerce and control. The Articles of Confederation had been written as a way to administer to the new country without infringing upon states’ rights; but as a result, the central government did not have enough power to enforce any laws it passed.

**Commerce**

One of the areas the Articles of Confederation had limitations in was commerce. Since it was unable to regulate commerce, there was no uniformity among the individual states regarding trading rights and consistency in importation and exportation. This can clearly be seen in the business relationship the United States had with Great Britain after the American Revolution. Great Britain decided to continue trading with the United States despite the loss of land; but in order to maintain the highest profit they would merely export cheap goods that America wanted to their former colonies but restrict the selling of American products in Britain. This harmed the American economy because money was constantly flowing out but not flowing back in. Also, since each state managed their own commerce, there was no standard tariff on British goods among the states. British traders and merchants would simply sail to the state with the lowest tariffs and sell their goods there. Money was pouring out of the United States and neither the Continental Congress nor the states themselves could prevent it.

**Control**

Another major deficiency of the Articles of Confederation was its inability to provide for the defense of the nation as a whole. The Articles of Confederation did not allow the central government to maintain a standing army. During the Revolutionary War, under the Articles of Confederation, the Continental
Congress had to request that the states provide more soldiers for the fight. Then, while they could compel the states to increase their production in industries relevant to the war, they could not force the states to supply the Continental Army. On several occasions, the Continental Army was on the verge of starvation. This extended after the Revolutionary War and when Shays’ Rebellion threatened the stability of the young nation. The Articles of Confederation could not even help pay back the pensions promised to the veterans involved in Shays’ Rebellion. With the very fabric of the United States on the verge of tearing, it was only a matter of time before the Founding Fathers came to the conclusion that the Articles of Confederation would not be enough to support the needs of the fledgling Republic.

Why This Is Important

It was clear from just these two points that the Articles of Confederation could not provide the necessary government that the United States need. There were many other issues but these were two of the main ones. How could the United States function if it could not maintain its economy or protect itself both from external invaders and domestic problems? The Founding Fathers deemed the Articles of Confederation lacking and so decided to draft a new document which we now know as the US Constitution. This section is important to know because this particular subject was an FRQ in 2011.

Constitutional Convention

The Constitution Convention took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from May 25th to August 17th in the year 1787. The reason for the congregation was to resolve problems that were looming over the recently independent United States. They had decided that the Articles of Confederation were unsustainable and to even try operating under the document would lead to the country’s demise. Many figures prominent in American history appeared at the Constitutional Convention. George Washington was unanimously chosen by the members of the convention to head the meeting. Other notable figures included Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. Originally, the convention had been called in order to revise the Articles of Confederation, but once the assembly was called to order, it was almost immediately decided that the Articles of Confederation needed to be replaced entirely. James Madison came forward with the Virginia Plan and it is from his designs that a large portion of the Constitution was created. It outlined a bicameral legislative body and an executive and judicial branch. Initially, he wanted the legislative body to be derived from a state’s population, but this was met with resistance from smaller states like New Jersey and Connecticut. These smaller states responded with the New Jersey Plan that would limit each state to one vote in the legislature. Both these plans were blended together through the Connecticut Compromise and formed Congress as we know it today. The House of Representatives is determined by a state’s population but the Senate is limited to two
representatives per state. Other improvements upon the Articles of Confederation include the creation of an executive and legislative branch in the form of President of the United States and the Supreme Court. One more vital difference was the creation of an electoral college to vote for the new president. Instead of committing the legislature to electing a new president, the task was given over to the Electoral College. The new Constitution empowered the federal government with obligations and responsibilities that were lacking in the Articles of Confederation.

**Why This Is Important**

The US Constitution has not changed much since it was written. It has been amended but the specific writing has not been altered. To this day, the federal government’s powers continued to be defined by the Constitution. The Founding Fathers took great care when choosing how to word the document and because of this, the United States still stands as both a republic and a democracy.

**Early Government**

With the new Constitution of the United States, it was time for the new government to go to work. While a legislature was already completed for the most part, the other portions of the United States government still needed to be filled. For the executive branch, George Washington won in landslide victory that saw both a unanimous vote from the Electoral College and an unquestionable majority in the popular vote. Congress and President George Washington then settled the matter of the judicial branch and selected six members for the Supreme Court with John Jay as Chief Justice. President Washington then set the precedent of selecting a cabinet to advise him. Among them were Thomas Jefferson as the Secretary of State and Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury.

One of the first major struggles of the new constitutional government was the creation of a **Bill of Rights**. In order to ratify the Constitution of the United States, the Constitutional Congress needed to get the approval of nine of the original 13 states. In order to get the support of the more reluctant states, they had to guarantee that the US Constitution would be amended with a Bill of Rights, specifically stating what were to be considered the inalienable rights of the people. Through this compromise, the Constitutional Congress was able to get the Constitution ratified. James Madison took up the task of writing a bill of rights that would protect the people and produced 17 amendments. Of those 17, the states accepted ten which would then become the original Bill of Rights as we know it today.

**Why This Is Important**
The Constitutional Convention had written the Constitution in secret, no one outside of that assembly knew the Articles of Confederation were being thrown out completely till the Constitution was completely drafted and submitted for ratification. It took the entire nation by surprise and there was much debate over the newly-strengthened federal government. In the end, the Constitution was accepted but not without a guarantee of personal rights that are still referenced today. Furthermore if you’ve read and understood this section you would be able to answer another FRQ from 2008 that asked why the Anti-Federalists opposed the Constitution at first.

**Revolutionary Changes**

With a new government in place and a fearful public placated by the composition of a new Bill of Rights, the United States was ready to take on the challenges of a nation. The US Constitution, as powerful as it is, does have some flaws. The document does not cover every single portion of the law and this lead to a revolutionary change in how politics played out. There were two prevailing thoughts regarding the Constitution, loose and strict interpretation. The former believed that if the Constitution did not explicitly prohibit the federal government from a particular task then it was free to perform it. The latter group believed that Constitution should be followed by its exact wording. From this division, there came the first prototypes of political parties in the United States, the Hamiltonians and the Democratic-Republicans.

A major division between the Hamiltonians and the Democratic-Republicans was the issue of funding for the new federal government. President Washington selected Alexander Hamilton to put together the new economic system. Hamilton went to work and came out with several proposed taxes. One of these taxes was on whiskey which would turn into the Whiskey Rebellion as western portions of the United States depended on whiskey for their livelihood. The new federal government quickly quelled the rebellion and revealed that the strong, centralized republic was now in charge.

*Why This Is Important*

Even with the American Revolutionary War over, there were still sweeping changes taking place in the new nation. A republican government had been empowered and faced new challenges as they tried to form a government that had mostly been untested on the scale they were trying to achieve. The United States did face these challenges, however, and grew from the struggles it faced eventually becoming the world power we see today.
The Wrap Up

This particular outline covers Period 3 of the AP United States History Course Description. The United States may have been conceived during the American Revolution, but it was only truly forged in the years after. Turmoil resulting from the weakness of the Articles of Confederation forced the Founding Fathers to see that in order for America to survive, it would need a stronger document that bound the states together even closer. Drawing from the ideals of the Enlightenment, they created the US Constitution, and while initially resisted it, was eventually accepted by the states. This new government endowed by the US Constitution helped early America navigate the mire of European geopolitics and manage its own domestic issues and is still cited and widely read today. Most importantly however, once you’ve completed this study guide you’ll want to test that you’re ready for the AP US History Exam. First, make sure you’ve familiarized yourself with Section 3.2 of the AP US History Course and Exam Description. Then when you’ve read that make sure to take these practice questions!
Period 3 (1754-1800): Internal Migration, Interaction, and Competition

General Overview

The United States was and still is to this day a nation composed of many different cultures. People from all across Europe came to America in order to forge their own destiny, unencumbered by the archaic traditions of their old continent. Instead, they brought with them small portions of their culture to the United States. People from all over Europe lived together as neighbors in the United States and the result was a combination of customs that was not entirely European anymore. This was the foundation of the American spirit. That any who came looking to work for their own fortune could come to the United States and trail blaze their own path. This mingling of culture led to new interactions in the new nation.

Competition arose as people all pursued the American Dream. When we examine early life in the United States, we can see the very first phenomenon of a complete social fluidity. Europe was set in its ways and it was quite difficult to climb the social ladder. In the United States, it was possible to make a name for yourself simply by working hard. This singularity manifested itself all across the North American continent in a variety of ways. This particular guide corresponds with Period Three of the AP US History Course and Exam Description, specifically the key concepts listed within. If after you’ve finished you want to test your new knowledge here are some practice questions as well.

Scots-Irish

The term Scots-Irish is actually a misnomer. The Scots-Irish in America were a group of Ulster Irishmen who had moved to the United States. They were predominantly Protestant and fled Ireland to escape the high rents imposed by English landlords and a series of famines and droughts that wracked the island nation. Most Scots-Irish settled in Western Virginia and Pennsylvania. The reason for this was due to the fact that most land along the coast had already been settled. In order to purchase land cheaply, most Scots-Irish moved further inland. Land further inland was mountainous and proved a challenge for the Scots-Irish to settle. However, they managed and did the best they could based on the circumstances. By the time they began settling in the areas of Western Virginia and Pennsylvania, the colonies were already embroiled in the French-
The Scots-Irish literally lived on the cutting edge of the American colonies and simply squatted on a patch of land that they found suitable. In addition, they would do their best to fight off Native American forays into Pennsylvania colony territory but were often driven off due to their lack of unity. Much of Scots-Irish income came from growing grain, but because they could not quickly transport their goods before it spoiled, they were forced to distill everything into grain alcohol.

**March of the Paxton Boys**

The Paxton Boys were a militia group of Scots-Irish. They were organized and lead by Reverend John Elder, known as the “Fighting Parson”. The reason for their assembly was because the Scots-Irish who had settled in Western Virginia and Pennsylvania were sick of being attacked and slaughtered at the hands of Native American tribes like the Lenape, Shawnee, and Seneca. Led by the “Fighting Parson”, the Paxton Boys began to attack Native American tribes. The nature of their offensives was brutal and in their wake, they butchered the innocent Susquehannock tribe. The Susquehannocks were a peaceful Native American tribe that had allied itself with Pennsylvania and as such, were under their protection. When the Paxton Boys found them, however, they murdered over 20 women, children, and elderly Susquehannock. When Pennsylvania’s governor, John Penn, got word he was shocked and placed the remaining Susquehannock Indians into protective custody. This failed however and the Paxton Boys found where they were being hidden and murdered and scalped the last of the Susquehannock Indians. It was the following year in January of 1764 did the Paxton Boys marched from Western Pennsylvania and Virginia towards Philadelphia. The reason was they felt that Pennsylvania’s government had failed to protect them from Native American attacks so they took matters into their own hands. The reason they did not riot, however, was because Benjamin Franklin promised he would bring their complaints to the legislative assembly. On top of that, he would grant pardons to all the Paxton Boys. Even though the Paxton Boys committed such acts of brutal violence, it forced the colonies to think about the Native American question.

**Battle of Fallen Timbers**

As Americans moved westward, there was a rush to settle the Northwest Territory. The Northwest Territory was land that was to the north of the Ohio River but southwest to the Great Lakes. This land was incredibly fertile and Americans wanted the land for themselves. Unfortunately, the land was already occupied by Indians. Americans believed that the land belonged to them because they had defeated the British during the Revolutionary War and since the Indians were allies of the British, they believed they had lost the right to that land. The
Indians did not agree; stating that when peace negotiations had been created, they had been left out entirely and so were not subject to the terms of the peace between the British and the Americans. Because of this, Americans and Indians were constantly fighting: the Americans for the right to settle in the Northwest Territory, while the Indians tried to keep the Americans out of their ancestral lands.

Initially, it seemed as if the Indians had the upper hand, they had a warrior culture which untrained militias could not hope to compete with. President George Washington saw this and charged General “Mad” Anthony Wayne with assembling and training a standing army capable of taking on the Indian threat. General Wayne spent two years preparing his army for battle. He trained them to not break the line out of fear and taught them discipline. Led by Blue Jacket and Buckongahelas, the Indians came face to face with a professional American army that would not run. The battle ended quickly when General Wayne ordered a bayonet charge and his cavalry prevented the Indians from escaping. The Battle of Fallen Timbers showed decisively that the Americans were willing to fight to grow beyond the Atlantic Coast. On top of this, the British saw truly what the Americans were capable of and sold off the last of their territories in the area to the United States. By eliminating the Native American threat completely, the United States was able to guarantee the safety of its citizens within its borders which only further fueled the migration westward. America was now ready.

**Frontier vs. Tidewater Virginia**

During the colonial period, Virginia was visibly split into two parts. Frontier Virginia was composed of smaller, family-owned farms. Life was much more difficult along the frontier as farmers had to contend with poor soil, less land to grow cash crops on, and the constant anxiety of a potential Native American attack. Tidewater Virginia consisted of landowners who made their farms along the Atlantic Coast. Their plantations were often more profitable due to owning more land. They were also insulated from attacks by Native Americans and had access to the ocean allowing them to ship their goods to trade them all over Europe and the New World. The importance of the division in Virginia lies in the equality felt by the poorer citizens of the colony. The colony was led by Governor William Berkeley and his colonial leadership stank of cronyism.

Under his governance, the colony’s taxes fell mostly upon the poor and exempted the wealthy. In addition, voting to change the government was limited to those who had money and thus, power in the colony. The problem was further exacerbated by the fact that Governor Berkeley protected the Native Americans in the west of Virginia and prevented further settlement. This was because he and his associates are maintaining a lucrative fur trade with the Native Americans west of the colony. The Frontier Virginians found this vastly unfair and were prone to starting fights with the Native Americans in order to seize Native American land and expand their own holdings.
The tension built up until Nathaniel Bacon, angered by the uncaring nature of his colony's government, led a revolt. Bacon's Rebellion was named after him and he brought a force of armed farmers and formerly indentured servants to Jamestown. He argued with Governor William Berkeley and wanted the colony to provide for the defense of the frontier along with many other grievances. When Governor Berkeley fled without even so much as hearing Nathanial Bacon out, the young revolt leader set Jamestown ablaze. This marked the first instance of a revolt stemming from popular discontent in the North American colonies.

**Corridos and Vaqueros**

Migration in the United States was not limited to English colonists moving westward passed the Appalachians and over the Mississippi. There were also Spanish colonists who also contribute to the mix. They brought with them the culture of Spain and this, in turn, further affected how the United States would grow and develop. One of the ways the Spanish contributed to the culture of the United States is through their introduction of the corrido. The corrido was a style of music that was fairly simple in nature. Often, they told stories whose topics were a little more realistic, occasionally tragic. The corrido was comprised of a call that gave the reason for the song. This was followed by the introduction of the protagonist and what his current problem was. Finally all corridos end with a moral of some sort meant to teach the listeners.

The Spanish also brought with them the vaquero culture. Even if you don’t know what the word means, you would probably recognize what it was if you saw it. The vaquero tradition came with the Spanish when the crossed the Atlantic Ocean. The tradition specifically refers to cattle ranching or herding and it is from the vaquero tradition that the American concept of the cowboy is derived. Furthermore, the vaquero tradition in the United States was split into the California and Texas traditions. The Californian tradition placed a focus upon skilled handling of livestock. The Californian-trained vaquero was perceived as having a very specific set of skills. They would often care for a particular herd and never strayed far from the home they grew up in. The Texas-trained vaquero is what you imagine when you think of the word “cowboy”. They were the ones who took livestock on long cattle drives in order to get them to market. The Texas-trained vaquero often did not have a permanent home but instead, relied on seasonal work and moved from ranch to ranch to offer his herding skills.

The Wrap Up

From its inception, the United States was a nation that was unbound by old rivalries and grudges founded on tradition. Europeans from all places flocked to the United States because the new country offered an unlimited potential never seen before. It provided a government where a citizen was not a subject to a king. A citizen could participate in his local government and have a say as to how the country should be run. Also the American citizen had the capability to purchase
his own parcel of land and with enough hard work and ingenuity rise above the social status his ancestors had been locked into for centuries. Each of these immigrants to the New World brought with them some piece of home. Each of these pieces would fuse and bind in ways that were distinct from European and making something uniquely American. Things were not always easy, however. The Native Americans constantly harassed colonial borders and seemed an unstoppable menace. Colonial disunity stemmed from socioeconomic differences that reminded people all too well of the Europe they were trying to escape, especially in the Virginia. Finally, there was the adoption of different portions of Spanish culture that further enriched American traditions. It is clear then that all this internal migration and interaction only helped to stir the sentiment of a single, unified nation. Remember, once you’ve read through this whole guide to test your knowledge on America’s history from 1754-1800 with these practice questions! They correspond with Key Concept 3.3 on the AP US History Course and Exam Description.
Period 4 (1800-1848): Developments in Technology, Agriculture, and Commerce

General Overview

The years of 1800-1848 were crucial years of growth and development for the United States. America was still fresh off of the American Revolution and was determining what it meant to be successful as a nation. As you get ready for the AP US History final, you will need to be very familiar with this portion of American history, and how the events that transpired during this time period shaped the remainder of American History.

One of the most important aspects of this time was the way that America developed as an industrial nation. Technology grew rapidly at this time, and as technology grew, larger economic markets developed. America reaped the benefits of economic development and dealt with the negative ramifications that came with it. The CollegeBoard AP US History course description lists some key concepts to concentrate on in each time period. We will use these key concepts as a guide for these comprehensive reviews. You can follow along on the course description or use these practice questions to keep yourself on track.

In this AP U.S. History guide, we will cover the second key concept of the period: Developments in Technology, Agriculture, and Commerce.

From 1800 to 1848, there was essentially a revolution of communication and global markets. The American economic market moved far past the boundaries of America and moved into Trans-Atlantic and European markets. Coinciding with this change, and spurred on because of it, agriculture and manufacturing processes were optimized to keep up with the demands of a global market. This had pretty extensive effects on American society and its way of life. Because of all this change, a big part of the dynamics of this period was adapting to these changes and understanding what they meant for the still new nation.

Expanding the Markets

One of the first ideas you will need to know about this period in APUSH is the way that America expanded its economic markets, both domestically and internationally. The new technology that allowed manufacturing and agriculture to happen much more efficiently also helped the growth of these markets.
Technology increased in three main ways: production technology (steam engines, textile machinery, etc.), communication (telegraph) and transportation (canals and railroads). Each of these technological advances greatly contributed to rapid market growth.

**Production Technology:** The technology that produced the industrial revolution is largely responsible for the expansion of markets. One of the key innovations was in the industry of textile manufacturing. The invention of the “spinning jenny,” invented by James Hargreaves in 1764, made textile manufacturing much faster.

Another crucial innovation was the use of interchangeable parts, created by Eli Whitney. This allowed for increased production as it contributed to the use of more machinery, and allowed for machines to do work that could typically only be done by men. It also led to the use of more unskilled labor, as essentially anyone could use the machines to manufacture goods. This created many more job opportunities for a wider range of people.

**Communication Technology:** The biggest, and without a doubt, most significant advance in communication technology was the invention of the telegraph. Although the official patent for the telegraph was not granted to Samuel Morse, who sent the first telegraph in America; until 1837, it was in the works for decades before and had very quickly made its way to the center stage of American economics. Morse also contributed the system of Morse code, which is what ultimately allowed for efficient communication through telegraph. As the telegraph gained popularity interstate communication became much more efficient.

**Transportation Technology:**

The development of transportation during 1800-1848 was one of the biggest technological developments in American history. The US saw two impressively efficient modes of transportation become extremely popular: the steam engine and the railroads.

Steam engines allowed boats to carry large amounts of people and supplies over long distances. Up until this time, rivers and bodies of water were still effective means of transportation, but the direction of travel was greatly limited by the direction of the current. The steam engine allowed boats to transport goods and supplies both upstream and downstream. Beyond that, it led to the creation of numerous canals, which greatly expanded American markets.

This was seen very clearly in the creation of the Erie Canal. The railroad provided a similar function; except it increased overland transportation. This further expanded the markets by allowing goods to be transported to areas that normally would have been out of reach. The increase in transportation also greatly
contributed to Westward Expansion, which is where many new markets developed.

For the Test

These three developments in technology were crucial to the expansion of markets. As you get ready for the test, make sure that you do not only understand which technologies contributed to the expanded markets, but also how they did so, and what importance they had. To solidify your knowledge of this information, try some practice questions about the expansion of markets!

Factory Workers

One of the most significant effects of the technological developments, expansion of markets, and rapid industrialization was the constantly changing dynamic of the workforce. Many people started to move away from simpler subsistence lifestyles towards specialized industrial work.

People started to produce goods for sale instead of just enough to support their family. This was of course spurred on by industrialization and rapid technological changes, which led to increased mechanization and use of factories. Factory jobs revolutionized the job market because jobs became available to a much wider range of people. This time period witnessed the growth of unskilled labor. Women and children started to gain jobs, and family dynamics started to revolve around factories.

Women Workers:

Pre-Industrialization, most women maintained positions as homemakers and caregivers. If women did work, it was usually in a traditionally feminine position like teacher, nurse, or midwife. However, as the factory system took over, opportunities for women opened up. The heavy machinery that took over for so much of the labor typically done by men allowed women to take over many positions. In fact their smaller hands and frames sometimes made them better suited for certain jobs. While this was a positive step towards independence and self-sufficiency, it also came with some negative effects. Factory work was often physically strenuous, and generally dangerous. Women, sometimes young girls, had to work long hours under unhealthy conditions.

Foreign Workers:

Another significant theme of this time period was the influx of immigrants, many of whom were looking for work in America. There was an infusion from a variety of areas. This trend did not really occur until closer to the end of the time period, but it was still a significant part of the era. Immigration boomed rapidly and massively. A lot of this had to do with the allure of opportunity and supposed
wealth in America. People felt that if they could make it to America, where there was bountiful land and economic opportunity, then they would be successful. Ultimately, this mostly just led to a lot of immigrants looking for factory work.

This became especially true in 1845 when the Irish Potato Famine hit. As Ireland’s food supply was virtually wiped out, Irishmen sought to escape as soon as they could. In other parts of Europe, political turmoil drove Europeans to emigrate. When they came to America, they needed just about any way to make money possible. That being said, they were often willing to work for low wages and in terrible conditions. As a result, they often replaced American workers in factories because of their low standards.

For the Test

For the APUSH exam, make sure you understand how the industrialization led to increased opportunities for factory work. You also need to know about the negative effects that came with the increased factory work, as well as the impact that immigrants had on the factory system.

King Cotton and the Slave Trade

One of the most substantial and quantifiable changes of the first half of the 19th century was the drastic increase in the number of slaves in America. As markets expanded, and technology allowed for even greater production of cotton, the need for forced labor greatly increased. Eli Whitney’s cotton gin is in fact commonly associated with the rise of slavery in America. Even though the international slave trade was disbanded early on in the time period, in 1808, the movement of slaves across the country still represented a significant part of Period 4 in AP US History.

Cotton Boom = Slave Boom

It is no secret that slavery and cotton go hand in hand in the mind of most Americans. Well for the APUSH test, you need to know why. Essentially, as the means for cotton production increased, so did the need for slaves. The expanded markets created by railroads and steam engines led for an increased demand for cotton. Because of the railroads, southern cotton plantations were able to provide goods for northern textile manufacturers. This created a pretty efficient system of manufacturing, and that created an increased need for cotton.

Large plantation owners worked hard to keep up with the high demand for cotton. Until 1808, the international slave trade brought hundreds of thousands of slaves across the Atlantic to be forced into labor on plantations throughout the south. However, when this was outlawed, an internal slave trade developed. People who owned slaves in areas where cotton was not grown would often sell their slaves to areas where the cotton market was rapidly expanding, such as the
south and southwest. Many northern slaves were transported into southern slave states. Unfortunately, this often took the shape of illegal slave trades, where free blacks from the north may have been kidnapped and sold into slavery. Also, as slavery became a more established institution in America, slaves started giving births to children, and these children were simply brought up into slavery.

**Slave Societies**

The increased need for cotton production further justified white farmers’ ideas that slavery was an economic necessity. They did not see themselves being able to support the rapid need for cotton without the use of slaves. Due to this reasoning, slavery became a much more accepted part of society in America. This is why the early 1800s saw the rise of the “Antebellum Period” in which slavery was just a natural way of life. This acceptance of slavery and the perceived need for it greatly hindered any abolition efforts that may have been in the works.

*For the Test*

Think about the factors that led to an increased need for slaves, and how those factors contributed to a national system of slavery. Also think about the effects that this increase in slavery may have caused.

**Creating a National Economy**

The first half of the 19th century was a time in which nationalism was developing, and Americans were seeking to develop a distinctly American economy. While the Federalists, Democratic Republicans, Democrats, and Whigs continued to debate the role of foreign powers in the U.S., there was a general desire to have an economy that was largely independent from foreign control. This was seen largely through Henry Clay’s desire for the creation of an American system, and was implemented through innovations in railroads and a focus on internal trade.

**Henry Clay and the American System**

In the early 1800s, America was still a relatively new nation, only establishing their independence a little over 25 years beforehand. Because of this, it was difficult for their developing economy to compete with the larger, better established market of British goods. The U.S. was also struggling to incorporate newly acquired western territories and newly developed states into the larger national market. Henry Clay was a prominent politician who suggested a plan to resolve many of these issues. This plan was known as the American System.

One of the first developments was the creation of the Bank of the United States (BUS) under Hamilton. The BUS was aimed at consolidating national economic power and creating a more efficient economic system. It might have been
successful, but Andrew Jackson eventually dissolved it due to pressure from those who viewed the BUS as unconstitutional.

Despite the failure of the Bank of the United States, Henry Clay and other supporters of the American System sought to resolve the issue of a weak national market. One of their primary goals was to promote intra-state trade versus interstate trade. This called for a greater emphasis on trading within one state. Up until the time, there had been very little focus on interstate trade, so this idea was not very well accepted by Andrew Jackson. Henry Clay saw the improvement of intrastate infrastructures as essential to the growth of the American economy, so he sought an alternative way to fund these developments.

Another big development of the American System was the implementation of tariffs on foreign goods. A tariff was essentially just a special tax placed on the importation of goods from a foreign country (this was a direct attack on the power of British goods at the time). This drove up the price of foreign goods and served a two-fold purpose. First, it created a source of income for American government. In Henry Clay’s mind, this money could be used to develop infrastructures. Second, it would lead to an increased demand for American goods because there was no tariff involved on them.

*For the Test*

The American System, while making some big jumps for the American economy, was ultimately not successful in its original goal of creating a single, unified national economy. It also made much tighter bonds among states in the North and the Midwest, while the South was somewhat alienated by the system. You will also need to be able to explain why the American System didn’t prove to be successful, and what other efforts have been made at a National Economy.

**Forced Migrations**

As economic pressures were rising and the American economy continued to grow, the necessity of developing more territories became more and more important to the United States. It became so important that it eventually led to one of the darker moments in American history. The newly formed United States was pretty well established in most areas East of the Mississippi. As economic demand for goods increased, so too did the demand for land. The only problem is that Native Americans were taking up much of the territories desired by American settlers. Facing intense economic pressures, in 1830 Andrew Jackson developed the **Indian Removal Act**.

**Indian Removal Act**

Andrew Jackson and his gang drew up this act during the year 1830. Essentially, it was aimed at giving white settlers access to land that had previously been
occupied by Native Americans. This act promised fair compensations for the Native Americans who were being displaced. It also promised them certain amounts of land in the unsettled West. Essentially, they tried to bribe the Native Americans out of their land in exchange for some money and for some questionable land. The land that was occupied by these Indian groups could then be taken over by white settlers who could capitalize on this land for financial gain. At this time, expansion of the American market was a high priority for people and they were willing to go to great lengths to accomplish this.

The Indian Removal Act was controversial for a lot of reasons. First off, it called into question what authority the president had to make these lofty promises. It was unclear what kind of jurisdiction these lands fell into, and it was also unclear how these Indian tribes would maintain their sovereignty. It also brought into question what kinds of political rights these tribes had. They were not technically settlers nor did they belong to a specific state. Did they still receive the same rights as states? Did the constitution still protect their land? What rights did these groups have to the land? All of these things were unclear, but because of the American desire for land, they were largely overlooked.

Technically, the Indian Removal Act called for voluntary evacuation of Indian lands. Unfortunately, that is not how it usually played out. Many non-Natives from surrounding areas were very excited about the prospect of being able to develop the land formerly held by Native Americans. Many Native Americans opposed the act and were not in favor of moving out west, but they soon discovered that the voluntary aspect of the act did not actually make a difference. Whether the Native Americans were in favor of the act or not, they accepted the fact that either way they would have to leave their homeland behind. One of the most well known examples of forced Indian removal is known as the “Trail of Tears.” It is said that over tens of thousands of Native Americans were forcefully removed from their homeland thanks to the Indian Removal Act.

The Indian Removal Act primarily affected the Chickasaw, Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes. The lands that were being sought after were primarily in the southeastern states such as Georgia and parts of Florida.

For the Test

You will almost certainly need to know the driving factors for America’s adoption of the Indian Removal Act (economic development, push for westward expansion, desire for Indian lands). It is also important to know which tribes were affected by this act, and how it ultimately demised into the Trail of Tears.

Opening the West

Prior to the development of railroads in western parts of the state, there was still a big desire to settle out west. People in America, struggling to make ends meet or
lacking in land to develop, saw the west as being full of promise and opportunity. There was a certain amount of awe attached to the West, as people sought economic opportunities. Many of the same factors that led to the Indian Removal Act were also driving early expansion efforts out West. Period 4 in AP US History seemed like a time of prosperity and growth, and everyone wanted in on the action. Thus, this period saw the growth of historic trails like the Oregon Trail.

**Reasons for Westward Expansion**

Before railroads could be used for this endeavor, trips out west were extremely long and dangerous. Most people who embarked out west had no means or plans of returning to the East. With all of the risk involved, what made people venture out to this unknown land? Well, a lot of things. Test out your knowledge on westward expansion and then brush up your skills back here. Here are three main causes for Westward Expansion.

- **Manifest Destiny.** Many white Americans believed that white settlers, as the supposedly “superior” race, had a right to conquer more land. Although this term mostly referred to foreign affairs, people used it to justify their move out west.
- **Monroe Doctrine.** This piece of doctrine basically said that if any European nation tried to colonize in the newly acquired Western territories it would be seen as an “act of aggression.” This discouraged other countries from moving west and also encouraged Americans to settle on more western land.
- **Oregon Territory.** This was one of the larger and more sought after territories acquired by the United States. People often journeyed out this way in hopes of obtaining new land, and in many cases, after gold. (Ever heard of the California Gold Rush?)

**Effects of Westward Expansion**

- New markets developed. As with any new land acquisition, these newly settled lands opened up new areas for trade and agriculture.
- New community systems. The way of life in the West was very different than in the East. People had to give up virtually everything they had and everything they knew. Their long and difficult journey led to newly formed communities of settlers.

*For the Test*

Be able to explain the philosophies of Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine. Know about key journeys like the Oregon Trail, and what kinds of dangers awaited people who went on these journeys. The idea of westward expansion is an important theme to know throughout AP US History.
European Migrants

To further complicate the events in America during the 1800-1848 era, there was also a massive infusion of European migrants. Between 1830 and 1840, the number of immigrants coming into America increased from 143,000 to 599,000. This influx of Europeans left the American economy frantically trying to determine what to do with all of these newcomers. It became a challenge to figure out where they fit in the American culture, society, and economy.

Reasons for European Migration: Push and Pull

The reasons for European migration are important to understand. They are typically referred to “push/pull” factors. As in, certain things were pushing them out of Europe and pulling them towards America. To make things easy for you, we’ll break down some of these push/pull factors that you need to know.

Push: These factors were usually centered on conflicts or issues in Europe that made life there difficult.

- Population growth. Europe as a whole was pretty prosperous around this time, which led to pretty rapid population growth. This created overcrowding and a lack of resources.
- Crop failures. Farmers were already having a hard time dealing with the rapid industrialization, and when their crops started to fail for various reasons, they struggled to survive. One very prominent example was the Irish Potato Famine of 1845, which caused about a million people to leave Ireland.
- Religious and Political Turmoil. Various groups, such as Jewish people from Germany, were led to leave Europe to escape persecution, or to avoid political conflicts that may have been occurring in their home country.
- Industrial Revolution: While the Industrial Revolution provided a large amount of jobs for people, it also put many people out of work who made their living off of artisanal trades.

Pull: These factors were alluring aspects of American life that seemed appealing to Europeans seeking an escape.

- Religious and Political Freedom. The American way of life was relatively tolerant of different beliefs, and it also created a large amount of economic freedom.
- Resource Abundance. During this time, America was rapidly gaining more land, so people felt that they would have a better chance of owning land if they were to move to America.
- Economic Opportunity: America in general seemed to be the land of promise to Europeans. It seemed that there were plentiful opportunities for work in America, which was an obvious draw.
General Effects of European Migration

It is important to know why Europeans flocked to America, but it is also important to understand the effects this had on America.

• Nationalism and Prejudice. Although America seemed like a land of economic promise, people still had to compete for limited resources and jobs. Outsiders seemed like threats to American job prospects, which led to a lot of frustration and distrust. Foreign immigrants were often disliked and many racial and religious prejudices occurred during this time.

• Overcrowding. The rapid infusion of European immigrants coupled with the natural population growth caused by industrialization led to overcrowding and urbanization.

Period 4 of APUSH was a time of extreme growth, and European migration certainly contributed to that growth.

The Isolated South

As mentioned before, one of the great failures of the American System was its inability to incorporate the South into the larger American market. The American system seemed to link the North and the Midwest more closely, and left the South somewhat on its own. The American System was not able to transcend the individual goals and separate identities of each region. For the AP US History test, you will need to understand the different factors that contributed to this isolation, and the effects that its isolation would have on American history, society, and economics.

Reasons for Isolation

The reasons for isolation are numerous and complex. A big part of this has to do with the American system. The tariffs that were put in place to increase the desire to purchase American goods did not offer much economic protection to the southern states. Southern states, with their abundant crop production, still relied heavily on exporting to foreign markets. Also, one concept that APUSH definitely wants you to understand is that the American System was very effective in connecting the North and the Midwest, but not the South.

Another big factor leading to this isolation was the Missouri Compromise. The Missouri Compromise was aimed at easing tension between slave and free states. This compromise was supposed to draw a clear line once and for all indicating where slavery would and would not be allowed. The compromise soon came under fire as being unconstitutional and it was actually basically overwritten by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which gave those two areas the ability to determine for themselves whether slavery would be allowed. However, the Missouri Compromise was very effective in isolating the South. This compromise, very
literally, drew a line in between southern and northern states, and showed that they had very different interests and beliefs.

For the Test

Understand how concepts like the American System and the Missouri Compromise led to the Isolated South, and how this created tension that would later develop into the Civil War. Use these practice questions as a guide.

Effects of Market Revolution

The quickly changing market had a number of effects on the American economy, society, and general way of life. Many of these effects were covered in the discussion of the factory system, while a few have yet to be mentioned. We will give a brief overview of the effects of the newly developed market that we have already covered, and introduce some new ideas about the changing markets.

Factory Work

This idea has been briefly mentioned already. Basically, as industrialization made its way over to America, factories started to develop and radically changed the job market. Pre-industrialization, people typically worked in jobs as skilled craftsmen, and women and children typically did not work outside of caring for the homestead. Post-industrialization, factory development opened up many new jobs for all kinds of people. Women and children became a viable workforce. This also allowed them to be exposed to very poor working conditions; and as people started to resist this kind of labor abuse, owners sought out immigrants who desperately needed jobs and were willing to work for low wages and in bad conditions. The use of immigrants in the workplace slowed the process of labor unions and reforms.

Social Life

This idea has not been mentioned much in this guide, but is a very important part of this period of AP U.S. History. The effects of the market revolution were not limited to changing the way that work was done. It also had a significant impact on family and social life. For one, it widened the gap between the rich and poor. Business and factory owners prospered while some people struggled to make enough to survive as they worked for tiny wages. At the same time, a middle class started to develop as opportunities for blue and white-collar positions became more available. Either way, there was a clear divide between the “haves” and the “have-nots.”

Another important effect was the way the market revolution changed family structures. Up until this point, women only worked inside the home or in traditional feminine roles, such as a teacher or a nurse. Now, they could hold
down a regular factory work job. Not only that, but their children could often work, which was usually needed to in order for the family to get by. As a result, children often left school early and did not receive proper education. This time period also introduced different family dynamics. Each of these issues was not really resolved within this period, but they set the stage for future reform movements.

For the Test

Be able to explain the effects of the market revolution, and the lasting impact that these effects would have. Also, know how it set the stage for later reform movements, such as the women’s rights movement or child labor laws.

Regional Politics

At this point, you should already have a pretty decent understanding of this issue. The regional politics of Period 4 were virtually a direct result of the isolated south and everything that came with it. Despite increased feelings of nativism and anti-immigrant attitudes, there was still not a lot of cohesiveness within national politics. Different regions had very different interests, and their political actions were meant to protect these. Southern states held tightly to slavery, cotton production, and foreign exportation. Northern states, on the other hand, sought to improve American markets and capitalize on the market revolution that they were experiencing. And of course, the slavery issue and the expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories even further deepened the divide. Also, the old federal government versus states’ rights issue was still prevalent, manifesting itself in slave policies.

Essentially, the regional politics that plagued this time period are just a culmination of all the other concepts from Period 4. Each of the concept covered above contributed to a politically divided America.

For the Test

Summarize how previous events and ideas contributed to the regional politics of the time. Identify key policies and issues that different regions disagreed on. Some examples can be found in these test questions.

The Wrap Up

The 4th time period covered in AP U.S. History, 1800-1848, experienced substantial changes in almost all aspects of economic, political, and social life. This was largely a result of the rapid development in technology, agriculture, and commerce. The aspects of this time period covered above directly correlate with Key Concept 4.2 on the 2015 AP U.S. History College Board course description.
Be sure to use these Key Concepts to make sure you are on track. And of course, for a more detailed explanation of any idea, event, or concept, make sure you check out blog for their abundance of resources.
Period 4 (1800-1848): Mass Democracy, National Culture, and Institutional Reform

General Overview

Period 4 (1800-1848) of AP U.S. History represents a critical time in America’s development as a country. It was a time of growth, change, and economic development. The changes seen during this time set the stage for the coming events of Period 5, such as the Civil War and Reconstruction. For the AP U.S. History exam, it is absolutely vital that you understand the political happenings of the first half of the 19th century. You will need to know who was in power, which parties represented which ideas, the most controversial topics of debate and discussion, and how each of these things shaped America into the country we see today.

Of course, this period in history has a bunch of other important factors in play. This guide will focus more on the political movements of the time, while our other guides for Period 4 will deal with social, economic, and cultural shifts. Feel free to use the practice questions that go along with this guide to further enhance your learning. Using these guides, and with a whole lot of practice, you will be sure to kick butt on the APUSH exam.

Also, it should be noted that these comprehensive guides and review questions go along with the outline of AP U.S. History as given on the College Board website. This particular guide corresponds with Key Concept 4.1. You can use the course outline to make sure that you are staying on track as you study. If it shows up on the course description and in this guide, you can be sure it is something you will need to know for the test.

Debates Over Power and Rights

As you should have learned in Period 3, there were a lot of controversial issues surrounding the creation of the United States. Although the founding fathers were able to come to some agreements and make some compromises necessary to the founding of this nation, there were still a lot of unresolved issues. British rule had left a sour taste for strong federal governments in the mouth of many people. There were many fears about too powerful of a government being formed, and the debates to keep this from happening continued long after the initial signing of the Constitution. Although most of the violence on American soil would subside
for the first half of the 19th century, it did not stop disputes from happening. The only difference was that now, the fights took place in the political realm. During this period, some key polarizing issues transformed American politics.

### Mass Democracy

To begin with, it should not be overlooked that America had managed to create one of the first modern “mass democracies.” That was quite the accomplishment! They had pretty successfully created a system of government in which the power really does come from the people, and where people have a significant say in government affairs. This idea of democracy has been sought after for thousands of years, but the newly established American system of governance was one of the first and most successful modern democracies. However, the tricky part for the US was figuring out how to maintain that modern democracy.

### Early Political Parties

The Federalist versus Anti-Federalist debates that emerged during the Constitution ratification process would go on to develop into some of the first political parties in America. So what were these political parties? Well, they came in two waves. At the beginning of the 19th century, politics centered on the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. During the 4th period, there was a shift in political parties with the emergence of the Whigs and the Democrats. We’ll look at each of these parties and their respective opposition, and then determine what led to the transition.

Federalists versus Democratic Republicans: The division of these two political parties focused mostly on the interpretation of the Constitution and the limitations of the federal government. Much of this debate arose after Alexander Hamilton attempted to create the first national bank. People were unsure as to whether the Constitution gave him the power to do this, and it resulted in two opposing viewpoints.

- **Federalists.** The Federalist Party was in favor of Hamilton’s actions. They did not see any issue with the way he interpreted the Constitution and felt that he was acting well within his rights to create the national bank. The national bank of course just serves as an example of the type of thing that these groups disagreed on. Generally, the Federalists were in favor of broad constitutional interpretations and a strong federal government.

- **Democratic-Republicans.** The early leader of this party was Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson felt that Hamilton was manipulating the Constitution, and that creating the national bank was outside of his power. Jefferson and his followers called for a more literal, straightforward interpretation of the Constitution. Essentially, they felt that it was unconstitutional for the federal government to assume rights that were not clearly written in the
Constitution. The followers of Jefferson became known as the Democratic-Republicans.

Think you got this down? Prove it by trying out these practice questions!

The division between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans manifested itself in the election of 1800, which pitted John Adams (Federalist) against Thomas Jefferson (Democratic-Republican). During this election, the two parties took very strong stances against each other, and mud slinging was at its best. The Democratic-Republicans came out on top with the victory of Thomas Jefferson. This was not, however, the end to the Federalist/Democratic-Republican debate.

Whigs versus Democrats: This was basically just a continuation of the Federalist/Democratic-Republican issue. However, the Federalist Party kind of disappeared and these two parties were just branches off of the Democratic-Republican Party. For a majority of the early 1800s, the Democratic-Republican Party had controlled politics. But, as history seems to repeat itself, the issue of state rights came up once again, this time within the Democratic-Republican Party. Here is how it played out.

- Whigs. The Whigs’ ideas for government were in many ways similar to the Federalists. They overall favored a stronger, broader national government. They saw Congress as being one of the most powerful mechanisms of government and believed they should maintain a lot of power. The Whigs also continued support for having a national bank. This party was certainly in support for the American System proposed by Henry Clay. In fact, Henry Clay was a very prominent Whig. There was certainly a sectional divide present, as most Whigs were located up North.

- Democrats. This group carried on many of the viewpoints originally held by the Democratic-Republicans. They believed in a less powerful federal government that left a lot of power in the hands of the states. The Democratic Party saw a lot of power belonging to the individual as opposed to communities or large groups. The farmer came to represent their ideal way of life and the ideal American. You could almost say that the Democrats were a party for the common people. One of their primary leaders was Andrew Jackson.

These two parties are very important to understand because they clearly marked the way for today’s current political parties in America. The Democrats of the early 18th century went on to remain the political party that we still refer to as Democrats. Their ideology has changed a lot over the years, but some of their basic principles still apply. The Whig party went on to become the Free Soil Party, and went through a couple different changes before finally establishing itself as the Republican Party. A quick glance at American politics might reveal how different the current Democratic and Republican parties are from the original Democratic and Whig parties, but it is important nonetheless to understand how
each came to be. It can be easy to get confused in all of this mess, so make sure you test yourself to stay sharp! Here are a couple questions that might help.

For the Test

Make sure you can clearly explain each of the political parties and what they stood for. Identify key leaders and understand what caused any changes in ideas over time.

**War of 1812**

Although Period 4 of APUSH marks a relatively peaceful time, the War of 1812 serves as an interesting change of pace. It was not a very long lasting war, as its name implies, but it did have a number of lasting effects on American history and was undoubtedly an essential part of America’s progression as a nation. Also, it marks the first time that America declared war.

There were many causes for the start of the War of 1812, but one of its key initiating factors was the impressment of U.S. sailors by British naval forces. Long story short, British forces were apparently taking US ships and making the people on board become part of their military. (Make sure you check out our crash course on impressment for a better explanation) Basically, British military forces were overstepping their bounds and encroaching on America’s sovereignty. Also, Great Britain put a couple of embargos in place, which really hurt the United States economy. This was an even greater violation of America’s rights as a sovereign nation.

Honestly, the details of the warfare are not really important for the APUSH test. What you do need to know is how this war impacted American foreign affairs and politics. The Battle of New Orleans was very triumphant for America and led to a lot of Andrew Jackson’s prominence and success. Ultimately, the war was a success for the United States. After the war, there was a meeting known as the Hartford Convention. At this convention, many Federalists expressed frustration with how the war was carried out and criticized the actions of the government. This proved to be a big mistake, as it divided the Federalist Party and eventually led to their demise. The thing about this war is that, not much changed as far as territory claims or impressment issues. Its main benefit was the fact that it proved America’s ability to survive and last as a nation.

For the Test

Understand the various factors leading to the War of 1812. Know who was involved, and what they had at stake in the war. Also, make sure you understand how post-war political conversations led to the demise of the Federalist Party.

**Important Elections**
There were a number of key elections during this time that had significant impacts on the political climate of America. For the APUSH exam, you should know what was at stake in these elections, who they involved, and the effects of the outcomes of these elections.

**Election of 1832**: This election featured Andrew Jackson (Democrat) running against Henry Clay (Whig/Republica). This was the first election in which candidates were chosen by party conventions instead of a congressional vote. The candidates for each of these parties had been very active in politics and were good representation of their party affiliation. Jackson was classically a defender of states and individuals rights, while Henry Clay advocated for the “American System” which called for a more unified American economy. Many parts of the American System directly opposed ideas of Democrats, such as the increased tariffs on foreign goods. For this reason, Jackson won the election in a landslide!

**Election of 1840**: This election featured Martin Van Buren (Democrat) who had served as the current president, against William Henry Harrison (Whig). Van Buren had served as the Vice President under Andrew Jackson and had essentially coasted off of Jackson’s success and into office. However, Van Buren did not effectively deal with the Panic of 1837 and this certainly hurt his chances during the 1840 election. Also, he was running up against Harrison who was a recent war hero and held the vote of the common man. This election saw a very large campaign from both sides, and ended in a Harrison victory. However, Harrison died only 30 days after his inauguration and his Vice President John Tyler served the remainder of the term as President. Tyler was a former Democrat, so although a Whig was in office, he experienced great conflicts with the Whig party.

*For the Test*

As mentioned before, for each of these elections you need to know who was running, which party they represented, and the outcome. Also, you should note how these elections affected the way future campaigns would go (slogans, advertising, etc.).

**Supreme Court Decisions**

As America continued to figure out where power belonged in the government and debates over state/federal power raged on, there were a few crucial court decisions during this time that had critically impacted these debates.

**McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)**

The creation of a national United States bank was a continually controversial issue. Many people felt that its creation was an overstepping of Congressional and Executive power. However, it continued to exist for many years.
This Supreme Court Case arose when the state of Maryland tried to impose taxes on any bank affairs through banks outside of Maryland. Essentially, this meant that it would be more expensive for people to use the national bank, which encouraged people to use Maryland’s bank system.

Although the law was implied to affect all out of state banks, it seemed to target the U.S. national bank. Essentially, this was a battle of power between a state and the federal government. Maryland did not support the creation of a national bank, and this was their counterattack. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the national bank. This was critically important for two main reasons. It implied that Congress indeed have the Constitutional authority to create a national bank, and it also made it clear that a state’s actions could not impede the federal governments action. This was a critically important issue for American politics moving forward.

For the Test

Understand how the background of the national bank effected this court decision. Be able to explain the implications of the Supreme Court’s decision.

Marbury v. Madison (1803)

For this Supreme Court Decision, it is not essential that you know all of the details surrounding the case. It is more important that you understand the implications and lasting effects of the decision. Basically, there were some disputes about Congress’s jurisdiction in making laws and the judicial branch’s jurisdiction in discerning constitutionality. The decision of this Supreme Court Case, in favor of Marbury, established the policy of judicial review. This gave the court the power to decide if a law created by Congress was Constitutional or not. This Supreme Court case would go on to have extremely important implications as the policy of judicial review was used in many future court cases.

For the Test

Understand the idea of judicial review, and be able to identify the Constitutional principles that give the Judicial Branch this power.

Economic Policies and Concerns

Different theories of economic policy were a consistent dividing factor in America during the early 1800s. Issues like Henry Clay’s controversial American System, the creation of national banks, the use of tariffs, and embargos consistently caused conflict in United States politics. Parties were formed around these issues, and they shaped the rest of the 19th century. These ideas have already come up in other parts of Period 4, and you will probably continue to see them in more parts. You should have a pretty decent understanding of these economic policies. Here
is a quick breakdown of some of the most prominent ones for your learning benefit!

The National Bank

Alexander Hamilton first introduced the idea of a national banking system. Since banks at this time were run off of a coin currency, Hamilton had hoped that the national bank would be able to provide some stability into the banking world. It was met with various reactions, often critical. One of the national bank’s biggest opponents was actually Thomas Jefferson. The initial national baking system died out in 1811, but was resurrected in 1816 as the Second Bank of the United States. Due to mismanagement of the bank, the public viewed it very critically. However, thanks to people like Henry Clay, the Second Bank managed to survive for quite awhile after its creation. Unfortunately for the Second Bank, Andrew Jackson, an American hero and immensely popular public figure, was very much against the national banking system. Jackson, putting his popularity and support on the line, eventually killed off the Second Bank of the United States. That would be the last America saw of a national bank until the National Federal Reserve system was established.

Tariffs

Despite the fact that Henry Clay’s American System never fully came to fruition, it was still a prominent part of historical events of the 1800s. One of the key aspects of Clay’s American System was the use of the tariff, specifically, protective tariffs. The general idea with tariffs is to place a tax on foreign imports. So basically, if you can buy the same thing from Great Britain or the United States, it would cost you more to get the good from Great Britain. This was supposed to encourage people to buy American goods and support the American economy. This especially helped industries that were competing with European merchants. The problem with tariffs is that they didn’t help anybody. Merchants or traders who relied on European imports definitely did not gain anything from tariffs. It also did not help the southern states because a lot of the cotton they produced would go to Europe. Ideally, the tariffs would refocus America’s economy and lead to growth and prosperity. However, it seemed to only further isolate the already distended southern economy.

Embargos

During the early years of the 1800s, America struggled with France and Britain not respecting their economic neutrality. Both France and Britain weren’t playing by the rules, which greatly frustrated the American leadership. At the time, American leadership was of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson did not wish to go to war with either of these countries (although America did go to war during 1812), and he hoped to come up with an alternative, peaceful solution. In 1807, he decided on an Embargo Act to be passed through Congress. This act was
supposed to prevent any American ship from carrying exports to these nations. He had hoped that this would severely hurt British and French economies and force them to play by the rules. Unfortunately, it did not turn out this way. The Embargo Act only hurt American merchants and was eventually repealed in 1809.

_for the test_

Economic policy played a large role in shaping the American political system. The ideas covered above will come up in many important events in APUSH. It is absolutely essential that you understand the ideas covered above and how they played into the larger picture of American economics. We have an entire section of questions about these economic policies that are definitely worth your time.

**Southern Defense of Slavery**

One of the biggest, if not THE biggest, issue in America during the 19th century was the institution of slavery. It became a staple of the American economy in the first half of the century, was a catalyst for Civil War in the middle of the century, and was slowly eradicated at the end of the century. That being said, it is, of course, a critical part of the APUSH curriculum. Slavery had an especially prominent role during Period 4 (1800-1848), which encapsulates the Antebellum Period. During this time, slavery established itself as being a normal part of life in America, particularly in the South. Southerners grew to rely on slaves to keep their economy going, and as a result they heavily defended their right to use slaves.

**Slave Trade**

The 18th century was a time in which the Atlantic Slave trade was very prominent. You should have already learned a little about the middle passage, triangular trade, and all of that nonsense. In the early 1800s, 1808 to be exact, the Atlantic Slave trade was put to an end in America. While this might have seemed like a big step towards abolition, it did not even come close to putting an end to slavery. Instead, the United States developed an internal slave trade in which slaves would be bought and sold around the U.S. Further, free slaves would sometimes be kidnapped and incorporated into the slave trade, and children born into slavery would grow up to be slaves. Without importing any new slaves, the institution still flourished.

**Expanding Slavery**

Because slaves were so important to the vitality of southern economies, southerners fought for slavery to be allowed in new territories. This was partly to allow more room for expansion for current southerners, as it would open up new land where they could continue to use slaves. More than that though, it was a
very political move. By making newly acquired territories like Louisiana slave states, it would swing the scale in favor of slave states. This would help them greatly when it came to political discussions and votes about the institution of slavery. The Missouri Compromise was a direct result of this issue, except it did not go the way southerners had hoped. The Missouri Compromise allowed Missouri to remain a slave state, but forbid any states above the “36-30” latitude line to allow slavery. Fortunately for southern slave states, the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854 allowed slavery in Kansas and Nebraska and basically went over the head of the Missouri Compromise. These events would not be the end of the expanding slavery issue.

**Defending Slavery**

There were some obvious reasons why southerners defended slavery so heartily. Slaves were a valuable economic asset and they provided the workforce necessary for the booming cotton industry. There were other, non-economic reasons for defending slavery though. Many slave owners saw it as their right as white men to own slaves. Others felt that they had a moral obligation to own slaves because it gave them a better quality of life. Some slave owners even felt that they were doing their Christian duty by owning slaves and making them Christians. Many people even argued that slaves were actually pretty happy and content being slaves. These arguments may have seemed legitimate to the slave owners and they might have actually believed these things. However, at the end of the day, slaves were an economic tool that provided a cheap workforce, and slave owners were willing to go to great lengths in order to not lose them.

**For the Test**

It is important that you understand why slaves were so important to southern economies. You also need to be able to explain how the issue of slavery created such an intense political divide. Think thematically about how these issues with slavery set the stage for the Civil War.

**Promoting Reform**

Another very significant event of the 1800s was the Second Great Awakening. This was a growing religious movement that started in the 1790s and gained momentum through the early 19th century. Basically, it was a movement of religious revival, primarily among Baptist and Methodist denominations. In many ways it was a continuation of the First Great Awakening, which was evident in many revivals. The social and political ramifications of this movement were very significant. The religious ideas explored during this time created an interesting dynamic in debates about slavery and other reform movements. For the AP U.S. History final, you don’t need to be an expert on the Second Great Awakening, but you need to know what it was and how it affected other aspects of American history.
Revival Meetings

Religious beliefs of the time started to transition away from the old school Puritan ideals, which featured a harsh God who was quick to send people to hell, towards a more loving and accepting God. The idea of a loving and accepting God was very appealing to many people, especially in light of the Romantic Movement and other philosophical developments that emphasized freedom in spirituality. The preaching of a simpler Christianity that only required faith and belief became very popular and spread across the country. Preaching was also often very charismatic and entertaining, so huge crowds would come out to see the event. Evangelicalism was at a peak during this time. The revival movement was split over the issue of slavery, and southern Baptists and Methodists broke off from their abolitionist counterparts in the North.

Reform Movements

The ideological and religious changes occurring during this time had significant social and political effects. For one, abolition movements started to develop. Religious movements that preached the equality of all men and philosophical ideas that emphasized the freedom of man made people start to question the institution of slavery. As a result, abolitionist groups were created and sparked many political and social controversies. This was a significant issue of the time but it was only one of the primary issues.

Another reform movement that came about during Period 4 of APUSH was the women's rights movement. Women led the way on many social reforms such as public drunkenness, education, and slavery. As they became more involved in the public sphere, they started to realize that one of the issues that needed to be reformed was the issue of women's rights. This was definitely influenced by the fact that women had steadily gained a more prominent place in society as they started to become part of the general work force. It is fitting and indicative of this time period that one of the most well known events of this movement was the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, which happened during the last year of Period 4. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who presented the famous “Declaration of Sentiments” at the conference, led the convention. The growth of these movements and women’s emphasis on reforming public issues led to the emphasis on women’s suffrage that would continue for many years.

One thing that is important to know is that women’s involvement in reform movements was so prominent and successful because women were often seen as being morally superior to men. Therefore, people were more willing to listen to women’s ideas on these kinds of issues. Also, people recognized that in order to accomplish any kind of serious reform, women needed to be able to vote.

For the Test
Ultimately, not a lot of changes happened during this time. However, movements like the Second Great Awakening and the women’s rights movement set the stage for radical changes in coming years. Make sure you have a basic understanding of various reform movements. This is a broad topic, so hopefully this guide and these questions can help you focus as you study.

**Fight for Emancipation**

As a side effect of growing reform movements, discussions about emancipation started to heat up during the early 1800s. The international slave trade was outlawed in 1808, but this, by no means put an end to slavery. Slavery continued to remain a cornerstone of southern economies and was prevalent in many areas. Yet, the number of free blacks in America was also increasing. The abolition groups that developed alongside the Second Great Awakening and reform movements started to make tangible plans for emancipation.

As slavery remained vital to southern economies and as desires for emancipation grew, the government was forced to start taking a definitive stance on slavery, which is something they had continuously avoided, and would continue to avoid for years to come. However, during the early 1800s, there were some things they simply could not avoid. For one, many slaves had escaped to the North and gained their freedom. It was unclear what the legal implications were for these free blacks. Were they citizens? Were they 3/5 of a citizen as drawn out in the Constitution?

Also, people had started to petition for the abolition of slavery, specifically in the District of Columbia. When people like John Calhoun, an advocate for slavery, got wind of these petitions, he wanted to squash them immediately. He went about this by convincing Congress not to officially acknowledge the petitions through a very roundabout process. This process was known as the Gag Rule. The specifics of the Gag Rule are not essential for APUSH. It is crucial to know that the Gag Rule was just another example putting off the issue of slavery. Basically, tension was building, and they continued to ignore the issue until they boiled over into the seemingly unavoidable Civil War.

*For the Test*

Understand the trend of growing numbers of free blacks in the North and the South. Explain how early efforts at emancipation were mostly ignored by the federal government, and how this would later impact the Civil War.

**Resistance to Democratic Ideals**

With all of the controversial happenings in America at the time, people developed a certain kind of resistance to the normalcies of the American way of life. As Americans learned about post-enlightenment ideas that championed themes of
freedom and liberty and compared this with the reality of situations in America, they saw that certain things didn’t match up. The Declaration of Independence cited that all men were created equal, and yet it was perfectly okay to hold some men in slavery. People started to realize that what America stood for and what they were actually seeing did not really match up. In addition to the hypocrisy of slavery, people came to resist the idea of westward expansion, and particularly resisted the harsh and unfair treatment of Native Americans. There was certainly a growing restlessness and distrust for the current policies of American government.

For the Test

This section most closely relates to thematic questions that you might face. For example, you will want to understand how certain events, like the Trail of Tears, contributed to this negative mindset about America.

New National Culture

While America progressed forward as a nation that mixed many different cultures, ideas, and philosophies, it developed its own unique national culture. Architecture and literature started to break away from the traditional European trends that had been prominent up until that time. American nationalism was high in the wake of breaking free from British rule and developing as its own entity. One big theme from this time period was the “Era of Good Feelings” which was a time of high national pride and a sense of unity among Americans. During this time, literature and art took on very patriotic themes that represented this new American culture. This era coincided with the fall of the Federalist Party and the growth of industrialism. White House architecture, the literature of Rip Van Winkle, and the Hudson River School are some specific examples of cultural trends in America during Period 4.

For the Test

Understand what the “Era of Good Feelings” represented and how it affected varying aspects of American culture.

Developing Regional and Counter-Cultures

In addition to the emerging national culture of the early 1800s, various subcultures also developed. These took many different forms and reflected many different groups. Native-Americans began to embrace their own culture and fought to preserve it amidst the growing American culture. In congruence with that, many different religious and minority groups tried to celebrate their own individual cultures. Some of these groups held somewhat unique or revolutionary views, such as the examples in these questions. Subcultures even started to
develop within certain regions and among economic classes. This was a very interesting contrast to the growing feelings of American pride that emphasized a unified nation. Overall, it seemed to be a unified national culture made up of many different cultural movements.

*For the Test*

Be able to identify some key examples of emerging sub/counter-cultural movements such as in Mormonism and Native American traditions. Explain how this impacted the larger national culture.

**African-American Opposition to Slavery**

One last key idea to understand about this time period is that African-American resistance to slavery was alive and well. Slaves were incredibly oppressed and had very limited rights, but they did the best with what they could to rebel and bring about change. One important example can be seen in Nat Turner’s Rebellion. In 1831, Turner, a slave, led a group of slaves who murdered their owner and his family, and sparked off a violent rebellion. (This unfortunately kind of backfired as slave-owners felt the need to crack down on slaves to keep the peace) This was just one example of resistance. On a smaller scale, slaves started to use peaceful forms of rebellion, such as faking injury, slacking off, breaking equipment, or avoiding work in general. Also, slaves started to form communities in which they developed their own culture, exchanged ideas, and helped each other out. These were small steps, but they were steps that signified a growing resistance and a growing tension between slaves and slave owners. Essentially, the African-American culture really blossomed during this time and would have a lasting impact on American culture in general.

*For the Test*

Be ready to explain how events like Nat Turner’s rebellion were significant for the lives of slaves. Understand how these events contributed to the already tense dynamics between slaves and owners in the North and South.

**The Wrap Up**

Hopefully, you have a much better grasp on the ideas, events, and people that were covered during this guide. Our goal is to break down events and ideas, and to help you think thematically about the course. This comprehensive guide is part of a three part series covering Period 4. This should have helped you understand more aspects of America’s rapidly changing political world and evolving culture. You should be able to summarize the progression of political parties and how they have changed over time. You should also have a solid understanding of the key issues that proved to be divisive in America. Lastly, it is imperative that you understand how this time period featured many events and ideas that ultimately
led to the Civil War of Period 5. Keep reading, keep practicing, and you’ll be extra ready for the AP US History exam.
Period 4 (1800-1848): Trade, Expansion, and Isolation

General Overview

Studying for AP U.S. History can be pretty overwhelming. There’s a ton of information to learn and numerous concepts to understand. Lucky for you, we are here to help. We have created comprehensive guides giving in depth explanations of events, ideas, and trends throughout each time period of AP U.S. History. Period 4 covers the years 1800-1848. Within this period, we have broken it down into a couple of different themes. The APUSH test covers a ton of facts and details, but it also deals with a lot of themes and big ideas that are important to understand.

These comprehensive guides go hand in hand with the course description from the AP College Board website, and each guide covers a specific key concept from the course layout. This particular review will focus on Key Concept 4.3. This concept is still dealing with the years 1800-1848, but is more focused on America’s foreign affairs during this time. We will take a glance at how America’s economy played into its foreign policy, and think about how these events would go on to affect different aspects of American life.

Also, we have created a series of practice test questions to go along with the guide. These questions will help you dial in on some specifics while the guide walks you through a general overview. Feel free to use these questions to keep yourself on track! All right, without any further ado: let’s dive in!

Expanding Westward

The United States had made great strides in expanding their market through acquisitions such as the Louisiana Purchase. However, as people continued to migrate to America, and settlers continued to look for more land and more opportunities, Americans were not content with these new territories for long. Instead, America started to look further north and even further west. They hoped to expand across the plains and take dominance over the Western hemisphere. This desire was especially prevalent during the final president of Period 4, James K. Polk. Polk’s presidency is most closely associated with the term “Manifest destiny” and this was very evident based on his negotiations with foreign lands.

James K. Polk and Manifest Destiny
As mentioned above, President Polk is most well known for the idea of manifest destiny. Essentially, manifest destiny implied that white Americans, as a superior civilization, had a right and responsibility to imperialize other areas. More than that, manifest destiny was a belief that God actually wanted American territory to expand all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Polk whole-heartedly embraced this belief, and it was the driving force behind many of his actions as president. Polk was not the only one to believe in this idea though. He actually campaigned on a platform that championed manifest destiny, and with promises to acquire Oregon and Washington. His successful campaign is indicative of the desires of the American campaign.

The Fight for Oregon

In order for America to fully accomplish manifest destiny, it needed to possess lands in Oregon and Washington. Before Polk was even elected president, he had his sights set on completing that plan. In fact, his expansionist platform is mostly what gained him his presidency. Polk ran into some trouble when negotiations about the Texas annexation went poorly, which angered many people who were already frustrated with America’s involvement with Mexico. On top of that, Polk ended up having to settle on a border in the Northwest that was much further south than people had initially hoped for. Many of these issues were centered on specific lines of latitude, which were of increased importance because of the Missouri Compromise, which declared everything above the 36°30' line to be free states. Basically, once again, the issue came down to politics about slavery. Northern democrats were frustrated because the border line for Oregon was created further South, which meant less land above the line drawn for the Missouri Compromise, which resulted in less free state areas. So long story short: James K. Polk acquired Oregon, just not as much of Oregon as people wanted him to.

For the Test

Understand what the idea of Manifest Destiny meant, and why it was so important to Americans. Be able to explain how issues of slavery affected political events, like the ones seen in these practice questions.

Controlling the Continent

Although the idea of manifest destiny mostly pertained to the idea of expanding towards the Pacific Ocean, at many times during this time period America had broader ideas of expansion. For example, the country sought to gain control of most of North America. Some even dreamt of a unified continent of the Americas that was inherently owned by the United States. In fact, in 1823, President James Monroe essentially tried to stake claims on all of North America. This was done through the Monroe Doctrine, which was just one example of America’s attempt
to expand throughout the western hemisphere. This period saw many different judicial, militant, and legislative actions with similar goals in mind.

The Monroe Doctrine

In one of American history’s boldest moves of diplomacy, President James Monroe essentially tried to call dibs on all of North America. The Monroe Doctrine, issued in 1823, warned European countries that any act of colonialism on a North American territory would be seen as a threat to the United States and would incur military intervention. It was issued at a time when many Latin American nations were gaining independence from European control. He saw it as a chance to separate the Old World and the New World and further distance America from European influence.

This kind of philosophy opened the door for later diplomacy styles like Theodore Roosevelt’s “Speak softly and carry a big stick” idea. In fact, the Monroe Doctrine would go on to be cited in many different cases through history, typically when an American leader wanted to get involved in foreign affairs where they didn’t really belong. This doctrine laid the foundation for America’s later involvement in South America during the early 20th century (Under the leadership of Teddy Roosevelt).

Webster-Ashburton Treaty

Another important piece of legislation in America’s foreign affairs was the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. This treaty is unique to this time period because it has to do with the northern border of the United States. It was also part of an ongoing dispute between the U.S. and British North American colonies. There had been numerous issues regarding the borders in several parts of the country. In Maine, there was a “war” (it never got to the point of violence, but involved military troops) about the border between Maine and the New Brunswick colony. In the area we now know as Michigan, there was a debate about where the border between Lake Superior and Lake of the Woods should rest. Also, the border of the Rocky Mountains was still up for debate. This treaty put an end to each of these questions, as well as outlawing slave trade and allowing for the Great Lakes to be shared. The treaty was outlined and signed in 1842 by Daniel Webster of the United States and Alexander Baring of Great Britain. This treaty was important because of its ability to improve relations with Britain and for gaining more American territory.

For the Test

You should be able to explain how these doctrines and treaties affected American foreign policy. You should also be able to determine some long lasting effects of these ideas.
Debates Over Acquired Territories

One issue that is a part of just about every single aspect of Period 4 in AP U.S. History is that of slavery. Particularly, the conflicts between slave states and free states. The early 19th century was an interesting time because slavery had grown to become a very crucial part of many American economic systems. At the same time, religious revivals and reform movements started to object to the institution of slavery. This created some pretty intense, pre-Civil War conflicts. Usually, these conflicts made their way to the political arena. This was especially true when America got into the business of expansion. America fought wars to gain new land, and the annexation of Texas created a new question of how these new territories would be ruled, and whether they would be free or slave states.

Mexican-American War

The Mexican-American War is yet another example of the influence of Manifest Destiny. You should be well acquainted with the idea of manifest destiny by now, but you just also need to know that many people saw the Mexican-American War as part of manifest destiny (which is basically a supposedly God given right to expansion). However, at its core, many people used manifest destiny, and the desire to expand into Mexico, as an opportunity to expand slavery. So how did this turn into a war? Well, James K. Polk sent a representative to Mexico to take part in negotiations for purchasing California, which is a failure. Soon after, Mexico attacked U.S. soldiers in an area that was claimed by both Mexico and America. As people learned about this attack, they wanted to understand where that battle took place, and whether that was on American or Mexican soil. This revealed the ambiguity of the Mexico-Texas border, which is where the war heightened. America was ultimately successful in this, as it gained a ton of new areas, known as the Mexican Cession, established in 1848. This included modern day New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and Wyoming. This was a triumphant victory for America, but it also created the issue of what to do with these new territories.

The Wilmot Proviso

This was one of the most important pieces of legislature having to do with the division of slave and free states. We have a pretty extensive crash course over the **Wilmot Proviso** that goes much more in depth. Basically, during President Polk’s negotiations about the newly acquired territories in Mexico, he put in a bill to Congress asking for 2,000,000 dollars for negotiations. A group of Democrats, led by David Wilmot, took the opportunity to attach a rider to the bill that would further their agenda in regards to slave and free states. Wilmot introduced an addition to the bill proposed by Polk that would guarantee that slavery would be outlawed in any of the newly acquired territories. Wilmot and his group of supporters hoped that because people loved Polk so much and wanted to grant him the bill that they would also approve of their addition to the bill. This would
be a huge victory for northern, free states because it would shift the scale of free versus slave states in favor of free states. More free territories equals more political power. However, Wilmot Proviso was ultimately never passed through Congress, even though the bill granting Polk the money for negotiations was passed. However, the proviso is very important because it brought the issue of slavery to the forefront of political discussions.

For the Test

You may have some test questions with specific details about the war and battles within it. However, mostly you will deal with questions about how the expansion into these new territories created many political issues.

**Federal vs. State Government**

One of the most consistent debates through American history has been the dispute between maintaining a strong federal government or establishing states’ rights. It was one of the main struggles that people had to work through in order to ratify the constitution and establish a United States system of government. Federalists/Anti-Federalist debates did not end when the Constitution was agreed upon. The debate continued on through the entirety of Period 4, and continues even to this day. During the early 1800s the debate mostly took the shape of the slavery issue. The AP Course Description for 2015 highlights two specific examples of this debate, and we will cover those here. These are also covered in our test prep questions for this section.

**The Hartford Convention**

This event took place early in the 1800s as the War of 1812 was coming to a close. Many people were upset by the federal governments actions at the start of the war. They felt that the government had assumed too much power when they declared war. There was also an outcry when President James Madison signed a very restrictive embargo act that hurt many American merchants and ports. Most of these complaints came from New Englanders, who in general were resistant to the Federal government. New England had even refused to grant the federal government use of their state militia, which frustrated Madison. All of this, combined with a few other frustrations, led to a gathering of New England Federalists who were concerned about the federal governments increasing power. At the Hartford Convention, which was actually a series of meetings between December 1814-January 1815.

At the debates, some people pushed for New England to secede from the federal government, although those opinions weren’t prominent. They also discussed the possibility of eliminating the 3/5 compromise from the Constitution. This would increase the political power of slave states, therefore limiting federal power. Also, they advocated for a rule requiring Congress to have a 2/3 majority on different
acts of Congress. In addition, they wanted to limit the term of the president to one term, restrict embargos to 60 days or less, and require each successive president to be from a different state. At the end of the day, none of the resolutions proposed at the Hartford Convention were ever seriously considered in American politics. It did show that there was a growing discontent, and brought attention to some serious issues. It also put the idea of secession in people’s minds, and made people weary of possible secessions.

Nullification Crisis

The Hartford Convention certainly did not represent the last of the debates between federal and state power. It came up again about 15 years later in the nullification crisis. This too was sparked by a group of people viewing a federal, or in this case executive, action as being unconstitutional. In this instance, it was Andrew Jackson’s implementation of a tariff on manufactured goods. The actual tariff was put in place as a political move, but it generated an intense reaction in the south, especially in South Carolina. Essentially, South Carolina wanted to nullify the Tariff of 1828 put in place by Jackson. They issued a “Nullification Ordinance” which was their official complaint against the tariff. In the end, a new tariff was put in place known as the Compromise Tariff of 1833. This was enough to appease South Carolina and prevent any kind of violent conflict. However, the nullification crisis showed that individual states were ready and willing to stand up to the federal government. This crisis clearly showed the roots of a Civil War.

For the Test

Be familiar with some general details about both of these events. More than that, understand how both of these events further set the stage for a Civil War, and analyze the political changes occurring during this time period.

Frontier Issues With Native Americans

Relations during this time between white settlers and Native Americans were incredibly tense. To summarize, Native Americans were oppressed and bossed around pretty consistently. White Americans, particularly in the south, had their sights set on taking Native American land and pushing them westward. However, they did not always go peacefully. There was certainly a movement of resistance that led to multiple violent conflicts and wars. For the APUSH exam, you’ll need to be familiar with some of these.

Indian Removal Act

The Indian Removal Act is covered in other portions of this comprehensive guide in the section about Westward Expansion. We will still go over the basic details here though. The act was put into place on May 28, 1830. It basically allowed the president to legally “negotiate” with Native Americans about their removal from
their homelands to territories out west. However, these negotiations were often forced, and often one sided. People in the south, who were anxious to move into these pieces of land, were largely in favor of the act. It did not benefit the Native Americans though, and the United States often used force to remove Native Americans. The act opened the door to many future conflicts.

**Seminole Wars**

The Seminole Wars is actually a series of conflicts between the Seminole tribes of Florida and the United States Army. For this time period, we will mostly focus on the First Seminole War, which occurred from 1817-1818. Andrew Jackson, a military leader at the time, had invaded some Seminole territories in Florida. He then later destroyed a fort at Pensacola. This angered many Seminole, who started to raid southern American territories such as Georgia. This created a lot of tension that lasted for many years after. One of the biggest effects of this conflict was that it hurt Jackson’s image and was one of his most controversial moves. Ultimately, it did not have a lasting negative impact on his popularity and did not prevent him from being an effective president.

*For the Test*

Be familiar with the basic events of the Seminole Wars, the Indian Removal Act, Hawk Wars, and a few others. Think about how ideas like manifest destiny may have impacted these events.

**An Uneasy Truce Over Slavery**

For most of the early 19th century, the American government had avoided taking any kind of action in the slavery versus free state issue. However, as debates about what to do with newly acquired territories heated up, the government was forced to make some kind of decision to hopefully appease both sides. The closest they got was the Missouri Compromise of 1820. This compromise established that any territory above the 36'30 line would not be allowed to be a slave state.

However, the Missouri Compromise ultimately broke down, especially with the implementation of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which allowed slavery in Kansas and Nebraska. Even before the Kansas-Nebraska Act, people tried to adjust where the line for the Missouri Compromise was drawn, and many people played around with the semantics of the law. Although the compromise had been passed and largely agreed on, there was still a significant struggle for power between free and slave states. One thing the Missouri Compromise did effectively do was create a very serious division between southern and northern states, as there was now a literal line drawn in to divide them. Beyond that, by creating a law outlawing slavery above certain latitude, it was a confirmation that slavery was certainly allowed below the line. Ultimately, the issue came down to maintaining a balance between free and slave states.
For the Test

Explain the purpose of the Missouri Compromise. Be able to analyze the reasons why the Missouri Compromise ultimately failed to keep the peace.

Slavery and Expansion

As if things weren’t already tense enough between free and slave states, during the early 1800s, the necessity for slaves continued to increase. The cotton industry was booming, and there was a huge demand for it. As a result, plantation owners looked to expand and grow. Unfortunately, the land in the south that plantations had occupied for so long was starting to become overused. As a result, farmers and settlers started to move their focus away from the Southeast and towards the Southwest. In their eye, the Southwest represented miles and miles of unchartered territory where their farms could flourish and their market could be expanded. There was just one huge problem: these southern economies absolutely depended on the use of slaves. So as southerners looked westward, northerners saw how this would impact the balance of free and slave states and resisted.

Although the annexation of Texas would provide a lot of resources for the United States, many people opposed the acquisition of Texas because they knew it would lead to the spread of slavery. By this time, there was a large amount of resistance to the use of slaves. So much so, that the opposition to slavery was a real factor in slowing the process of accomplishing the manifest destiny goal of so many southern Americans. However, despite the hesitancy of many Americans to adopt Texas, Texas went on to declare their independence from Mexico. Despite the best efforts of the Missouri Compromise, this did indeed lead to the spread of slavery.

For the Test

Be sure to understand why exactly people did not want Texas to join the United States. Also be ready to explain some of the lasting effects of the annexation of Texas.

The Wrap Up

Period 4 of AP U.S. History is a crucial time for you to understand. America was greatly affected by a number of political conflicts, both internally and externally. As opportunities for expansion presented themselves, America had to decide where it stood on issues of slavery, foreign affairs, and federal power. During this critical time, America moved out of the revolution era and set the stage for the divisive Civil War at the end of the 1800s. Understand the events of this era and you will understand the details of the Civil War much more clearly.
Period 5 (1844-1877): Expansionist Foreign Policy, Migration, and Immigration

General Overview

The period of 1844 to 1877 was a period of introspection for the United States. We had solidified our position as a nation to be respected on the international level because we had met every contender for control in the America and emerged victorious; we would be the masters of our own destiny, and so we turned our gaze inward to strengthen the foundation of the nation. This page in American history is stained with blood: the blood of Native Americans as we pushed west, the blood of immigrants trying to find their way in the world the United States offered, and the blood of American soldiers as the Civil War raged across state lines. President Polk faced Mexican encroachment upon American soil. President Tyler faced racial violence against the Irish after his succession of President Harrison. Greatest of all was President Lincoln who wrestled with the American South in order to preserve the Union and died a martyr after his task was done. America was suffering from growing pains and in its struggles threatened to tear itself apart. When studying this guide make sure to follow along with Period 5 of the AP US Exam and Course Description. Take your time studying and when you finish take a look at these practice questions.

War Message

The United States had expansion on the mind during this period. Expansionists from both major parties at this time claimed the concept of “Manifest Destiny”. It was the God-given right of Americans across the fledgling nation to spread across the continent and settle the land while spreading American ideals and democracy. It was a major political topic of the day and both parties believed that denying Americans this right was political suicide. It is with this in mind that we join President Polk as he begins his presidency; the nation is at war with Mexico over the fate of Texas.

“Mr. Polk’s War”

The Mexican-American War marks the beginning of this period of conflict. The war began as a result of the Mexican government supporting American colonization of the Texas territory. The reason for this is because the Mexican government wanted a shield between Mexican territory and the southern states of...
American. In exchange for American colonization the Mexican government promised they would be given land, all they had to do was become Mexican citizens and give up their religion for Catholicism. Soon the Texas territory grew to a population of 30,000, Americans outnumbered the native Mexicans. These Americans saw this and pushed for statehood at home. The Mexican government saw this as an act of rebellion in their territory and crushed the Americans at the Alamo and Goliad.

Americans residing in the United States saw this as an act of aggression on the American people and an act of war. They called for blood and President Polk was more than willing to give it to them to show American superiority in the hemisphere and in support of Manifest Destiny. President Polk made the call to Congress to declare war, stating that “American blood has been shed on American soil.” Congress was more than happy to make the declaration and the war was on. The United States was split on the issue, some derided Polk’s blood-thirstiness as wasteful of American lives, others believed that it was only a matter of time before the United States came into conflict with Mexico as it pursued Manifest Destiny.

Americans living in the Northeast and the Whig Party believed that this military action was a guise for adding more territory where slavery was acceptable. Abolitionism had not spread equally across the United States and this was the beginning of a rising tension that would lead to the Civil War. Southern states had exhausted the soil of along the Atlantic coast. They wanted to expand their plantations west and the Mexican-War seemed a godsend. Southern politicians fully supported the war and blocked any motions from the Northern senators that suggested diplomatic actions with the Mexican government. The United States eventually won the conflict and both the United States and Mexico signed the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, ending the war and ceding Texas to America. What would come next would threaten the very fabric of American society.

For the Test

The AP US History exam can ask you what events lead up to and caused the Mexican-American War and how Americans at home reacted.

Major Debates

The issue of slavery had divided the United States since its birth at the hands of the Founding Fathers. It was such a divisive issue that the Founding Fathers postponed making a decision about the matter for several decades. Skirting around the issue of slavery proved to have consequences that affected later Americans that began to appear during this period. Congress began arguing over the decision of slavery for states that would be later integrated into the union. Northeastern members of the Whig Party thought that as a modern nation to even contemplate further development of slave plantations was an abomination.
Southern Democrats, whose plantations depended on slavery, argued that it was a matter of states' rights.

**Congressman Wilmot and the Wilmot Proviso**

While Americans celebrated the victory of the United States over Mexico, a second arena was forming in Washington. Congressmen believed that it was a matter of states' rights. **Lines were drawn as the North argued with the South over whether Texas would be a free state or a slave state.** This acquisition of a new state threw out the former Missouri Compromise of 1820 that brought balance to the free states and the slave states. This was unacceptable to Northern congressmen, especially David Wilmot. David Wilmot proposed that any territory gained from Mexico as a result of the Mexican-American War should automatically be made a free state. His motion became known as the Wilmot Proviso, and while it passed through many hands in Congress and its points debated incessantly, it never managed to make it into law. It was blocked by Southern congressmen who believed that Texas would be an advantageous addition to the slave-holding states of America.

Arguments boiled in Congress as senators and representatives deliberated over what was to be done about Texas. It was only until Lewis Cass, presented a third option to Congress that seemed the most fair. He explained that in order to maintain democratic ideals they should not decide the fate of Texas, instead the decision should be placed in the hands of the people. Senator Cass seemed to have proposed a middle ground that would be fair for all. Unwilling to argue against democratic principles northern congressmen assented, but it was with wariness.

**The Fire-Eaters**

Soon after the Mexican–American War California applied for statehood, its population was bolstered by the Gold Rush of 1849 and after it reached the necessary amount appealed to the Senate for statehood. This would have brought balance back to the North and South in terms of the number of free states versus slave states. Then the North saw that the New Mexico territory and Utah were soon close to achieving the number of people required to apply for statehood.

The North began influencing these territories in order to bring them in as free states. It is at this time that the Fire-Eaters appear. They were a group of young, hot-blooded congressmen from the South who believed that the North and anyone from there were treacherous, simply wanting to deprive the South of slavery and thus its livelihood. They were called the Fire-Eaters because of the extreme words they spoke; they espoused radical action against the North that culminated in calls for secession from the Union. These young men’s words and deeds foreshadow a nation.

*For the Test*
A major debate during American history was the institution of slavery and how it was to function in a nation that claimed “all men are created equal”. The AP US History Exam may ask you to trace the beginnings of this conflict and how it relates to the beginning of the Civil War.

**American Progress**

Slavery aside, all Americans were able to agree on one point during this period: American culture was superior and it was considered a virtue to spread American culture across the continent. As we mentioned earlier, this idea was known as Manifest Destiny. **Americans along the Atlantic coast agreed that the west was meant to be taken**, by force if necessary, in order for the United States to achieve its true purpose, a nation that stretched from one sea to another. Unfortunately this philosophy was not accepted by all. There was a small vocal minority that claimed that the land already belonged to a different group of people: Native Americans. Yet their opinion would be swallowed by the rush westward.

**“Fifty-Four Forty or Fight!”**

The United States saw its first opportunity to reach Manifest Destiny in the Oregon Territory along the northwestern Pacific coast. The land was originally contested between the United States and the British but both nations came to a consensus. They would jointly own the land and British or Americans were free to settle in the Oregon Territory. This gave Americans the green light to begin settling in the area and American pioneers crossed the hazardous Oregon Trail to stretch American arms further.

Thousands of Americans settled in the area and soon they began calling for American home rule in the territory. President Polk approached the British government with the offer of purchasing the territory up to the 49th parallel. In modern terms this offer would have cut the state of Oregon into half its current size. The British rejected the offer and Americans scoffed at this decision, they wanted the northern border of Oregon pushed to the 54th parallel. Popular rally cries included: “The Whole of Oregon or None!” and “Fifty-Four Forty or Fight!”

Additionally, this flight to Oregon put Americans **face to face with the Native American** population living between the Pacific and the western border of the current United States. To Native Americans these pioneers and colonists were settling upon ancestral lands that had been in their tribe for generations. These encounters were **not normally peaceful and ended in violence** with either Native Americans or American pioneers dead. Furthermore the trail itself was not particularly easy. American pioneers faced rough terrain and weather, starvation, and disease while following the Oregon Trail.

**An American Cuba and the Ostend Manifesto**
Manifest Destiny also turned the United States’ gaze outwards beyond the water towards Cuba. During the Polk administration the United States had offered $100 million to Spain for the acquisition of the island of Cuba. This proposal was rejected much in the same way that the proposal for Oregon was rejected however the main difference was in how the United States reacted. Americans saw this took this refusal much worse and began calling for war against Spain in order to claim Cuba. This fire of war was further fanned when Spanish officials held the Black Warrior, an American trade ship, in a Cuban port. War was avoided when Spain realized the potential economic cost of entering into an intercontinental war with the United States.

The Ostend Manifesto was supposed to be an answer to the Cuba question. William Marcy, a member of President Franklin’s cabinet, asked American diplomats in Europe to find a way to bring Cuba into the United States as a new territory. The American diplomats Pierre Soulé, James Mason, and future president James Buchanan met and drafted the Ostend Manifesto. The document outlined the lengths to which the United States was willing to go to acquire Cuba. This included paying Spain their asking price up to declaring war and beginning military action to obtain Cuba.

The Ostend Manifesto was the beginning of the end for the relatively young republic. North and South no longer felt they could trust each other. The North believed any association with the institution of slavery was barbaric. The South believed that the federal government was overreaching its bounds and infringing upon states’ rights.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam can ask how Manifest Destiny affected American foreign policy and expansionism during the second half of the 19th century.

The US and China

Beginning in the middle of the 19th century the United States turned westward. This entailed settling all the land between Missouri and the Pacific coast with American sons and daughters and planting American culture. However American vision stretched beyond the Pacific coast toward China. The United States had already heard of lucrative European trade with the Orient and believed that they must also have their own avenues of commerce with the enigmatic east. While it wasn’t till the end of the century with the Open Door policy that the United States showed its international dominance, the thought of Chinese luxuries were always on the collective American mind.

The addition of the California and Oregon Territories brought these thoughts to the forefront as Americans realized they now had access to their own ports that could begin trading with Chinese ports. Chinese luxuries began to trickle in.
across the United States that didn’t have the duties that came from trading with Europe. These goods included trade goods like silk and tea.

This exchange of American and Chinese culture was not limited to the importation of Chinese goods. This opening of trade routes also started Chinese immigration to the United States. Most Chinese immigrants stayed in along the Pacific coast and California, with little communities appearing in San Francisco. Most Chinese immigrants were unskilled laborers with impoverished families at home; most of their income was dedicated to sending money back to their wives and children.

Fortunately Chinese immigration coincided with the growth of railroads in the United States. Hundreds of Chinese laborers filled the ranks of railroad workers who were determined on connecting the west coast with the east coast via railroad. Unfortunately, Chinese workers began to compete with Irish workers and soon racial tensions lead to gangs of Irish workers wandering San Francisco and harassing Chinese immigrants. This violence lead to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that forbade anymore immigrants from entering the United States.

For the Test

Manifest Destiny lead to American interaction with new cultures. The AP US History Exam may ask you what these interactions were and how American citizens reacted.

No Irish Need Apply

When the Potato Famine struck Ireland large portions of the population were left with no livelihood. Many Irish depended on the potato not just for food but to sell as well. Unfortunately a treacherous mold began destroying potato crops and left Ireland destitute. Faced with starvation many Irish immigrated to the United States. Their immigration to the United States was met with both hostility and welcome.

The Fighting 69th; “Gentle when Stroked, Fierce when Provoked”

The federal government welcomed the influx of Irish immigrants for one main reason: they needed bodies to fuel the fires of the Civil War. Patriotic spirit and social pressure soon drained the viable volunteer pool and the surge in enlistment waned. Soon the North ran out of manpower and President Lincoln was forced to institute a draft.

It is here that the Irish immigrants enter the scene. Fleeing a nation wracked by famine and forced out of their homes by the lack of jobs the Irish found the United States torn by war. The federal government was more than willing to
exploit the Irish immigrants’ desperation and began conscripting Irish immigrants into the Union army by the boatload. Between 1861 and 1865 over 800,000 Irish immigrants were pressed into service by the federal government and forced to fight a war they had just recently heard of. Despite this surprise waiting for them the Irish served the United States and soon distinguished themselves in the effort to save the Union.

The Fighting 69th was a unit in the Union Army that was mostly comprised of Irishmen. They fought at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg. Then at Antietam, the single bloodiest day of the Civil War, in spite of the fact that they were badly battered the Fighting 69th lead the attack on Sunken Road, a key vantage point at the Battle of Antietam. Their reputation was so fierce that Union commanders began to depend on the Fighting 69th when a particularly key, but tough, mission needed to be completed. Their motto was, “Clear the way!”

**The Nativist Movement**

On the opposite spectrum, many Americans did not trust the new Irish immigrants. Their logic stemmed from two major ideologies, anti-Catholicism and Nativism. Most of the immigrants coming from Ireland were Catholic and practiced the faith regularly, keeping many of the holy days and following the Catholic bible. While there are similarities between Catholicism and Protestantism, most Americans were Protestant and were proud of their Protestant heritage. They believed that the sudden influx of Irish Catholics would dilute the pure Protestant doctrine that had taken root in the United States. Americans with Anglo-Saxon heritage were especially distrustful of Irish immigrants.

Now prejudice of Irish immigrants was not limited to Anglo-Saxon American Protestants. Portions of the population who were not Anglo-Saxon or Protestant also felt the threat of a growing Irish population. This ideology manifested itself in the Order of the Star Spangled Banner. Formed Charles B. Allen the Order of the Star Spangled Banner was a secret society dedicated to shutting out the Irish from the United States. Members of the Order of the Star Spangled Banner were called Know Nothings because they admitted to “knowing nothing” about the secret society. The Order of the Star Spangled Banner eventually formed a legitimate political party called the American Party. They were a single-issue party that focused on making it harder to naturalize citizens and attain citizenship.

**Trails West**

The movement west was caused by a variety of reasons. At the same time settlement of the west was barred by a myriad of obstacles. To Americans the West was a mysterious land, mostly unmapped and largely traversed mainly by frontiersmen and Native Americans. It was only a matter of time however before
the West was transformed from an unexplored and menacing landscape to a land of opportunity and economic profit. Americans had already mostly settled in Texas and upon the victory of the United States in the Mexican-American War the American Southwest was opened to further cultivation. Americans moved to New Mexico and Arizona which lead to a blending of Spanish and American culture.

The West was also seen as a haven for religious minorities. Many sects that were persecuted or ostracized for their religious beliefs moved west to escape the harassment. One of these many groups was the Church of Latter-Day Saints. You may know this group more colloquially as Mormons. Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith in the 1820s. However, the Church of Latter-Day Saints found that it was unwelcome in the United States and moved to the territory that would eventually become Utah.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam can ask you what motivations lead people to leave the safety of established states for the unexplored territories. It may also ask you what groups helped establish future states.

Sand Creek Massacre

American movement west was not always welcome. Native Americans already lived on the land that Americans were looking to settle. Many tribes had already been pushed westward with the original waves of colonists and as the states grew and the United States expanded the Native American tribes were pushed further and further west. The Sand Creek Massacre was the bulk extermination of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians by the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers. The First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers was returning from the Battle of Glorieta Pass and their victory over the Confederate Army. Lead by Colonel John Chivington the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers attacked the lodges of the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

Prior to the attack on Sand Creek the Cheyenne and Arapaho nation had signed a treaty with the United States federal government that marked the Cheyenne and Arapaho nation as a sovereign dominion under the protection of the United States. Ignoring the treaty that was already in place Colonel Chivington and the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers swept down from the hills and began their destruction of over 70 lodges. These lodges mostly housed women and children and a majority of the casualties were non-combatants. The slaughter was characterized by the Colorado Volunteers taking grisly trophies from the bodies of the women and children, including ears and scalps.

This attack on an unarmed civilian population was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Factions had formed among the Native American population ever
since the first encounter with the white man. Many wanted to attack the United States and take back their ancestral lands. However for the most part a moderate majority ruled that realized a war with the United States would only lead to utter annihilation. But the Sand Creek Massacre strengthened the position of the belligerent faction and the relationship between Native Americans and the United States government was forever tainted.

*For the Test*

The AP US History Exam may ask you to trace the beginning of Indian and American relations and identify key events that lead to the break down in American and Indian relations.

**The Wrap Up**

Manifest Destiny was the driving force that caused America to spread past our former borders and increase the influence of American culture. From the former Mexican-owned Texas territory to Spanish Cuba the United States was willing to go to war for new territory. This integration of new territory worsened relations between the North and the South as they argued over the issue of slavery and whether it would be allowed in new territories. It came to a head during the Civil War which was fought by Irish immigrants. Manifest Destiny compelled Americans to move westward and they further trespassed on Native American territory. Yet in the forge of the Civil War and territorial expansion the United States found that it was ready to emerge on to the international stage.
Period 5 (1844-1877): Divisions and Civil War

General Overview

For the first time in the history of the United States the Union among the individual states was threatened. The attack was not external, but rather it came from within. The institution of slavery was an issue upon which there were two sides. If you were to step back into the mid-19th century you would find yourself on the side of the southern states whose wealth was built on the back of slavery and plantations. On the other side you had the northern states who wished to abolish the abominable institution, but were blocked by Democrats on every front in the federal government.

The traditions and foundations established by the Framers were going to be tested and the bonds of brotherhood hammered against the anvil of war. Our journey doesn’t begin with the first shot of the war fired at Fort Sumter, but before that. Both the federal government and the major political parties of the time were paralyzed, neither one wanted to make a decisive action against slavery. At the same time black freedmen and other prominent figures in the African-American community were beginning to speak out against the paradoxical dichotomy of a land of the free where part of the population was enslaved. The North and the South decided to ignore the issue entirely and it almost tore the nation apart. Remember that as you study the American Civil War, you can guide your efforts with the AP US History Exam and Course Description. Additionally, you can test yourself with these practice questions!

White Slavery

The United States has had a history of chattel slavery since before the triangle trade that depopulated Africa. When England first set foot in the New World they had a steady flow of speculators and young men who voluntarily went over to North America to work in and help grow the new British colonies. Eventually this rush to the New World to seek a fortune or a new beginning slowed down into a trickle but the colonies required constant immigration in order to function since living in the colonies had a high mortality rate. The British required a new source of labor that they found in indentured servitude.

To enter indentured servitude a person would sign a contract stating they would work for a certain number of years in exchange for job training and passage to the New World. Indentured servitude was similar to slavery in that it required the person enter into service for a large portion of their life with no expectation of
A majority of indentured servants were either of Scottish, Irish, or German descent.

This model was also not sustainable because as soon as the terms of the contract were up the indentured servant would eventually leave to seek their own fortune in the New World. This was especially damaging to landowners in the colonies because the contract normally ended when the indentured servant had finally acquired the necessary skills to be an efficient worker. It is at this point in time that the British Empire turns to the enslavement of Africans to fill their labor quota and began the oppression of an entire race that lasted for centuries. Their justification for the systematic enslavement of an entire population lies in their reasoning that Africans were savage animals and their enslavement would lead to their civilization. It was a flawed logic based on ethnocentric ideals.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam can potentially ask you to trace the history of slavery beginning with the colonial period. You may need to identify key points in the history of colonialism from when the colonies first used indentured servants as their main labor force and eventually transitioned into full chattel slavery.

Fourth of July

The institution of slavery was not ignored by Americans. There were those who saw what an offensive paradox they were maintaining in the United States of America. To preach liberty for all men and then enslave an entire race on the basis of their skin color was a mockery of the Founding Fathers’ intent. Seeing this many spoke out against the Southern dependence on chattel slavery and reproached the nation for their continued support of the appalling establishment by not acting against it. Many of these orators and writers were former slaves who had escaped to the north and found their freedom. By their very existence they proved that slaves were indeed capable of learning and smashed the arguments of Southern slave owners.

Speaking Out

Among those who were able to escape their bonds one of the most famous slaves-turned-abolitionist was Frederick Douglass. Douglass was born a slave in the state of Maryland, he never knew his mother and she eventually died before he ever got the chance to get to know her better. He first learned to read from the wife of the plantation owner who claimed him as his slave after Douglass’ mother died. The lessons were normally carried out in secret, but upon the discovery of Douglass’ education he sent Douglass away to another plantation.

It was too late however; the seed of knowledge had been planted in Douglass’ mind. He read everything and took every opportunity he had to further his
education. It was only when he began to teach other slaves to read that the young Frederick Douglass was made into a target and was constantly beaten by his master. Soon Frederick Douglass could take no more and fought back, at that moment Douglass knew that he could not live the rest of his life a slave. Douglass made his escape to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1838 and said that upon entering the bastion of freedom, “A new world had opened upon me.” Douglass then dedicated his life to fighting against the institution of slavery. He continued his education for he saw it as the best way to strike against his former masters. He polished his speech and became known as an eloquent orator, he spoke to assemblies of white men and railed against the inhuman nature of slavery.

**For the Test**

The AP US History Exam may ask you about activists who fought against slavery during this period. You may be asked to recognize key figures who strengthened the Abolitionist Movement by their actions and supported the dissolution of chattel slavery in the United States.

**On Slavery**

On the opposite of the coin there were those who not only believed that slavery was useful, they proclaimed that it was necessary. Imagine a world where the politicians supported the mass enslavement of an entire section of the population and you will find yourself in mid-19th century America. This was not just a vocal minority either, highly influential figures in Congress truly believed that slavery was an inseparable portion of the United States and in order to properly function as a nation they needed to maintain the institution. These beliefs could even be found in the North, normally portrayed as a stronghold of abolition. While the North did believe that slavery was dehumanizing they could not quite commit to the idea that slaves needed equal rights. This wavering belief only prolonged the existence of slavery.

**The Voice of Reason, The Voice of Oppression**

When you study the Civil War normally you see the North portrayed as completely against slavery and that the Civil War was imminent because the North was not willing to compromise on abolishment of the foul custom. This is not entirely true, there were many northern proponents in the United States who firmly believed that the United States has succeeded so well in its endeavors because of slavery. Among these supporters was John C. Calhoun. A striking speaker from South Carolina John C. Calhoun was able to capture the attention of his audience through his persuasive speech and intellectual nature. In his heyday John C. Calhoun was the leader of the War Hawks, a senator for South Carolina, Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and eventually Vice President of the United States. In spite of all these achievements the largest remnant of his legacy was his
Calhoun proposed that slavery was a “positive good” that helped uphold social order and stability in the Union. He also developed two major theories that would play a role in the eventual secession of the South from the Union: nullification and the right of the minority in legislative matters. Nullification is the concept that the individual states of the union could declare legislation passed by the federal government unconstitutional and in doing so would prevent the law from being carried out in that state. Additionally, the right of the minority was described by Calhoun as the power of the minority to oppose legislation from being passed through Congress if the legislation itself overstepped its authority.

Both these concepts became important to the South because they saw it as an opportunity to defend their livelihoods. Many Southern politicians latched on to Calhoun’s political theories and used them to rationalize the existence of slavery. The reason for this was since only white males could vote the vast population centers of the North outstripped the Southern population since most inhabitants of the South were black slaves. Minority rights gave them the ability to block sweeping motions made by Northern politicians and nullification gave them a guarantee of their constitutional rights.

His principles carried far-reaching consequences because they would eventually be applied by the Southern states as reasons for their secession from the Union resulting in the American Civil War. His logic would reappear immediately after the Civil War and was applied constantly during the Reconstruction period. It took the form of preserving the “separate but equal” ruling where this disparity between black and white Americans was seen as important to sustaining societal harmony.

For the Test

The AP US Exam may ask you how the South defended their plantations and slavery in general. Questions may include what specific theories the South used in their defense and how they justified their secession from the Union.

New Territories

Another wedge that further drove apart the North and the South was the addition of new territory to the Union. Due to Manifest Destiny, many settlers were rushing west to start farms and expand the influence of the United States. However this belief presented the issue of whether states admitted to the Union would be free or slave states. This issue was originally resolved by Henry Clay and his Missouri Compromise of 1820. All states south of the 36°30’ north parallel would be slave states, and all those north of the parallel would be free states with
the exception of Missouri. This model lasted for 34 years but in the end it was not sustainable. The Union was going to have to make a decision soon.

**The Kansas-Nebraska Act**

Despite the success of the Missouri Compromise in conserving a tenuous peace between the North and the South it did not last. Manifest Destiny pushed the borders of the nation further west and soon new territories had appeared that soon applied for statehood. The first two among them were Kansas and Nebraska Territories. Tensions were high in Congress as they fervently debated the future status of these territories. At this moment Senator Stephen A. Douglas enters the scene.

Douglas was ambitious and sought to acquire the presidency, and in an attempt to build support for himself introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Instead of relying on the Missouri Compromise of 1820 Senator Douglas suggested that each territory should decide for themselves in a vote of popular sovereignty. This would determine whether they were to be a free state or a slave state. By sponsoring this act he hoped to paint himself as a man of democracy and thus gain support from both Northern and Southern senators. The law passed but it had consequences that ruined Douglas' chances at the presidency.

**Bleeding Kansas**

The motion passed and the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was replaced by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Unfortunately for Senator Douglas this did not relieve any of the tension between the North and the South and instead did the opposite. Now that the territory could determine its own status the North and the South both saw an opportunity to influence the direction the nation would take. Southern plantation owners and Northern small-town farmers flooded into the Kansas Territory in an attempt to sway the direction the state would take.

It was just a matter of time before northern abolitionists came into contact with southern slave owners and the tension eventually erupted into a full conflict. The violence was led by radical abolitionist John Brown and his sons who used broadswords to cut down five pro-slavery men within the borders of the Kansas Territory. Soon after he attempted to lead a slave revolt in Harper’s Ferry, Virginia but failed and was soon executed by the Virginian government. John Brown ended up becoming a symbol of the abolitionist movement because his actions. He took an active stance against slavery and because of this died a martyr.

*For the Test*
The AP US History Exam can ask you to determine what key events lead up to the Civil War. They may also ask you how early Congressmen attempted to resolve the issue of slavery and whether it was successful or not.

**Freeport Doctrine**

Despite the failure of the Kansas-Nebraska Act Senator Douglas still pursued the presidency. In a series of debates that would become famous in American history Senator Douglas faced off against future-president Abraham Lincoln as they fought for a senate seat in the legislature of Illinois. Lincoln posed the following dilemma: how could Senator Douglas support the Kansas-Nebraska Act when the Supreme Court stated that it is unconstitutional for US territories to deny the institution of slavery within their borders? To further explain the Kansas-Nebraska Act promoted the idea of popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty allowed a US territory that was applying for statehood to determine for themselves whether they would be a free or slave state. However in the US Supreme Court case *Dred Scott vs. Sandford* the US Supreme Court ruled that territories could not limit slavery simply because there were already slave states with established traditions. Even if the majority of the territory’s population were against slavery they could not make the decision to limit slavery.

Senator Douglas responded to Lincoln by defending the constitutionality of popular sovereignty. According to Douglas’ defense a state’s self-determination took precedence over the ruling of the Supreme Court because of the fact that it was the constitutional right of the people living there to choose how they wanted to run their state. The Freeport Doctrine further divided the North and the South because Northern Democrats felt that Senator Douglas was simply allowing the further spread of slavery while Southern Democrats thought that he was preventing it.

*For the Test*

The Democratic Party was the dominant party during the events leading up to the Civil War, but it was divided on the issue of slavery. The AP US Exam may ask you how the Freeport Doctrine only widened the divide between Northern and Southern Democrats and how the Republican Party benefited from this split.

**Causes of Secession**

With tension running high in antebellum America it would only take one more major event to finally dissolve the Union. This came in the form of a presidential election. Murmurings of secession had existed since the 1820s but had never been seriously considered. It wasn’t until the South felt as if the deck was beginning to be stacked against them that they began to hear these murmurings more clearly. President Buchanan had not taken a solid stance for or against
slavery while running on the Democratic ticket and that had been good enough for the South, but he did nothing to relieve the tension. The straw that finally broke the camel's back was the election of President Abraham Lincoln to the oval office. Abraham Lincoln had run on the ticket of the Republican Party and this was anathema to the South because one of the major points of the Republican Party was their belief that slavery should be abolished.

South Carolina seceded from the Union and was followed closely by most of the Southern states forming their own Confederate States of America. Either under the basis of nullification or states’ rights the Confederate States of America declared that the United States of America had failed to protect the constitutional rights of the South and so began the American Civil War.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam can ask you when exactly the Union was shattered. They may also ask you what actions were taken by the Presidents prior to Southern secession to preserve the Union. There is also the chance that they can ask you to determine which states formed the Confederate States of America.

The Wrap Up

In history, slavery as an institution was not an invention by white landowners in the south. Slavery had existed in early colonial times, originally with the indentured servitude of the Irish, Scottish, and German. This model was untenable and was soon replaced with the enslavement of black Africans taken from their homes and sold in the New World. However an institution like slavery could not exist in a nation whose foundation was based on life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Abolitionists appeared who wished to make slavery illegal which began the nation’s path towards civil war. Politicians from both sides argued over the morality of slavery and from this argument arose two important concepts: nullification and minority rights. This problem was compounded with the addition of new territories to the contiguous United States and whether they should be included as free or slave states. Democrats were split on the issue and so leadership for the nation was divided. This allowed the Republican Party to rise in power and with the beginning of Abraham Lincoln’s presidency the nation was divided and the fight to preserve the Union was on.
Period 5 (1844-1877): Union Victory, Reconstruction, and Civil War Aftermath

General Overview

We now arrive at the American Civil War. Since its inception the United States was unable to decide how to deal with the institution of slavery. It had been a feature of American development since the original revolution of the thirteen colonies. Slaves worked the fields of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson as they sat in a sweltering, boarded-up courthouse in Philadelphia. Perhaps the irony escaped the Founding Fathers as they drew up the documents that would form the foundation of a nation where all men could be free, but it is doubtful. Instead they chose to ignore the reprehensible practice and leave the decision up to their children, as wise as they were it seems that they did not foresee the consequences of this decision. On April 12, 1861 the first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter and began a conflict that pitted North versus South. For three years, 11 months, and 28 days the Union was divided and brother killed brother over whether the Constitution claimed a man could legally own another man.

Congress and the federal government had failed the people and in doing so led hundreds of thousands of their men to their deaths. The Northern industrial centers were converted into factories of destruction. President Lincoln entered his presidency and found a nation in crisis and was forced to take a stance on slavery in order to save the Union. General Robert E. Lee, a masterful tactician, butchered division after division of Union soldiers until he met his match in Ulysses S. Grant. In the end the North defeated the South and slavery was abolished, but a practice that had existed since the writing of the Constitution left its own shadows during the Reconstruction. Nevertheless there are always people willing to fight for what is right and it is them we may thanks for the progress we have made since then. As you read through this study guide and learn of the struggle between the North and South remember to stay on track with the AP US History Course and Exam Description. Then once you’ve gone through this guide test yourself with these practice questions.

Year 1860

Prior to the beginning of the Civil War the United States was divided not only in ideology but in economy as well. The North and the South both derived their
livelhood from very different methods that would eventually lead to the North’s victory and the South’s defeat.

Advantages of the North

The North had several factors in its favor during the Civil War. The North had been settled earlier and as a result had a long history of agriculture that contributed to the war effort. Most of the North’s agriculture was directed towards food and during the Civil War this was further endorsed in order to feed the Union Army. Crops that did not directly contribute to the war effort, like tobacco and cotton were taxed since they were not seen as immediately useful. Congress also passed the Homestead Act to bring in even more arable land that could then be cultivated to support the Union Army. The Homestead Act declared that any settler who was willing to move west and farm for five years would be allowed to keep up to 160 acres of the land that he moved on to. The effect of this was that the densely populated north was dispersed west even more while simultaneously helping providing sustenance for the war effort.

Additionally where the south derived a majority of its income from cash crops like tobacco and cotton, the North had turned its financial interests elsewhere and became an industrial powerhouse. The North was able to direct factories that normally created textiles and other domestic goods towards the manufacture of guns, bullets, and uniforms for soldiers. This proliferation of industrial centers had failed to reach the South and thus gave the advantage to the North. The South had depended on the North’s trading centers, of which the Union had many more, to export and import goods. Cotton could not turn a profit for the South if it could not be sold anywhere. The North blockaded the South and slowly but surely starved the South of any trade from the rest of the world.

Advantages of the South

The South had different advantages that were just as effective if less apparent, especially at the beginning of the war. The South was fighting a war against an army on the offensive. In essence all they had to do was defend the Confederacy till enough Union lives had been lost and Northerners lost their taste for war. Conversely the North had to not only subjugate the entirety of the Confederate Army but successfully occupy and pacify the Southern states; this task was not helped by the fact that Northern supply lines were long and easily disrupted.

The South was also fighting on its own territory; this led to the Union Army constantly having to attack an encamped position where the terrain was against them. The South also had a military tradition stretching back to colonial times. For example, Georgia had been formed not only as a prison for debtors but as a buffer state against northern incursions of Native Americans and the Spanish. There were more Southern soldiers with martial experience compared to the
For the Test

The US AP US History Exam may ask you to write an essay about the advantages and disadvantages of the North and South during the Civil War. They may also ask you what lead the North to triumph over the South.

Lincoln on Slavery

Lincoln’s election to the White House was not popular by any means. He entered the Oval Office and found a nation in shambles. His predecessor James Buchanan had failed to hold the Union together. Despite the enormity of the problem President Lincoln decided that it was his duty to keep the Union together, no matter the cost.

Abraham Lincoln: Law-Breaker

Abraham Lincoln realized the advantage of the South mentioned earlier in the guide: if the North lost the will to fight then the Union would be lost. Realizing this Abraham Lincoln knew that he had to maintain popularity for the war for as long as it took to subjugate the South entirely. This meant that he would have to do his best to silence anti-war sentiment, even if it meant bending or even ignoring the liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

Abraham Lincoln’s presidency is infamous for its violation of civil rights and disregard for the Constitution in order to preserve the North’s fighting spirit. An example of this was Abraham Lincoln’s sweeping announcement that he was increasing the size of the Union Army. Lincoln knew that the only way the North was going to beat the South’s martial prowess was through a war of attrition, he knew he had to simply throw enough bodies into battle until the South was unable to wage war. Formerly the decision to enlarge the army was something that only Congress could approve, but President Lincoln could not wait for that decision to pass through Congress and made the decision himself.

President Lincoln also shut down several newspapers and eliminated the writ of habeas corpus. In doing so he was able to imprison anti-war supporters who would denounce the Civil War and thus weaken the North’s morale. This elimination of civil liberties was unprecedented but Lincoln was forced to take extreme measures to preserve the Union.

Abraham Lincoln: The Emancipator

In the wake of the Civil War President Lincoln was painted as staunch opponent to slavery, but this was not the truth. Instead President Lincoln’s political stance
leaned closer to the Free Soil Movement. Initially President Lincoln believed that complete abolishment of slavery would result in a Union incapable of reuniting. He supported the principle that slavery be allowed to exist where it was already established, but new territories introduced into the Union would all be Free states.

**Pressure from abolitionists in the North to take a stance forced President Lincoln**’s hand and he had to make a choice. Fortunately it coincided with a Union victory at the Battle of Antietam and President Lincoln took advantage of this by his [delivery of the Emancipation Proclamation](https://www.nps.gov/wohi/historyculture/abolitionism.htm). A popular inaccuracy about the Emancipation Proclamation states that it ended slavery in every single state, but its exact wording states differently. President Lincoln declared in the Emancipation Proclamation that slavery was ended only in the South and any territories it controlled. **This had a dual purpose:** first it added the abolishment of slavery to the goals of the Union and second it portrayed the Union in the moral right while decrying the South’s choice to maintain slavery.

**For the Test**

The AP US History Exam may ask you specifically what Abraham Lincoln did to preserve the Union. It may also ask you about the effects and goals of the Emancipation Proclamation.

**Civil War Battle**

With the war in full swing the Union and Confederate armies clashed on several occasions. At the onset of the conflict it seemed that the Confederate Army had the advantage, experienced leadership resulted in the utter domination of entire battlefields. Prior to the North’s industrial advantage taking effect it seemed that the Confederate Army had already defeated the Union Army. General Robert E. Lee was a mastermind on the field of battle and the Union’s own General George McClellan was outmatched and outclassed. There were several instances where the South was able to take the fight into Northern territory. However from the forge of war two figures emerged who would lead the Union Army to victory: Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman.

**Ulysses the Conqueror**

*When Ulysses Grant was rising in the ranks the Union Army was in dire straits.* At the first Battle of Bull Run the Union Army had hoped to overcome a much smaller Confederate force. They did not count on Southern tenacity and the determination of one General “Stonewall” Jackson. The Union Army was smashed at Bull Run. The losses did not stop there, the Union also lost the Seven Days Battle and again at the Second Battle of Bull Run. It was only after the Battle of Gettysburg that President Lincoln knew that they needed new leadership. Grant’s first major success was at the Battle of Vicksburg and his
victory arguably signaled a turning point in the war. His capture of Vicksburg only further tightened the noose around the Confederacy’s neck as supplies had already become scarce. Soon after the Union succeeded in crushing the Confederate Army in several conflicts but Grant could not completely squash southern resistance.

**Sherman the Destroyer**

The reason for the South’s continued resistance was their ability to constantly escape from Union forces. Grant could readily defeat the Confederate Army but he could not stop an enemy that believed it could continue its campaign by living to fight another day. General William Tecumseh Sherman offered a solution to General Grant with his famous march to the sea. The South believed that the north would not go so far as to completely destroy land that it believed rightfully belonged in the union so they took comfort that their homes would be protected.

Sherman told Grant that as long as southern soldiers had a home to return to they would continue fighting. He suggested that he take a small regiment of the Union Army and ride to the western border of the Confederacy. From there he would completely annihilate Southern farms and cities in an act of “total war”. Grant agreed and so began Sherman’s trail of destruction. His campaign ended with the burning of Atlanta which resulted in two things: that the Union was willing to go to any length to preserve the Constitution and the Confederacy was now divided by Union forces.

*For the Test*

The AP US Exam may ask you to recognize key battles and how their results affected the war. It can also ask when the tide began to turn and what tactics were used by the Union generals to subdue the South.

**Slavery by Another Name**

Eventually the South fell to the Union Army. The South could not match Northern industrial production and the extreme tactics of General Sherman. The institution of slavery was abolished and President Lincoln succeeded in preserving the Union, but the shadow of slavery did not dissipate immediately. The entire southern United States depended on slavery for their livelihood and their heritage demanded their oppression of the former slaves. Freedom it seemed was not so free after all.

**Continued Oppression**

With the fall of the Confederacy Congress was free to pass legislation that forever banned the enslavement of another man within the boundaries of the United States of America. Slaves rejoiced but it was premature. Slavery had existed for so
long in the south that Southern whites were not willing to accept their former slaves as equals. Many attempts were made to fully integrate the south back into the Union but they were all eventually reversed since no effective leadership appeared to protect the new rights of former slaves. Several systems appeared in the South to once again subjugate the black population.

Examples of this were the South’s Jim Crow Laws which kept blacks separate from the white population. While the Emancipation Proclamation required the South to free their slaves it could not force Southern plantation owners to suddenly respect their former property. Another example was the Black Codes. The Black Codes gave freed slaves more rights but were secretly meant to extend their oppression. Effects of the Black Codes included ownership of property and the right to bear witness in court. Unfortunately the Black Codes continued the disenfranchisement of blacks, they also could not rent or own land and they were denied their constitutional right to bear arms.

A Slave in Everything but Name

Most former slaves once freed were unable to support themselves. Despite the fact that they were no long bound to work the land for the rest of their lives they lacked basic skills that prevented them from competing with their white counterparts. Most slaves had worked as farmers all their lives, but they had no money to purchase their own land. All they could really offer was the labor of their hands in exchange for capital, and it was here that the South began to exploit them once again. Former plantation owners created contracts; they tricked or bullied former slaves to sign them and so the sharecropper system was born. Southern plantation owners were able to entrap former slaves into working their old plots of land by stating that the slave had signed a binding contract, they were paid very little and were essentially bonded for life since they could never repay the debt that the contract forced upon them.

For the Test

After the death of Abraham Lincoln, the South took the opportunity to bring their former slaves back to the plantations that had made the South so wealthy. The AP US Exam may ask you what measures the South took to further subjugate the former slave population.

Reconstruction

The North won the Civil War and the slaves had been freed, the Union had been preserved. There were many questions left to answer however: the South had to be re-integrated into the Union, the rights of the former slaves had to protected, and the cities that had once been jewels of the South had to be rebuilt for they had been burned to the ground by Sherman’s March to the Sea.
Congressional Reconstruction

When the Civil War was over many people questioned how they would be able to trust their former enemies. Former President Lincoln had died, shot in the head by John Wilkes Booth at Ford’s Theatre. Before his death he had planned for a policy of compassion and the swift restoration of both the South’s economy and their own state governments. Former Confederate citizens simply had to take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and the Union and once 10% of the population had taken the oath the Union would allow the formation of a state government.

Sadly, President Lincoln died before he could implement his policy and in his place a faction of Radical Republicans took control of the South’s reconstruction. Their demands were harsher but their intentions were good. These Republicans feared a second Southern aristocracy would rise and enslave the black population once more and refuse to abide by the laws that the North had passed in the South’s absence. Their cause was not helped by President Lincoln’s successor, President Andrew Johnson.

To prevent the summary restoration of the South’s former status of slavery Congress united and stood against President Johnson. They formed the Joint Committee on Reconstruction and set to work. First they began work on the Fourteenth Amendment stating that no man could prevent any other person of their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They then passed the Military Reconstruction Act that set the terms for the restoration of the South. The rebellious states were combined into five military districts and gave the federal army the right to maintain law and order until the South had met the following terms: they had to pass the Fourteenth Amendment, they had to guarantee the right of black people to vote in their own state constitutions, and they had to weaken or repeal the Black Codes entirely.

White Man’s Government

As mentioned earlier the Southern states continued their oppression of former slaves despite the abolishment of slavery in the Union by the Thirteenth Amendment. Republicans who had overseen the Reconstruction sought to combat this by passing the Fourteenth Amendment which guaranteed all male citizens of the United States of America the right to vote. This did not guarantee Southern acquiescence however because the Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws prevented black Americans from rising out of poverty or exercising their basic human rights.

Literacy Tests and the Ku Klux Klan

The Fourteenth Amendment legally bound the South to treat their black population equally. Unfortunately they could not compel the South to follow
these laws, and Congress soon lost steam after the amendment was passed preventing them from enforcing these laws. While the South implemented ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and included equality for all citizens in their state constitutions they found other ways around it.

One of the most popular ways to prevent black citizens from voting was by using a poll tax. Poll taxes were passed by Southern politicians that required all citizens to pay a tax to vote. Since most former slaves were poor, they were unable to pay the tax and also could not vote. There was also the effect of disenfranchising poor whites as well since they could not pay the tax either. Literacy tests were also popular, requiring voters to pass a certain level of education before they were allowed to vote. Their most blatant disregard for the Fourteenth Amendment came in the form of grandfather clauses. Grandfather clauses made it so that you were only eligible to vote if you were able to vote prior to the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. Since the Thirteenth Amendment was only passed after the Civil War, before slaves were freed, slaves were completely blocked from the polls.

Laws prevented the majority of blacks from voting, the rest were intimidated into submission by groups like the Ku Klux Klan. The Ku Klux Klan was originally founded by former Confederate soldiers. They were formed with the intent of barring blacks from exercising their civil rights and simultaneously scaring them into submission. They dressed in all white and covered their faces with hoods and claimed they were the ghosts of deceased Confederate soldiers. In truth they simply needed to hide their identities as they harassed black Americans to prevent the law from getting involved.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam will ask how white men kept black men down using the law, violence, and fear. They may ask you to define key concepts like poll tax or grandfather clause as well.

Black Reconstruction

In spite of the sustained oppression by Southern whites and lawmakers, many black Americans were still able to improve their lives and their station in society without the shackles of slavery.

Delivered from Egypt

Many Republicans and former abolitionists moved south to help rebuild and one the tasks they undertook was the education of former slaves. Schoolhouses spread across the South like wildfire as many former slaves wanted to learn how to read. This desire for literacy stemmed from the desire to read the Bible. Many slaves had drawn inspiration from the Bible when their lives on the plantation...
seemed almost too much to bear. Former slaves compared themselves to the Israelites who had been trapped in Egypt. Compelled to work in much the same way that Pharaoh had made the Israelites slaves, they had prayed for their own eventual freedom. Compounded by the fact that plantation owners often allowed their slaves to pray in church lead to their yearning to read the bible for themselves.

**Self-Sovereignty**

The sharecropper system was able to trap many black Americans in slavery once more but there were those who rose above their former lot in life. In spite of violence, segregation, and even Supreme Court Decisions black citizens were able to rise to the rank of politician. Hiram Revels became Senator of Mississippi, and the first black member of the Senate. Joseph Rainey was elected to the House of Representatives and scorned the attempts of Southern politicians to prevent him from exercising his authority. All black politicians at the time were members of the Republican Party for the Republican Party was the political party of Abraham Lincoln and thus the party of abolishment of slavery and the enfranchisement of former slaves. The Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the rights of black Americans to hold office and vote, but that did not stop the Ku Klux Klan from using intimidation tactics to scare them from the ballot.

Unfortunately, despite this progress former slaves were still kept on a lower level than white Americans. As Southern Democrats regained power in the South they didn’t fight the Fifteenth Amendment directly, instead they turned to politics, both at home and on the federal level. Legislation was passed that maintained separate facilities for black and white Americans that would later be upheld by the Supreme Court case of Plessy vs. Ferguson.

**For the Test**

The AP US History exam may ask you how former slaves worked to improve their condition. It may also ask you of notable examples of black Americans who were able to resist further Southern tyranny and make a name for themselves.

**Susan B. Anthony**

The enfranchisement of black men and their inclusion into politics soon heartened the efforts of women everywhere. Women were not allowed to vote, regardless of race, prior to the Civil War but with its conclusion and a Union victory, women believed that they would be extended the right to vote. When the Fifteenth Amendment was being drafted it included that all males of the United States of America were allowed to attend federal and state elections and cast their vote and to prevent them from doing so was unconstitutional. At first this may seem just but the Fifteenth Amendment only allowed for people to vote,
regardless of their “race, color, or previous condition of servitude” it did not include any mention of gender.

This enraged women abolitionists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who had fought for the enfranchisement of black men. They were not included in the text of the Fifteenth Amendment and so were further banned from voting. Female abolitionists had found that while they were fighting against the enslavement of black Americans and supported their treatment as citizens of the Union they had been left out of the changes being made to the constitution. As a result the women’s suffrage movement began and they struggled for their right to vote as well. It was not until decades after the Reconstruction that they were able to finally participate in federal and state elections.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you how women reacted to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment. It also has the potential to ask you when women were finally enfranchised and who famous women of the early suffrage movement were.

Social Changes

Gone were the plantation dynasties that had stretched across hundreds of acres of cotton fields. After the Civil War all southerners faced tough times ahead since the Union Army had for the most part destroyed the livelihoods of the Southern states. Whole crops were ruined or went unharvested since white landowners relied on slaves to labor in the fields. Regardless the South did manage to rebuild, but not without major changes to the fabric of society.

Carpetbaggers and Scalawags

During the interim period between the Civil War and the formation of state governments two groups of white Americans rose to prosperity in the South. One group called carpetbaggers came from the North, and the other was known as scalawags and they already resided in the South. The term “carpetbagger” was a derogatory term for a northerner who came with their carpet bags to the South in order to take advantage of the poor economic situation. This entailed selling products at high mark-ups up to running for political office in order to shut out Southern Democrats. On the other hand there were scalawags. Scalawags were Southerners who had voted against secession from the Union or supported the Republican Party during and after the Civil War. Scalawags were seen as turncoats or baseless cowards for returning to the Union with open arms upon the Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. They sided with the Radical Republicans in Congress and did their best to help ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.
For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you what changes occurred to Southern culture and society in the South as a result of the Fourteenth Amendment. It may ask you to describe how the South used the law to keep black Americans in their former servitude.

The Wrap-Up

The American Civil War saw a nation torn apart. The United States had been formed on the basis that each one of her citizens had a set of inalienable rights that no government could take away. However the Founding Fathers had failed to account for massive slave population that sustained the plantation economy of the American South. The issue eventually boiled over and the American Civil War led to the death of over 600,000 Union and Confederate soldiers under the leadership of General Grant and General Lee.

It was only by the will of Abraham Lincoln that the Union was able to maintain its fighting spirit long enough to overwhelm the South and in doing so emancipate all slaves in the United States and abolish slavery entirely. The assassination of President Lincoln left the Reconstruction of the South in the hands of a faction of Republicans set on preserving the work of President Lincoln. In doing so they passed the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendment while simultaneously alienating President Johnson for his soft policy towards the Reconstruction of the South.

Regardless of these amendments however the Southern aristocracy eventually regained its former influence and Southern Democrats entered Congress once more. Through policy and legislation they systematically subjugated the former slaves once more till they were trapped in contractual servitude in conditions that were not much better than the slavery they had suffered through. Still black Americans rose to the challenge presented them and refused to back down, leaders like Hiram Revels and Frederick Douglass inspired the former slave population to take control of their destiny and when the time was right they would fight back against the Southern oppression and overthrow it once and for all.
Period 6 (1865-1898): Emergence of Industrial Culture

General Overview

The effects of the industrial revolution were not limited to the American economy or system of markets. All aspects of American life are interconnected. As a result, the rapidly changing economy created a rapidly changing social life. During the second half of the 19th century, from 1865-1898, America had to deal with the newly emerged culture surrounding the newly industrialized national economy and the issues that came with it. This took the shape of social, economic, and political issues.

In this AP U.S. History guide, we will cover some of the events and ideas noted in Key Concept 6.2 on the official AP U.S. History Course Description. The course description can be used along with the guide to make sure you are staying on track with your studies. If you really want to take your studying to the next level, you can use some of these practice questions to go along with the guide.

New Immigrants

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, America was a nation made up of small agrarian farming communities. As industry made its way into America, this quickly changed. Many people’s lives began to revolve around cities and urban areas. This transition is relatively easy to understand. Factories and industries often formed together or around each other for efficiency’s sake. These factories and industries were big sources of jobs. And of course, people were going to move to the areas where jobs were. So if the majority of jobs are available in cities, than people were going to move to cities. All of that to say, the urbanization, or movement from rural to urban areas, was not at all a surprising development for this time period. What is interesting, however, is the way that the influx of new people into cities and towns affected urbanization.

America’s population was booming through most of the 19th century. There was a massive infusion of foreign immigrants from a number of different areas. Many immigrants came from Asia as well as Europe, while there was a sort of “internal migration” that occurred among African-Americans who were previously slaves in the South. Although the mass movement of people into cities was an indication of America’s financial success, the movement frustrated many people. In particular, people were frustrated by the number of immigrants who were part of this movement into cities. Chinese immigrants had been prominent in America for many years and would continue to come to America in large numbers until
the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 limited their allowance into the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act was largely a response to anti-Chinese sentiments, as many Americans did not like how many Chinese immigrants were taking jobs. However, Chinese immigrants were often limited to low paying jobs, commonly working in laundry mats or restaurants. Either way, the prominence of Chinese workers was a tense subject for many Americans, and this was not just a new development in the late 19th century.

Aside from the continual controversy surrounding immigration from Asian areas, there was also a wave of “New Immigrants” that made their way to America during the late 19th century. These new immigrants came from areas of Europe that immigrants were not historically from, such as Italy and Poland. These immigrants rarely had enough money to afford land in rural areas, so they were naturally drawn to cities. Cities provided more opportunities for unskilled labor, and in many instances cheap housing was available to them. About 10,000,000 “new immigrants” came to America in between 1860-1890. This was a massive number of people to be added into cities and it often put a strain on American infrastructures. When immigrants didn’t move into cities, they often moved into rural areas out west where they hoped to find alternative sources of employment.

For the Test

Be able to explain how the infusion of immigrants affected the development of cities. Understand why people may have been frustrated by the amount of immigrants moving into cities.

Urban Social Divisions

One of the key developments in the Gilded Age was the breakup of society into social and economic classes. There was a growing divide between rich and poor families and individuals, and the rich seemed to experience a time of extreme prosperity. However, social life was often divided even further than just economic status. Divisions were also created among racial and national lines. Many immigrants were seen as second-class citizen and received harsh treatment from native-born Americans. One key example can be seen in the treatment of Irish immigrants.

Overall, there was an extreme amount of discrimination against many immigrants, and the Irish typically received the brunt end of that treatment. Most immigrants had come to America with the intention of finding work opportunities and gaining economic freedom. However, discrimination often prevented that from happening. Since there were such a large number of immigrants seeking employment, many Americans felt that they were taking jobs away from American citizens. These feelings were intensified by increasing feelings of nationalism and American pride. People who were born in America felt a certain sense of superiority to people who had come to America from a
foreign nation. One group that was historically prevalent in their immigration to the United States was the Irish. Since the infamous Irish Potato Famine of 1845, hundreds of thousands of people from Ireland had migrated into America in hopes of escaping famine and finding economic prosperity. This resulted in tense relations between Irish immigrants and American citizens. The Irish were seen as being barely above African-Americans in society, and were often characterized as lazy alcoholics. The anti-Irish feelings were made even greater by the fact that Irish immigrants were typically associated with Catholicism, which was generally a negative association. The discrimination against Irishmen took hold in the marketplace where Irish-Americans were often discouraged from applying to certain jobs.

The harsh treatment of Irishmen in America was a consistent trend throughout most of the 19th century. It was also not just isolated to Irish groups. In general, Americans had negative attitudes toward any ethnic group that was not native to America, as well as any group that did not hold traditional Protestant views. As a result, many Catholic groups were also discriminated against. Overall, American society developed a very limited view of what it meant to be an American. Anyone outside of that view would face an uphill battle to join the workforce and be a part of the American culture.

For the Test

Understand why people may have been led to discriminate against certain groups. Explain how society became divided on more than just an economic basis.

Americanization

America’s influx of immigrants created an interesting mixture of cultures and societies. It was the beginning of what we now call the “melting pot” effect of America. It is now what people consider to be one of America’s greatest strengths. The United States is host to a number of different cultures and groups of people and they have created a very broad and inclusive American culture. However, it was not always this way. During the 19th century, Americans were feeling a great deal of national pride. Following the Revolutionary War, Americans were eager to separate themselves from any traces of Great Britain’s culture. The best way to do that was to embrace their own American culture. This is often embodied by an enthusiastic acceptance of capitalism, an emphasis on the ideas of freedom and liberty, and a fascination with the West. This nationalism was only slightly set back by the Civil War, when distinct Southern and Northern cultures started to emerge. However, the American ideal was broad enough to encompass both northern and southern cultures, so long as they were inherently American.

Immigrants to America faced a number of difficulties. Although in title and theory it was as simple as just adding “-American” to an immigrants nationality,
in practice it was not so easy. Immigrants often struggled to decipher between characteristics of their old nation and their new place of residence. Some wanted to maintain the traditions and characteristics of their old culture, while creating a life in America. Others were more willing to leave behind their old traditions and way of life in exchange for the American culture and way of life. This second group was going through a process known as Americanization. A majority of immigrants fell somewhere in the middle of these two groups. It was impossible to attempt to make a life in the United States with going through at least a little bit of Americanization, even if that just meant starting to learn English. At the same time, immigrants were often proud of their heritage and sought to maintain some of that cultural identity. The Americanization process often occurred through “settlement houses.” These settlement houses were areas where immigrants and others looking for new opportunities could live cooperatively with others in low-cost housing. These houses were often a form of mission work for Christian women, and they soon became hubs for cultural exchange and the emergence of new ideas. People had the opportunity to learn English while gaining work experience and saving money on their living situation.

The importance of Americanization was usually seen during the search for a job. It was apparent that many employers held serious prejudices against different ethnic and cultural groups. Some employers simply wouldn’t hire a person if they didn’t speak English or seem “American” enough. Thus, it became necessary for immigrants to Americanize. As people started to see the issues of prejudice in the workplace, other groups that classically faced prejudice sought out new opportunities. Women began to reevaluate their possible place in the workforce, while African-Americans looked to expand on their newly acquired rights. Through these unique processes, the workforce was greatly expanded upon

**Political Machines**

Aside from financial extravagance and blossoming business models, the Gilded Age is very closely associated with political corruption. The general assumption about government and political happenings of the time was that they were extremely corrupt and dominated by crooked politicians who only looked out for their own good. This is of course a very broad generalization, but there is a definite amount of truth to it. This corruption primarily occurred through the implementation of political machines.

So what exactly was a political machine? Basically, it was a crooked combination of business and political interests. It was a group of people who would work together through different techniques of varying levels of legality, and try to get certain people elected to a certain position. Once this person or group of people was elected to political office, they would use that political position to create financial gains for the members of the political machine. So essentially, these political machines would do whatever it took to get their people into positions of political power. Once they were in power, they would reap the many economic
benefits from their power. Political machines typically had a “boss” at the head of them who calls the shots and organizes the corruption.

One of the most infamous leaders of a political machine was William “Boss” Tweed, the leader of the Tammany Hall political machine. This machine was one of the most powerful in history, and at its peak, it controlled almost all aspects of politics in New York. Political machines like Boss Tweed’s gained power during elections. They would often go around and find voters who were classically underrepresented, like immigrants, and provide some kind of service or assistance for them. They might find them a job or a cheap place to live. Then, when the time of an election came around, they would go and sign the immigrants up for voting and remind them to return the favor of their newfound job. At their core, they were manipulating immigrants. When this wasn’t enough to win elections, they would sometimes commit voting fraud by sending groups of people to different ballots under different names to cast duplicate votes.

Once the leaders of a political machine were in power, it became very easy for them to make insane amounts of money. One key way that Boss Tweed’s political machine made money was through the use of bribes. Anytime a public work project was going to happen, different contractors had to place bids to get the job. What that really meant, is that contractors had to pay extreme bribes to these elected city officials in order to get the job. Since the majority of city officials were part of the political machine, there wasn’t really any way around this corrupt system. In addition, people could pay bribes to be appointed to a certain government position. This opened up a system known as patronage. This was detrimental to the political system because it meant that it was no longer the most qualified person who would get a certain job, but it was the person who could be most useful to the political machine. Boss Tweed and the Tammany Hall political machine maintained control over New York City from about 1860 to 1872.

One benefit of the political machines that should not be overlooked is that they provided some valuable services to immigrants who were struggling to get by. Of course, they did it for the wrong reasons and their assistance was limited to those who could help their machine, but it was still beneficial. It opened the doorway to many reform movements and systems of assistance.

**Women’s Groups**

As political machines offered up some preliminary services to immigrants, women sought new purpose through various reform efforts. Thanks to the industrial revolutions impact on the workforce and the development, and decay of the nuclear family, women now had a greater role in public life. Although the right for women to vote in America was not established until the beginning of the 20th century, women had begun to take a much more active role in politics. This was especially true during the second half of the 19th century. While still
alienated from public positions of authority, reform movements allowed women to make substantial changes in American society. One example of this can be seen through the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. This group revitalized the temperance movement and laid the groundwork for prohibition in the early 1900s. Their goal was to create a pure and holy society through abstinence from things like alcohol, tobacco, and other Earthly things said to be detrimental to society. The success of this organization was an indication of women’s abilities in the public sphere and the necessity for reform in America.

For the Test

Understand the significance of the power held by political machines. Relate the reform efforts of women’s movements to the smaller reform efforts made by political machines.

Native American Discrimination

Immigrants to America were not the only groups of people to be discriminated against in American society. On the contrary, they were one of many groups to face harsh treatment and discrimination. Ironically, one of the main groups to receive this same treatment was Native Americans. If immigrants weren’t quite American enough, I guess Native Americans were perhaps, TOO American? While the logic of their discrimination is unclear, the reality of the situation is very clear. Native Americans had historically been treated poorly and abused by the American government, as seen in events like the Trail of Tears and the Indian Removal Act. This poor treatment continued through the end of the 19th century.

Prior to the Civil War, America had emphasized westward expansion, hoping to spread the United States across the entire continent. They were reasonably successful in spreading these boundaries. However, to do this they had to alienate many Native American groups by signing treaties and enacting laws that sent Native American tribes further and further west. After the Civil War, as technology improved and markets expanded westward, more and more people desired to move out west. This mass migration was partly coincidental, but also partly due to some American government actions encouraging westward migration. One such act had actually been passed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862; the Homestead Act. This promised 160 acres of public land to settlers out west. The problem with government subsidies like this one is that in order to be fulfilled, the government would have to give away land that wasn’t actually theirs. This meant that they were giving away land that had previously been promised to Native Americans, or land that Native Americans had previously been situated on. This was of course enticing to many white settlers looking for new opportunities, but highly detrimental to Native Americans out west. This kind of movement even further alienated Native Americans from American society.
Unfortunately for Native Americans, there were hardly any systems in place to prevent them from being taken advantage of. They were not considered United States citizens so the right to vote did not protect them. They had no spokesperson in the federal government who could stand up for them, and they were easily overpowered by the federal military force. Thus, it was essentially very easy for the United States government to take advantage of the Native Americans, and the government certainly did. This happened further through the land-grant colleges promised by the Morrill Land-Grant Act. This act was a nod to America’s dependence on agriculture, and its goal was to create a number of agricultural colleges throughout the United States to create more efficient mechanisms of farming and development. This act ensured 30,000 acres of land to any state that opened up an agricultural college. The issue with this was similar to that of the Homestead Act. It involved the federal government giving away pieces of land that they did not necessarily own. More than that, it involved giving away pieces of land on which Native Americans had created homes, leading to thousands of displaced Americans. And again, all of this occurred without them having hardly any say in the matter.

For the Test

Have a clear understanding of how different acts of government encouraged westward migration. Analyze the problems that arise from displacing Native Americans off of public lands.

Clashing Over Western Land

Although Native Americans were mostly unable to stand up for themselves politically, they were not altogether powerless against United States western expansion. Their defense did not often take the form of a vote or political action, but rather it was in violent conflicts where they attempted to defend themselves. These conflicts were also not limited to white American settlers and Native Americans, but they included Mexican Americans as well. These conflicts for land often turned violent, and the conflict is encompassed by a few key conflicts.

Battle of Little Bighorn

One of the most prominent conflicts between the United States army and Native American tribes occurred during the Battle of Little Bighorn in the summer of 1876. This battle was part of the larger Great Sioux War. Essentially a couple of Native American tribes, under the leadership of Sitting Bull, were ready to fight back against the U.S. military that was driving them off of their lands. This conflict primarily occurred in the Black Hills area of Montana. At the Battle of Little Bighorn, the United States cavalry was attempting to displace Native American tribes from the lands they had taken up and onto their designated reservations. One section of the American military was led by General Custer. His troops attacked a Sioux tribe prematurely, thinking that he had the upper hand.
However, he was apparently greatly outnumbered and quickly defeated. This was a humiliating defeat for the United States, although only a somewhat triumphant victory for Native American tribes. The United States government, upset about the defeat of General Custer and his troops, only made stricter boundaries on reservations and created more available land for white settlers.

Overall, the Sioux victory at the Little Bighorn was not a positive step for Native American tribes. As mentioned, the United States only heightened their defenses against Native American tribes. Various conflicts ensued, and they usually resulted in mass casualties for the tribes. Tensions were increased, and it became more difficult for tribes to hold on to their way of life. Also, the United States developed a renewed desire for the land that had previously been set aside for Native American tribes. The Battle of Little Bighorn represented a turning point in the Great Sioux War, and it was not in favor of the Sioux. The United States troops ultimately proved victorious, and many Native American lives were lost in the process.

*For the Test*

Be aware of the impact of conflicts like the Battle of Little Bighorn on relations between Native Americans and white settlers. Understand how previous interactions between the U.S. government and Native Americans led to these conflicts.

**Assimilating Native Americans**

As time went on, it became clear that Native Americans, despite their best efforts, were going to have a difficult time maintaining their land. The United States went against their word on some of the promises they had made to Native American tribes regarding land use. Violent conflicts such as the Great Sioux War, the Battle of Little Bighorn, and the massacre at Wounded Knee were starting to take their toll on these tribes. The relationship between the United States government and Native American tribes was forever changed through a number of acts and events aimed at easing tensions between the two.

**Dawes Act**

The Dawes Act was an extremely important piece of legislature in the second half of the 19th century. Congress passed the act in 1887 in an attempt to deal with Native American land. Basically the act would take land that belonged to tribes and divide them up into smaller plots of land. These plots of land would than be given to Native Americans who were willing to live outside of their tribe and become ordinary United States citizen. Different pieces of legislature like the Homestead Act and the Morrill Land-Grant Act had set the precedent for taking Native American lands and using them for federal purposes. The Dawes act continued in this trend, although it was different in a couple of key ways. For one,
the government was taking Indian tribe’s lands to then be given away to Native Americans. Second, while other acts were used to entice white settlers out west, the Dawes Act was geared towards drawing individual Native Americans from their tribes and making them American citizens. The process of attempting to integrate Native Americans into American culture is known as assimilation. The Dawes Act is just one example of this.

**Chief Joseph**

Chief Joseph was the leader of the Nez Perce tribe. Initially, he and his tribe were resistant to being placed in government reservations, and even went so far as to attempt to lead his tribe in a retreat to Canada. They were pursued by the United States military and they continued to retreat while fighting off American forces. This conflict came to be known as the Nez Perce War. Chief Joseph, by retreating, had hoped to avoid violence and war. The Nez Perce proved to be formidable opponents to the United States military, but the conflict was still very violent and bloody. Ultimately, Joseph and his people surrendered. His surrender gained him a place of honor and respect in American culture, and he became a spokesman for Native American tribes out west. He was eventually able to regain access for his tribe to their original land, but unable to improve the overall condition of Native American tribes in America.

*For the Test*

Explain how assimilation was in some ways forced upon Native American tribes. Describe some implications of the Dawes Act.

**The Wrap Up**

The second half of the 19th century’s changing industrial and economic systems created a number of issues for Americans to deal with. The workforce had been greatly expanded and diversified through the influx of immigrants taking on positions of unskilled labors. Tensions between immigrants and American-born citizens started to heat up, while white settlers sought out land from Native American tribes. Through all of this, big city politics remained corrupt and ineffective at providing peace and justice. This was an extremely difficult time for almost anyone besides a wealthy white American, and the way that America dealt with the various challenges would have long lasting impacts on the coming 20th century in America. The Gilded Age experience was certainly not always a positive one, and this is clear through the experience of immigrants, African-Americans, and Native Americans.
Period 6 (1865-1898): New Cultural and Intellectual Movements of the Gilded Age

General Overview

The years of 1865-1898 were crucial years in America’s development as a nation. Within a span of 30 years, America saw extreme wealth in contrast to extreme poverty, while government affairs got tied up in business affairs, and racism and anti-immigrant feelings affected American social life. As a result of so many significant changes occurring, many new ideas and intellectual movements emerged, each offering different kinds of solutions to the problems that had arisen in the years following the Civil War. It was a time period marked by a unique contrast of old attitudes and progressive ideas. It is imperative that you understand the cultural and intellectual movements that occurred during this Gilded Age.

In this AP U.S. History guide, we will cover some of the events and ideas noted in Key Concept 6.3 on the official AP U.S. History Course Description. The course description can be used along with the guide to make sure you are staying on track with your studies. If you really want to take your studying to the next level, you can use some of these practice questions to go along with the guide.

Reforming Government

The political atmosphere in the United States during the late 19th century was one marked with corruption and crime. The recently developed big businesses, trusts, and monopolies were intrinsically tied up in government affairs, and government actions usually favored these already wealthy groups. This was the era of famous political machines like Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall, which specialized in corrupt elections, patronage, and graft. For many years, political machines like Boss Tweed’s were more powerful and influential in politics than the actual government. It was a dark time for the United States government. As the century came to a close, many Americans started to find fault with the current system where corruption and patronage ran wild. The public sought substantial changes in the government and hoped to bring about an end to this corruption. The public’s desire for change took the shape of specific political actions that heavily shaped American politics.

The End of Patronage
One constant through most of 19th century politics was the use of the patronage, or spoils system. It originated during the 1828 presidential election in which Andrew Jackson was victorious, and remained prevalent through the end of the century. The idea was pretty simple. Basically, after an election, government jobs and positions would be given to people who supported the campaign of the triumphant political party. So, if a Democrat won an election, he/she would give government jobs to Democrats who had supported him/her. A person did not necessarily have to be well qualified for the position, so long as they supported the right person. This was beneficial to people in elections because it was a way of guaranteeing support through lofty promises, and it encouraged people to support a candidate in hopes of getting something in return. This spoils system (often called patronage) was used both by legitimate politicians like Andrew Jackson, to corrupt leaders of political machines like Boss Tweed.

Towards the end of the century some political parties sought reform, advocating for government jobs to be given based on merit, instead of the corrupt spoils system. Unfortunately, for many years it was difficult for politicians in support of the merit system to gain traction because so many powerful figures were benefitting from the spoils system. James Garfield, elected in 1880, was one of the first presidents to take an active stance against patronage. When a supporter named Charles Guiteau demanded a political appointment based on his support for Garfield, Garfield refused. Garfield was in favor of civil service reform, meaning that he wanted government jobs and positions to be given to people who deserved them. This stance, and particularly his denial of Guiteau, is what led to his assassination. It also sparked a greater desire for reform. The Pendleton Act was created in 1883, which created a commission responsible for evaluating candidates for civil service positions based on their merit.

**Steps Towards Reform**

In the case of patronage, it took a president being assassinated to initiate any kind of proactive reform movement. Fortunately, this was not the case for all issues of the time. There were a couple other ideas for reform that came about somewhat more peaceably and created a substantial change. One key example is the Interstate Commerce Act. Following the Civil War, the railroad industry had really taken off. Things like the Transcontinental Railroad had made magnificent steps in connecting different parts of the country. Unfortunately, these new railroad systems fell into the hands of business giants who attempted to create trusts and monopolies. This often hurt smaller farmers out west who were unable to afford the ridiculous rates being charged by railroad companies. The Interstate Commerce Act was an answer to appeal from groups like the Grange, which demanded regulation over railroads. This act allowed for the federal government to regulate railroad rates and business practices.

Another important step towards political reform was the introduction of the initiative, referendum, and recall. These were advocated for by a political group.
known as the progressives. The general idea behind the initiative, referendum, and recall was to give the general population some power over the legislature and state politicians. The initiative would allow citizens to submit a piece of legislation for a vote without it necessarily being approved by the legislature. This way, government officials could not limit what was being voted on, and the people could ensure that their voice was considered. A referendum allowed voters to directly vote on a law during general elections. The recall gave citizens the ability to remove an individual from public office through an election process. The main goal behind each of these ideas was to provide some accountability for government officials and limit their ability to act corruptly. These laws received varying levels of acceptance, but they represented a significant ideological shift towards political reform.

For the Test
Outline some of the key events that led to political reform. Explain why there may have been some pushback to these reform ideas.

Racist and Nativist Ideas

Although there were considerable steps towards reform in politics being taken, many aspects of American society remained as crooked as ever. Despite the resolution of the Civil War putting an end to the institution of slavery, it did very little to put an end to the racist attitudes held by many in the United States. African-Americans were still treated very poorly and were largely considered second-class citizens. People continued to go to great lengths to ensure that black citizens would not be allowed to vote, and Supreme Court cases like Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) established a legal precedent for the segregation that was already prominent in America. Further, African-Americans were not the only group to face harsh and unfair treatment. There was a very prominent anti-immigrant feeling held by many people, and extreme frustration over the amount of non-“natives” in the workplace. Consider this the beginning of the classic, “They’re taking all of our jobs” argument being used against immigrants. These feelings of frustration with immigrants were coupled with growing feelings of American “nativism,” which was essentially just the glorification of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants (WASP) in America.

Organized Racism

As mentioned, living in the South after the Civil War was a difficult task for African-Americans. They faced extreme racism, harsh treatment, and often had no choice but to take extremely low paying jobs doing the same kind of work they had been doing under slavery. The government disbanding slavery was not enough to protect their way of life. Discrimination and segregation were increasingly popular in the South. The Plessy v. Ferguson court case, which legally established segregation, only made this issue greater. This case simply
upheld and encouraged the Jim Crow laws that remained prevalent in America through the 20th century.

Many immigrant groups fared no better than African-Americans. One group that had a hard time in particular was Chinese immigrants. There were many feelings of anti-Chinese sentiment floating around the United States. Many felt that they were taking jobs from native-born Americans who deserved them, while others simply held bigoted racist views of them. These feelings led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers. This was a very harsh step against immigration, and only led to increased discrimination against Chinese-Americans. It was essentially government sanctioned racism.

**Nativism**

The organized racism was made possible and supported by the public because of intense feelings of “nativism.” At its core, nativism was a dislike of any group that was not white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. This meant that it was not just a hatred of African-Americans or Chinese immigrants, but also Irish Catholics and many more groups. The general feeling around nativism was that these people did not deserve to be in the United States and should not be taking jobs from people or having an influence on political events. These feelings were manifested in the American Protective Association. This organization was basically an anti-Catholic group aimed at limiting the influence of Catholic Americans on the generally Protestant nation. Specifically, they wanted to make sure that Catholics were not elected to government positions. These types of groups encouraged feelings of nativism and racism throughout America.

*For the Test*

Be ready to explain why there was so much acceptance of segregation in the South, and how government actions encouraged this segregation. Explain some reasons, outside of race, that may have contributed to anti-immigrant feelings.

**Gospel of Wealth**

One key theme of the Gilded Age was the growing disparity between the rich and the poor. By now you should have a good understanding of how big business models created extraordinary wealth for some, while others lived lives of extreme poverty. As the extreme differences between rich and poor became more apparent, wealthy Americans came under criticism. This was especially true as people became aware of the danger and power of trusts and monopolies, and as many people felt taken advantage of by industrial giants. As a result, successful businessmen had to justify their extreme wealth. They also felt the need to explain why it was not only necessary, but actually beneficial to the general public, for them to have so much wealth.
One specific leader in this justification of wealth was Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie was made extremely wealthy through the steel industry (he was responsible for the Bessemer process, which made steel production much more efficient.) He wrote an article titled, “The Gospel of Wealth.” In it, he justified his extreme wealth and why it was morally acceptable for him to have so much money. Carnegie was himself the leader of a monopolistic style of business, and he seemed to have no issue with that. Instead, he felt that people who found economic success had a responsibility to the general people. He referred to the wealthy as “trustees” of the people’s wealth. For him, that meant wealthy citizens needed to redistribute their wealth to those who were not so successful. Carnegie argued that wealthy businessmen had a responsibility to support charities with their donations and to be active in philanthropy. He also preached against extravagant spending or ridiculous lifestyles. Carnegie himself donated a large amount of money to numerous art projects and universities. Some may have criticized Carnegie for the fact that although he was generous with his wealth, he had accumulated his wealth through the means of a monopoly.

For the Test

Identify some of the factors that might have led to people coming up with ideas like “The Gospel of Wealth.” Be able to point out some shortcomings of Carnegie’s ideas.

Social Gospel

On the other side of society, while wealthy entrepreneurs considered what to do with the absurd amount of money they possessed, many family’s lives were consumed by a struggle for survival. This was especially apparent in cities, where thousands of people dealt with less than optimal living conditions. Many immigrants lived with multiple generations of their family in small, dirty housing areas known as “tenements.” Disease ran rampant throughout these tenements, and sanitation practices were nowhere near a suitable standard. Most people living in these kinds of areas were working extremely low paying jobs with little hopes of upward mobility. Cities were generally overcrowded due to the influx of people seeking industrial jobs, and there seemed to be no reasonable escape. As people like Carnegie put forward ideas like “The Gospel of Wealth”, many citizens started to consider methods to help alleviate these issues.

One leader in this was the author Jacob Riis. Riis is most well known for his book titled, How the Other Half Lives. In this book, he highlighted the plight of immigrants living in America. He went into very detailed descriptions of the horrific living conditions that immigrants were forced to put up with. His account of their situation was made more powerful by his inclusion of photographs documenting the living situations he was observing. His book emphasized how different these tenements were in comparison to the wealth and prosperity being
enjoyed by others in America. Riis’s book was monumental in that it led to the end of tenement houses and sparked the need for reform.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a trend known as the Social Gospel came to the forefront of American city life. This was a movement within the Protestant faith, although it did not always have religious themes attached to it. The Social Gospel is most closely associated with the Progressive Era of the early 20th century, but it certainly had roots during the Gilded Age. Women, who had recently gained a newfound purpose in reform movements, often led early movements of the social gospel. At its core, the goal of the social gospel was to apply Christian principles and ethics to daily American life. This meant that people wanted to clean up American society by eradicating things like frequent alcohol and tobacco use. Other people used the social gospel as motivation to help poor families. This can be seen in action through the creation of settlement houses, which offered free services like day care or health care to people living in poor areas. Essentially, advocates of the social gospel wanted to use parts of the Christian faith to improve people’s lives.

For the Test

Explain the significance of people like Jacob Riis and his commentary on Gilded Age life. Identify some of the key factors that may have contributed to the social gospel.

Challenging Their Place

It has been made clear that many people in America during the late 19th century were dealing with less than ideal treatment and unfavorable social situations. White, American pride was running high, racism was prevalent, and nativism reigned supreme. In addition, women continued to struggle to find their place in society, and men often dominated the social sphere. However, it is necessary to understand that these groups did not just sit idly by while they were oppressed and mistreated. There were, in fact, a number of groups and individuals that challenged the status quo and sought equality and justice.

One key example of this was Booker T. Washington. Washington believed that Americans needed to utilize African-Americans as a source of labor, since they were already here and had proven their work ethic (as opposed to immigrants.) Washington ultimately wanted equality, but felt that it was necessary for African-Americans to prove their economic value. He went on to establish the Tuskegee Institute, which was aimed at providing job-training skills to help African-Americans gain work positions. He was certainly a historic leader, but his ideas were often criticized for being too accommodating to the white agenda. Other leaders, like Ida B. Wells were more drastic in their call for equality. She was not only an African-American civil rights activist, but also a women’s suffrage activist. She revealed the horrific details of lynchings, and encouraged African-
Americans to actively protest stores and restaurants owned by white people. She was also very active in her support of women’s suffrage. These two figures are just two examples of citizens fighting against the status quo and seeking tangible change, although they did this through two very different methods.

For the Test

Be able to identify some key leaders of minority groups and steps they took to make a change.

The Wrap Up

The last half of the 19th century, the Gilded Age, represented a time of considerable change. New styles of business had developed, and immense amounts of wealth were earned. It was a polarizing time, as America went through a period of rebuilding and redefining American society following the Civil War. With all of the changes that occurred, there were quite a few key issues to be dealt with. A lot of these issues, while rooted in business and politics, were heavily cultural and social issues. As political corruption was exposed, groups and individuals looked for different ways of creating reform. Although many forward steps were taking to clean up political issues, racism and nativist ideas continued to run wild, making life extremely difficult for certain ethnic groups. One significant development during this time was the formulation of new ideologies geared towards solving problems and answering questions of wealth, race, poverty, and social life. Wealthy business leaders bought into ideas like “The Gospel of Wealth,” while average American citizens adopted ideas like the social gospel. In addition, certain minority leaders looked to improve the status of their respective groups.

The cultural and intellectual changes during this time period are historically significant for the way they attempted to address problems brought on by mass industrialization, and for the way they set the stage in America for the Progressive Era. Many ideas from the Progressive Era, in fact, were rooted in this time period. Understanding the factors surrounding these ideas will contribute to your understanding of ideas featured in the next time period.
Period 6 (1865-1898): Rise of Big Business and Resulting Transformations

General Overview

The Period after the Civil War was a time of extreme economic growth, although only certain people reaped the benefits of it. The Civil War had put a pause on industrial advances, while it had also revealed some economic weaknesses and some areas for further development. In the years following the war, American businesses got right into the trend of expansion and grew into industrial giants and business monopolies. Meanwhile, some Americans dealt with poverty, overpopulation, and unfair labor practices. The rise of big business presented a number of issues for America to deal with, and many of these issues arose during this time period.

In this AP U.S. History guide, we will cover some of the events and ideas noted in Key Concept 6.1 on the official AP U.S. History Course Description. The course description can be used along with the guide to make sure you are staying on track with your studies. If you really want to take your studying to the next level, you can use some of these practice questions to go along with the guide.

Transportation and Communication Systems

During the last portion of the 19th century, the American economy experienced expansive market, technological, and communications growth. This sparked what would come to be known as the Gilded Age. The Gilded Age was characterized by a time of increased consumerism and extravagance. Marketing became a valuable part of business, and businesses developed different strategies for success, such as consolidation. All of this was made possible by remarkable advances in communication, developments of new technologies, and political actions that encouraged economic growth.

Pacific Railway Act

The Pacific Railway Act was put into place on July 1, 1862. This act set aside government funds to be used on developing a transcontinental railroad that would traverse across the entire United States. This was incredibly significant in that it was a federal subsidy being used to promote business and industry growth. Besides that political significance, there were of course many significant
economic effects as well. This particular act was not just limited to establishing and expanding railroad lines, but also included the creation of numerous public lands.

What about the actual railroad? The Pacific Railway Act actually refers to a number of successive amending acts that either removed portions from earlier versions or expanded on some of the ideas expressed. The original act started the movement of the U.S. government investing in the creation of a railroad that would reach from coast to coast. This was a huge endeavor, and a monumental one. It was a time of unity and excitement. It was certainly something that America needed to reconnect the nation in the wake of the incredibly divisive Civil War. Through the Pacific Railway Act, the government hired a couple of railroad companies to work on the massive undertaking, known as the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroad companies. Its actual construction was started in 1866.

The transcontinental railroad was a huge undertaking that spanned many years following the Civil War. It made huge strides in connecting America and created a truly transcontinental market and system of communication. Also, it was a big step for America to start such an endeavor, as it essentially meant they were making claims on public land use across the entire country; even at the expense of the people living on or near the lands. The actual railroad, and the construction of the railroad, had a significant impact on Period 6.

For the Test

Understand some of the goals of the Pacific Railway Act. Be able to explain some of the implications of the government making such an action.

Controlling Foreign Markets

As businesses continued to develop within the United States, policymakers and economic leaders began to seek markets outside of the United States. Earlier in the 19th century, the United States had been heavily focused on a solely American economic system that minimized the use of foreign economies. Now, people were looking to areas outside of the United States as untapped pieces of land that would open up many doors for economic growth and prosperity. This led to a unique integration of American free-market, capitalistic style economics with delicate foreign affair situations. This was seen through the ideas of Alfred T. Mahan, interactions with Latin American and Asian countries and the Teller Amendment.

Foreign Power

The early 19th century gave rise to foreign policy’s like Theodore Roosevelt’s “speak softly and carry a big stick” philosophy and the Truman Doctrine. These
ideas emphasized America’s belief in its own power as a nation, and their commitment to maintain control of areas that they saw as being economically important. During the Civil War, American interests turned inwards as the government struggled with how to run a nation fighting against itself. As the details of the Civil War settled in, and the issue of slavery returned to the background, United States foreign affairs again rose to the foreground. Many politicians and business people were optimistic about America’s potential as an international power. They also saw the military as being a key part of that power.

One of the key figures in foreign relations at this time was Alfred T. Mahan. Mahan was the admiral of the United States Navy. He adamantly believed that the most important part of a nation’s success was to have a strong military. He even wrote a book expressing this belief, titled *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*. In this he outlined the influence of naval power on numerous recent conflicts in history. He especially emphasized the events of the British and French conflict in the early 1800s, in which Great Britain was ultimately successful because of their powerful naval forces. His ideas also somewhat extended Manifest Destiny to include overseas imperialism. The beliefs of Mahan were widely influential and had international effects. The popularity of his ideas eventually started a race for sea power among international powers like Germany, France, Great Britain, and of course, the United States.

**The Teller Amendment**

Cuba was a highly sought after piece of land for America during the 19th century, and was often a key focus for their imperialist efforts. When Cuba sought independence from Spain, the United States was quick to come to the aid of Cuba. Spain wanted desperately to maintain their control over Cuba, especially considering the fact that they had recently lost control of many of their other colonies. The conflict between Cuba and Spain was very violent and resulted in many deaths, particularly when Spain placed Cubans in concentration camps. United States President William McKinley hoped to put an end to this conflict by declaring war on Spain if they did not get out of Cuba. Spain did not back down and the Spanish-American War ensued. The *Teller Amendment* emerged out of McKinley’s desire to go to war against Spain. Some politicians and business leaders feared that McKinley would annex Cuba in the wake of the Spanish-American war. This was especially troublesome to people invested in the sugar business, as they did not want Cuba to be a competitor for domestic business. The Teller Amendment appeased these fears by guaranteeing that the United States would not try to annex Cuba. After Spain lost control of Cuba, the U.S. did occupy Cuba, but did not try to annex it.

*For the Test*
Be able to state some specific examples of how the United States attempted to expand their foreign markets. Explain some implications of the Teller Amendment.

**Trusts and Monopolies**

One major theme for this time period was the growing disparities between the rich and the poor. The American economy was still reaping the benefits of the Industrial Revolution and Imperialism, and businesses were booming. The differences between rich and poor were largely a result of the growth of business giants who seemed to dominate the market. Just as the Industrial Revolution had optimized the manufacturing process for many different goods and commodities, businessmen in the Gilded Age optimized the way that large-scale business was done. And in the same way that the Industrial Revolution made many artisan positions obsolete, this time period gave way to huge business that almost eradicated the many smaller businesses beneath them. This process was sparked by the creation of trusts and monopolies. These trusts and monopolies placed an incredibly large amount of wealth in the hands of only a few people. Their apparently unfair wealth was justified through ideas such as “Social Darwinism”. The growth of these business giants led people to reconsider the role of business in society and stretched capitalistic ideas. As an APUSH student, you’ll need to know a couple examples of these trusts and monopolies, as well as the general idea of social Darwinism.

**Rockefeller and Morgan**

There are two key examples that best exemplify the model for giant businesses that emerged during this time period. The first is John D. Rockefeller, and the second is J.P. Morgan. Rockefeller established himself as a business leader through his involvement in the oil business. His company, known as the Standard Oil Company, grew quickly and rapidly. This was partly due to the fact that he got into the oil business very soon after it had been found in the United States. It did not take long for Standard Oil to have a pretty dominant control over the oil market. In fact, at one point he was producing over 90% of the nation’s oil. He was able to do this through a tactic known as horizontal integration. Basically, he made such good deals with people involved in the oil production and distribution process that competitors could not compete. The other example, J.P. Morgan, found his wealth through various means, is most well known for his active role in the steel business. First, he merged two different companies to create General Electric, which proved to be a monumental business move. He also developed a steel company that he would go on to combine with the famous Carnegie Steel Company, among others, to create the United States Steel Corporation. He was also heavily involved in the railroad industry, and dominated the market.

These two examples were very successful in their acquisition of wealth and power. However, they were often criticized for their use of monopolies. Although
monopolies were essentially made illegal in the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, they still occurred. People like Rockefeller and Morgan were able to have so much money and power that they could either control the production process through vertical integration of control the markets through horizontal integration. This made it extremely difficult for smaller businesses to compete, and it led to growing frustration with the economic system in America that had allowed such big businesses to develop.

Social Darwinism

As some people started to grow frustrated with the American economy and the drastic wealth that some businessmen were able to acquire, others started to defend the current system through ideas like social Darwinism. The original idea of Darwinism, which had developed only a few years after the Civil War, was centered on the “survival of the fittest” idea. Well around the end of the 19th century, the idea was applied to economic and social situations. The theory essentially believed that the “strong” would be wealthy and continue to be wealthy, while the “weak” would be poor and continue to be poor. Proponents of this idea often advocated for an extremely laissez faire, hands free, approach to government, where social Darwinism could simply take its natural course. This idea was generally embraced by people of wealth, who saw it as validation that they deserved to be wealthy.

For the Test

Give some specific examples of the development of trusts and monopolies in America. Have an understanding of social Darwinism and how it might have supported those who held a lot of economic power.

“Conspicuous Consumption”

As mentioned earlier, a defining aspect of the Gilded Age was the growing gap between the rich and the poor. As the poor struggled to have enough money just to survive, people of significant wealth lived lives of extravagant luxury. Money was more readily available and there were a greater variety of things for people to spend that money on. This not only gave rise to an upper class, but also to what would be known as a “leisure class.” This leisure class was made up of people who had the money to buy things that were of absolutely no use besides leisure. For many years up until this point, many upper class families still only had enough to provide the basic needs for their family. Now, as money moved into cities and cities grew, an entirely new segment of the market and society emerged. In fact, it was during this era that F. Scott Fitzgerald’s “The Great Gatsby” took place, and the lavish lifestyle of Jay Gatsby is an example of the wealth and extravagance experienced by some during the Gilded Age.
At the same time, there was a section of society experiencing a far less prosperous time period. Unfortunately, it appeared that in order for some to be wealthy and successful, others had to be poor and unsuccessful. Not only were the rich getting richer and living a life that was very well off, but the poor were also getting poorer and living a tough life. Factory and industrial jobs in cities were plentiful, but they often did not pay very much and were just as often given to foreign workers who were willing to work for less or under worse conditions. The growth of industry and big business had caused many thousands of American citizens to move from rural areas to urban areas, where the promise of work and success awaited them. Unfortunately, these cities were often unable to support the rapid growth they were experiencing. Infrastructures struggled to keep up with the demands of a growing population, and living conditions often suffered as a result. Many people had to deal with less than desirable living conditions that were often not entirely safe.

The different lifestyles associated with these people’s varying levels of income created an apparent societal divide in cities. There was a very obvious difference in the lifestyles of families that were very well off and families that were struggling just to get by. They had different styles of dress, different preferences for activities, and different attitudes about life. They developed unique cultures and subcultures within their economic and social class that dictated a large part of their life. Because there was such a divide between the rich businessmen and the poor people who were often keeping these businesses alive, lower class citizens soon grew frustrated by the dominance of big businesses and their ability to control the markets.

For the Test

Understand the social implications of a developing upper class. Understand some of the causes and effects for the divide between rich and poor.

Expanding Workforce

The effects of industrialization on America in the 19th century simply cannot be overstated. These effects were numerous and far reaching. One significant way that they shaped America was through the expanding workforce seen in the United States. In the earlier 19th century, the United States had received an extraordinary amount of immigrants from various countries, most moving to cities, and all looking for work of some kind. On top of the influx of foreign immigrants moving into cities, many American born families were also moving to cities. Industrial work offered employment to large numbers of people; so industrialized and urbanized cities seemed like a hotspot for work.

As a result, the industrial workforce became much more diverse than it had been for many years. Typically, adult men had done a majority of the work for families while women cared for the families from home. This status quo for labor was
consistently broken during this time period. There were, of course, still very skill specific jobs in the law, health, and education professions that required certain knowledge or ability that only some people possessed. White-collar work was indeed still available. However, skilled artisan and craftsmen work was not as readily available. Jobs that previously would have required a highly trained, knowledgeable individual to perform them or to create a certain item, could now be accomplished quickly and efficiently using assembly line systems. The separation of labor into small, unskilled positions, created a number of available jobs for unskilled laborers. This let many more people enter the workforce than before hand. In addition, America was home to plenty of immigrants looking for work, as well as recently freed African-Americans who needed jobs. The industrial expansion and development that occurred in the years following the Civil War helped to provide these jobs.

Not only were there more jobs available, but also the types of people who could work them was increased. Since most positions were what we would call “unskilled labor” it meant that almost anybody could do them. So whether you were a small child, a woman, a foreign immigrant, or a newly freed slave, there were numerous positions available to you. Since there was such a big group of people willing to do these jobs, business owners could offer ludicrously low wages and find people willing to take them. Not only were the wages often very low, but the working conditions were also very harsh. People worked long hours in unhealthy conditions and received little compensation. Children became a growing source of labor since they were small and could work well with lots of machinery and were readily available. Many children did not receive a proper education because they entered into the workforce at such a young age. Child labor developed during this time period, and would be an issue on the front end of many reform movements to come.

For the Test

Explain some of the key factors that led to the increasingly diverse workforce. Understand how and why child labor could have developed and why it might be a problem.

Labor Unions

In the late 19th century, big businesses were prospering and monopolies were developing left and right. The industrial revolution’s attitude of creating as much product as possible for as little money possible had made its way to the business market. Large businesses, with the hopes of controlling markets and being a dominant economic force, looked to minimize costs and maximize their income. They were often willing to do many shady, if not illegal, things to accomplish this. One easy way to accomplish this was by cutting costs in the production process. One of the most expensive parts of the production process was paying the laborers necessary to create the goods. However, there was a surplus of
workers, which gave businesses the power to offer low wages and create less than standard working conditions. Long story short, workers were being taken advantage of, and they needed a way to stand up to big businesses.

**Knights of Labor**

As laborers realized they were being taken advantage of, they started to form organizations to stand up to the businesses taking advantage of them. As a result, labor unions developed. One of the first attempts at a labor union was the Knights of Labor, an offshoot of the National Labor Union. The Knights of Labor was a group organized by Terrence V. Powderly with the purpose of creating an organization that could demand rights for workers. This at first took the shape of a fraternal organization of workers, but soon developed into an actual labor dedicated to making strides forward for workers. This was often realized through the implementation of strikes and protests. As far as ideology goes, the group ultimately wanted fair wages, an 8-hour workday, and an end to child labor. The group allowed most people to be part of the union, but excluded bankers, doctors, stockholders, and lawyers, who they did not deem to be valuable parts of the workforce. Unfortunately, the Knights began to decline as some of their strikes and protests resulting in riots seemed to spoil their name, and they were especially hurt by the economic depression in 1893.

**American Federation of Labor**

The American Federation of Labor was actually an organization of different labor unions. It was created in the late 19th century by Samuel Gompers, who was the leader of a cigar makers union. It was different from the Knights of Labor in a few key ways. First, it did not allow individual members to join. To be considered part of the American Federation of Labor you had to already be a part of an existing trade union, and that trade union had to be part of the AFL. Also, the AFL was only focused on protecting the interests of trade workers; so unskilled laborers were not admitted into the union. They also did not allow unions that allowed women or African-American workers, so it was more exclusive than the Knights of Labor. Their demands included a desire for a shorter workday, better pay, and better working conditions. It was ultimately more successful than the Knights of Labor and lasted up until the mid 20th century, when it merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

*For the Test*

Be ready to explain why labor unions became necessary. Understand some of the limitations or shortcomings of various labor unions.
The New South

The South, for many years, had had a difficult time keeping their economy afloat amidst a rapidly changing American market. Industry and foreign goods seemed to make things difficult for them to compete. Also, many people felt that the South’s defeat in the Civil War was largely a result of their dependence on cotton. Some started to believe that if their economy was only focused on developing cotton, than they would be in a significant amount of trouble if the land became unsuitable for cotton production. Basically, their strength created a weakness. As a result, many southern business leaders wanted to diversify the economy. The expanded market that they pictured, including the addition of more crops and a greater focus on industry, was known as a “New South” economy. In agriculture, farmers in the south started to re-emphasize tobacco production, while they also capitalized on the availability of rice and sugar in Louisiana. Of course, they continued to rely on cotton as their primary crop and saw an increased demand during this time period. For industry, the south started to embrace the use of hydroelectric energy as a way of promoting industrial growth. Despite the many changes the southern economy had undergone, it ultimately remained loyal to cotton farming and it remained a region dominated by agrarian societies. This was especially true considering that many former slaves simply found low paying jobs working on many of the same farms that used to serve as plantations.

For the Test

Understand why some people in the South thought it was necessary to recharge the southern economy with different crops. Explain some shortcomings of the “New South.”

Extending Control Over Resources

For most of the 19th century, the United States had viewed land and resources simply for their economic values. America was caught up in an imperialist agenda that emphasized growth and consumption. Industrialism had taken hold in the American economy, and business leaders were consistently looking for more areas to which they could expand their markets. This was seen clearly in the idea of manifest destiny in which Americans wanted to expand western boundaries even further west. However, as the 19th century continued on, people started to rethink how land and resources should be used. More than that, they started to question how they should be managed, and by whom.

Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior was created in 1849. Many 19th century government actions were focused on either business issues or foreign affairs. The Department of the Interior, on the other hand, was created to focus strictly on
domestic affairs. Their original jurisdiction was pretty wide, concerning issues ranging from land management to Native American issues. The need for it was determined by the seeming randomness of some federal offices that didn’t really have a department to which they directly lined up. Therefore, the Department of the Interior was established to encompass some of these federal agencies. Its main focus, however, was land management. The Department of the Interior is the head department over such organizations as the National Parks Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The department’s creation was controversial because it represented federal control over another aspect of American life.

**Sierra Club, U.S. Fish Commission, and Land Management**

After the Department of the Interior was created, a number of smaller, specific organizations were created that had interests in protecting America’s land and resources. One example was the U.S. Fish Commission. This was formed in 1871, outside of the Department of the Interior. Its main goal was to determine the reasons for the apparent decrease in number of fish and marine life in coastal and inland areas, and to provide solutions to help the issue. Basically the organization would investigate patterns and habits of commercial fish, and try to fix or remedy anything that may be leading to a decline in these fish. The agency later became part of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish Commission was important because it represented early government action involving environmental issues. Outside of government influence, many activists and individual citizens had begun to take a special interest in preserving aspects of the environment. One example is the Sierra Club, established in 1892 by naturalist John Muir. The Sierra Club was a group of people committed to protecting natural and wilderness areas in America, particularly in the west.

The development of these agencies, departments, and organizations was a controversial issue for many Americans. Businessmen hoped to capitalize on any and all available resources. Government management of American resources made it less likely that they would have access to these resources (such as timber). Also, people began protecting areas of land for their inherent aesthetic or recreational value, not just for their economic value. This was not pleasing to the business and industrial giants of the time, and marked a monumental shift in American thought.

*For the Test*

Identify some key examples of government control of resources. Understand why this government control might have been frustrating for some.

**Problems of Farmers**

The Industrial Revolution had caused the big business attitude of industry to make its way into many other aspects of society. Big business was the prominent
trend and people looked to incorporate big business ideas into all aspects of business, including agriculture. However, small agrarian communities still mostly dominated agriculture. These small agrarian communities did not wish to give up control to big businesses or corporations. To resist the influence of big corporations, they had to organize together to maintain a standard for agricultural practices and fair prices. Farmers were often taken advantage of by big industries that paid less than fair wages for their product.

One such organization was the “National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry,” or just “the grange” for short. The grange was essentially a union for farmers. It established a standard of farming that was to be upheld by all farmers who joined the organization, which would hopefully help limit any unfair competition. The Grange gained a lot of momentum as people involved in the farm industry became weary of industrial influence. It even grew to possess some political influence and made efforts at enacting laws and reforms to alleviate the problems that farmers were facing. The Grange was ultimately unsuccessful, however, in that it did not address the issue of overproduction of produce, which was one of the primary factors leading to the inflated market and low prices.

For the Test

Be able to explain how the rise of big businesses might have been negative for farmers, and identify examples of actions taken to deal with these problems.

**Populism**

As mentioned above, the industrial influence on agriculture had made things very difficult for individual farmers to survive. They struggled to compete with huge, industrial style farms out west. Many private banks even came to be owned by banks. Also, these small farms were heavily dependent on railroads. Unfortunately, small farms could rarely afford the shipping costs associated with using railroads. All of these factors made it very difficult for small farms to be successful. Farmers grew weary and restless as organizations like the Grange failed to make a lasting difference, and they were looking for an alternative solution.

That solution presented itself in the form of populism. Essentially, populism was a political movement and party largely fueled by farmers. It is commonly associated with the catchphrase that farmers needed to “raise less corn and more hell.” As farmers across the country faced difficult conditions and struggled to get by, they were fairly easily united. The political power of the populist movement, although short lived, was timely and surprisingly influential. Within just a few short years, the Populist Party was able to elect a number of senators to congress and even became a recognizable factor in the 1892 elections. Overall, the Populist Party was concerned with railroad use, land management, and money. However, their emphasis soon became the desire for a currency based more on silver, which
they thought would solve many of their issues. This is the issue that populism is most closely associated with, and it is the issue that populism ultimately died with. The power of the Populists was short lived and only made a temporary impact. They were soon swallowed up by the Democratic party, who shared their views on the issue of silver.

For the Test

Describe the factors that led to the development of the Populist Party. Explain some of the key issues that the Populist Party was concerned with.

The Wrap Up

The second half of the 19th century was a very influential time for American businesses and society. America’s recovery from the Civil War was expedited by the growth of big businesses that often took the shape of trusts and monopolies. The government had to figure out how to deal with rapidly growing business structures in the face of increasing poverty and a booming population. The extravagant spending of many Americans during this time will serve as an interesting contrast to the tough times to be seen in the early 20th century. This so called “Gilded Age” was a very unique time in America as the nation determined how businesses should be ran, how land should be used, and how to maintain a fair and equitable way of life for all types of people.
Period 7 (1890-1945): Large-Scale Industrialization, Economic Uncertainty, and Social Changes

General Overview

Beginning in the 1870s and stretching to 1945 was a period of uncertainty for the United States. Sweeping changes in industry affected the economy and in turn affected the society to its most fundamental level. The institution of slavery was abolished in America after the Civil War and this period saw a portion of the population suddenly free to move around as they pleased. During this time technology advanced and we began to see the first instances of mechanization and the assembly line. Men like Henry Ford and Andrew Carnegie built business empires on this method of production and were enriched as a result. Yet as time went on it became clear that all was not well in the United States. The average American found himself competing with an influx of immigrants from central and southern Europe and on top of this America’s farmland was exhausted after hundreds of years of use resulting in the Dust Bowl. At the same time social challenges led to explosive change in America. A new force was sweeping America, calling all laborers across skillsets to join and seize control of the production, this was unionism. Simultaneously women decided that they would no longer be disenfranchised, under the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution they should be granted the right to vote as well. Times were changing and if the United States was going to survive it would need to change with them.

To keep track of your studies and to give you an idea of where you are in US history this particular guide corresponds to Section 7 of the AP US Course and Exam Description. If you want to test the knowledge you’ve gained after your review make sure to check out these practice questions to get you ready for the AP US History Exam.

Gilded Age

This era in the history of the United States got its name from Mark Twain’s novel The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today. It began in 1870 and ended around the beginning of the 20th century. Mark Twain gave it the name the Gilded Age because the era had a thin veneer of social progress and economic restoration after the Civil War, but in reality the period was wracked by social problems that were just beginning to be identified but in reality were simply being swept under
the rug by the federal government. Immigration was a constant specter over the average American as Europeans poured into the country and competed with them for jobs. At the same time the benefits of the economic growth were truly only for a select group of the American population. They formed monopolies and trusts that kept the wealth from the rest of America.

**The New Immigrant**

The United States’ population steadily grew from its birth to the Civil War, but beginning with the Gilded Age American population flourished. This was due to a steady stream of immigrants coming from southern Europe and China. Much like how the Irish were treated in the 1840s the United States believed that this constant, unyielding flow of immigrants would destroy the nation and American culture through its corrupting influence. Most immigrants arrived in major cities and tended to stay there and this lead to a chain reaction where newer immigrants of the same background would find this preexisting support group in cities and move there and set up their new homes. This resulted in little “cities” within cities where certain areas of a metropolis would have high concentrations of a certain ethnic background. In some sense Americans were right because these little “cities” grew to have enormous political sway as more immigrants. A prime example of this was New York City’s Tammany Hall. Run by Boss Tweed, Tammany Hall essentially ran New York City. He consolidated the sway of immigrant influence through cronyism; he would help new immigrants find jobs, support immigrant families, or defend them in court and in exchange he would ask for their votes. Boss Tweed’s wily schemes lead to Tammany Hall’s control of many of New York City’s branches of government, to the point where they were basically invincible and untouchable.

**Monopolies and Trustbusters**

Another major problem of the Gilded Age was the rise of monopolies. In reality, there are two types of monopolies, one made through vertical integration and other through horizontal integration. Vertical integration was pioneered by Andrew Carnegie where the manufacture of a product was controlled beginning from the harvest of raw materials up to the actual vending of a final product. This allowed for quality control from the beginning of a process to the end and created an environment where the object in question could be produced quickly and efficiently; in Andrew Carnegie’s case he found his wealth in steel. The monopoly is created because no other company can compete with the quality. Horizontal integration involves the purchase of a competitors means of production in order to eliminate competition and thus form the monopoly. John D. Rockefeller found his fortune through horizontal integration of oil companies. Monopolies would become huge players not only in American economics but in the federal government as well. It is because of their sway that President Theodore Roosevelt sought to curb their strength. Despite the influence of monopolies in federal government, and especially on Congress President Roosevelt decided to fight for
the consumer. In pursuit of his “Square Deal” President Roosevelt prevented J.P. Morgan from monopolizing railways. He also pressured Congress to begin taking action as well and in response they created the Department of Commerce and Labor, which would later be split into two different departments. These departments would help President Roosevelt by making sure that companies carried out their business fairly and that the consumer did not suffer at the hands of monopolies. It was in giving the average American a “square deal” that big businesses gave President Roosevelt the name “trust buster”.

For the Test

The AP US History exam may ask you to classify how exactly President Theodore Roosevelt became known as the “trust buster”. You may also be asked to list the ways in which the new tide of immigration changed the face of society and politics in the United States.

Patent Medicine

At this time period there was no real protection for the average American consumer. The average American had no idea what went into their food or medicine. Also many snake oil salesmen were able to profit because of this ignorance. This problem was further exacerbated by the fact that the federal government chose to do nothing. Medicine and food went unregulated until the people began to find out what exactly went into them. They began to exert pressure on the government to regulate how food was prepared and medicine manufactured because of scathing exposés by the media and journalism. It was through the combined efforts of the muckrakers and President Roosevelt that the Progressive movement was able to effect changes that would benefit the American people. President Roosevelt and his Square Deal only further helped his popularity with the average American and as a result he began to be seen as a champion of the common man.

Sinclair’s Jungle

One of the many novels to come out of this period was The Jungle by Upton Sinclair. The novel followed and described the Chicago meatpacking industry. It illustrated how meat was butchered, prepared, and sold for consumption by the American populace. Sinclair originally meant for the novel to show the American population how the new waves of immigrants were being treated like slaves, but it produced a different effect. Instead the American people focused on the disturbing and disgusting practices by the Chicago meatpacking industry. When President Roosevelt heard of these practices he was shocked but didn’t quite believe it; he sent out an investigative committee to see if Sinclair’s writing was true or merely sensationalism. When he discovered was horrendous, and Sinclair was right. President Roosevelt pressed Congress to handle this situation and so they passed the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act of
These two pieces of legislation made it compulsory for any companies manufacturing a product for consumption to list the ingredients.

For the Test

You may need to explain how muckrakers were able to lead the federal government to implement policies that lead to social change. Also you may need to connect these policies to President Roosevelt’s Square Deal.

Plains Trouble

The Gilded Age saw a heavy reliance on the gold standard for the American Dollar. In fact the American dollar was so reliant on gold that there was a whole movement in order to shift the reliance to some other collateral that was less turbulent then gold. Also during this period the American Plains were beginning to suffer from overuse. American farms that so readily provided food for the United States had drained and depleted the soil resulting in the catastrophe known as the Dust Bowl. Many Americans were displaced either because of the severity of dust storms or because they were no longer able to grow crops as a livelihood.

William Jennings Bryan’s Cross of Gold

In 1896 the presidential race’s biggest split was along the line of money. Money was backed by gold, but it was incredibly volatile to have money guaranteed by a metal anyone could find. At the time Republicans continued to support the gold standard, but a new party had risen in opposition: the Populist Party. The Populist Party was mainly comprised of farmers from the American Plains and Midwest. They were tired of being at the mercy of big corporations and banks that controlled their land through mortgages and loans with unreasonable interest rates. These Populists took to politics and began a campaign against the corporations as they felt that the federal government, nor the Republicans or Democrats represented them fairly. Populists believed that switching from the gold standard to silver would help farmers and the average American alike by increasing the money supply that could be printed because at the time silver was more prevalent than gold. Among the Populists rose William Jennings Bryan, a congressman from Nebraska. Williams Jennings Bryan was an incredibly eloquent speaker and he fought for the American farmer, truly believing that silver was the best way to support the American economy. His greatest work culminated in his “Cross of Gold” speech where he railed against the gold standard and supported the American farmer.

Dust Bowl Depletion

Later on in this period the United States faced a terrible ecological disaster. During the 1930s, also called the Dirty Thirties, the United States faced the Dust
Bowl. For too long the United States had been planting too much and harvesting too quickly in order to feed a growing nation but also in order to raise a quick profit overseas. Before long the United States' Midwest and American Plains' soil were both depleted. The nutrients from the soil had been sapped and the soil was left sandy and infertile. Winds tore through the dry soil and stirred up great dust clouds that eroded the ground and carried the soil all through the nation. The damage from this calamity was incalculable. The dust storms would render large swathes of land uninhabitable as the dust would cover everything or they would simply tear through a house and destroy it completely. Also farmers were unable to provide for themselves since their crops were ruined. Then because they could not turn a profit banks foreclosed on their farms and they were turned out from their homes. Massive migrations took place as farmers traveled across the United States in search of a way to feed themselves and their families.

For the Test

The AP US History exam may ask you to outline challenges that faced the average American farmer, both in politics and in their livelihoods, and the actions they took to protect themselves.

Industrial Challenges

An ailing United States found itself in want of solutions and certain ideas began to spread among the working class. Trade unions seemed to be the relief that the working class was looking for at the time. The biggest trade union of them all was the IWW or Industrial Workers of the World. Members of the IWW were known as Wobblies. The IWW was radical in that it called for unskilled laborers and skilled laborers to unite in order to gain massive bargaining rights with companies and corporations. By combining the political sway of both types of workers they hoped to supplant current model of production, where the worker simply took a small cut of their work compared to the share of the company overall. Their work rippled across the United States and began to affect other groups as well. Women saw the effect that the IWW had when they combined their efforts and began looking for ways to gain equality with men. The suffragette became ubiquitous during this time as more and more women began to take on the fight that they might be able to vote. Women began protesting against President Wilson for he had sent the American armed forces to fight for democracy and yet a large portion of the American could not participate in their own democracy simply because of their gender. Soon after the suffragettes won their fight and the Nineteenth Amendment was passed on 1919 that ruled not allowing women to vote was unconstitutional.

For the Test
Challenges in the American economy lead to issues that would affect society as well. You may need to identify what these underlying social ailments were for the AP US History Exam.

**Great Depression**

One of the darkest times in American history the Great Depression seized the American economy in a stranglehold that would not end for almost a decade. The compounded effects of the Dust Bowl and a weakening dollar lead many people to believe that the United States was no longer capable of guaranteeing the worth of their currency. This began with investors selling all their stock for money in order to get their optimal value. This cascaded and resulted in more people selling their stock and withdrawing their money from banks. As more and more people withdrew their money from banks the banks were not able to keep up and soon there was not enough cash left in these banks for people. People lost all their savings overnight and many businesses were left bankrupt. The American economy had fallen and there seemed to be no end in sight. Beginning with President Hoover, many politicians tried to pull the economy back to its former powerhouse status however it wasn’t till President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal that Americans began to feel as if there was a light at the end of the tunnel. President Franklin Roosevelt created such departments like the CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps, which hired young men from 17-23 to work on public works projects such as building tails for a small income that they could use to supplement their families’ wages. This worked in tandem with the WPA or the Works Progress Administration. The federal government paid many unemployed people to construct public buildings, roads, and work on literacy projects.

*For the Test*

The Great Depression was gloomy time for the United States; it has affected our history in more ways than one and contributed to a whole generation’s fear of prolonged poverty and privation. You may be asked to write an essay on its causes and how the actions taken and policies passed by the federal government helped to ease the United States out of the worst economic slump in its history.

**The Wrap Up**

Unparalleled development was an ubiquitous feature of this period of the United States’ history. We had just emerged from the American Civil War, slavery was abolished and the union was preserved. Industrialization fever seized the United States and we began to rise as an economic power in our own right. Yet all was not as good as it seemed. The Gilded Age gained its name for the façade of progress that hid an underbelly of backwards thinking and oppression. Europeans trapped in their traditional societies with little room for upward social mobility and zero representation in their government saw the United States as a
promised land of opportunity where they could settle their families and prosper. Yet this idealism was met with hateful xenophobia and racism. Americans saw this new wave of Europeans as a threat to American culture and society and their mere presence in the United States would taint it. On top of this corporations began to consolidate and power shifted from the American people to the American company. Shady business practices and unfair policies passed in Congress dealt the average American a poor hand. Monopolies were formed and trusts built in order to keep profit margins high and the average American citizen poor. Then the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression seized the United States. Farmers were forced from their homes and an exodus took place with families that had been foreclosed on traveling wherever they could find food to feed themselves. However in these bleak times American individualism and integrity stood strong and certain key figures refused to take any of this lying down. Beginning with President Theodore Roosevelt he began dismantling the influence of these power-hungry corporations. He fought for consumer rights and the common American by safeguarding food and medicine from poor industry practices. Disenfranchised women, seeing the triumph of the American Civil War, and seeing their opportunity after World War I began to fight against their marginalization. The U.S Constitution and Declaration of Independence guaranteed their rights and they would not be deprived of them any longer. Finally President Franklin Roosevelt took on the burden of the Great Depression. He saw how America suffered during that time and did his best to relieve his troubled nation. It was only with the advent of war in Europe that America began to recover once more.
Period 7 (1890-1945): Mass Culture and Cultural Conflicts

General Overview

From 1890 to 1945 the United States entered the world ready to shake things up. We had achieved our goal of Manifest Destiny in 1912 when New Mexico and Arizona applied for statehood simultaneously and were accepted into the union. At the same time events were beginning to shape a new America at home as well. The early 20th century saw explosive growth for the United States and was given the name the roaring 20’s. The roaring 20’s were accompanied by transformations in the social landscape as well. Women were gradually granted more freedom. Immigrants poured into the United States during the 20’s in pursuit of their own American Dream. But this economic explosion was short-lived with the arrival of the Great Depression in the 1930s. For a whole decade the United States was plunged into economic decline. This downturn in the economy pitted Americans against each other as they fought for jobs.

This AP US History Guide will cover concepts taken from the AP US History Course and Exam Description. If you want to have an idea of where this fits into US History take a look at the previous link. However, if after you’ve read through this guide and want to test your new knowledge try these practice questions on for size.

Unemployment and Immigration

One of the darkest times in the history of the United States was the Great Depression. It began in September of 1929 when stock market investors began selling their stock. This may have seemed normal but this rush to sell their stock at high prices caused a domino effect. Other investors saw what they were doing and began selling their own stock. The worst of this was reached on October 24 and October 29, called Black Thursday and Black Tuesday respectively. By 1930 the Great Depression had overtaken the United States and the stock market began a downturn that would not end till the beginning of World War II.

President Hoover’s Great Depression

Times were hard for the United States. Over 100,000 businesses failed and about 6,000 banks. This left American families without jobs and the loss of their hard-earned savings on top of it. By 1934 25% of the American workforce was unemployed and because of this many families lost their farms and homes to foreclosure since they were unable to pay their mortgages. One of the most
prevalent images of the time was Americans of all social classes standing in soup kitchens and breadlines just looking for a bite to eat. During the Great Depression the Republican Party held power in the federal government, and they rallied behind President Herbert Hoover. President Hoover believed that in order to get out of this economic slump the American people would have to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Any major involvement by the federal government to bring aid to the American population would erode the American spirit of individualism and reeked of communism which President Hoover found repugnant. Instead he offered the relief systems of the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to help the American population get back on its feet. President Hoover soon saw the folly of his proposals when local aid stations were quickly depleted, so he was forced to bring the might of the federal government to bear. He issued orders for the construction of the Hoover, Boulder, and Grand Coulee Dams in order to create jobs. This would not be enough however and President Hoover and his administration were soon replaced by President Franklin Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

Immigration in the Land of the Free

Early in the 20th century the United States saw an influx of immigrants from both sides. Many Europeans would pass through Ellis Island as they searched for their own land of opportunity as did many Chinese who arrived in California. In 1920, 430,000 immigrants entered the United States and the number nearly doubled in 1921 to 800,000. This unprecedented amount of immigration was often met with hostility. Many Americans saw the rise in immigration as a threat to their own way of life. Seeking to capitalize on the xenophobia Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 that limited the number of immigrants that could enter the United States. This resistance to immigration was also resisted on the most fundamental level of the American population. During this time the Ku Klux Klan saw a revival in their popularity as many Americans, nervous at the constant influx of immigrants, sought a way to fight back. The Ku Klux Klan was the epitome of nativist ideals as white, protestant Americans donned white robes and burned crosses. They threatened anyone who wasn’t white or protestant but they specifically targeted African-Americans, Jews, and Roman Catholics since they saw those particular groups of society as a corrupting influence. Despite these pushes against immigration both Congress and the Ku Klux Klan were not able to stop those searching for a new, prosperous way of life.

For the Test

You may be asked to describe challenges the average American faced during the Great Depression and actions taken by the federal government to combat the economic downturn. You may also find that the AP US History exam will challenge you to define how immigration was treated both by the federal government and the average American citizen.
Social Challenges

The Roaring ‘20s brought massive change to the social structure of the United States and the transformations of this period would affect America up till ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s. Immigration brought a fresh injection of different cultures into the United States as Chinese immigrants and Southern Europeans began to flee from their homelands to the United States. Protestant Americans began to feel the strains of modernism as many Americans began to fall away from the flock and embrace this new era of science and industry. Finally women and African-Americans began their first tentative forays into the pursuit of equality that would eventually become a full-on fight for their rights.

The Fall of Religion and the Rise of Modernism

The 1920s and ‘30s saw increased migration to the large cities of the United States causing that caused these cities’ population to skyrocket. This migration exposed people to new ideas and facilitated a melding of culture that shifted the focus away from the church and one’s eternal soul towards the polished glow of science and modernity. Families who had previously lived on farms began to migrate to cities in droves and found that the only way for them to compete was to acquire education. Around this time period mandatory attendance of public schools became mandatory. Also during this time Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution began to gain traction in the United States. Christian Fundamentalists were repelled by the idea that man had evolved from a lesser creature and preached that the Bible was the only source of knowledge needed to understand man’s origins. It was from this clash that the United States first encountered the importance of separation of church and state. The Scopes Monkey Trial was born out of this argument as Christian Fundamentalists actively fought against the teaching of the Theory of Evolution in Tennessee’s public schools. On the side of religion was William Jennings Bryan, a Presbyterian preacher and three-time Presidential candidate, and on the other was Clarence Darrow, a simple trial lawyer from the city of Chicago. The trial was carried out in a courthouse in Tennessee stifled by the July heat. Arguments were traded and the trial almost came to blows but William Jennings Bryan succeeded. However Clarence Darrow also won in the sense that he convinced reporters of the foolishness of a literal interpretation of the Bible.

The New African-American and the Flapper

The influx of migrants to cities stirred American culture in a new and profound way. Women were beginning to see that if they stood together they would be able to petition Congress and fight for what they believed were equal rights granted to them by the US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. The League of Women Voters scored a victory when Congress finally passed the Nineteenth Amendment and gave women the right to vote. On top of this more women were starting to work outside of the household with more than ten million women
joining the workforce by 1930. A new type of woman emerged who eschewed traditional dress and practiced a different kind of lifestyle. This new woman was called the “flapper”. Flappers chose non-traditional, called “immoral”, types of dresses that extended only to their knees or higher. They smoked and rolled down their stockings and danced the Charleston. While all of these qualities were decried as an erosion of proper morality and Christian principles the worst was the growing trend of divorce. This new found independence allowed women to divorce their husbands without fear of becoming ostracized by society. Joining women in their rise in society were African-Americans. During the 1920s Jazz began to appear and Americans could not get enough of it. A child of African-American ragtime and European music Jazz became a way for African-Americans to improve their lives. They moved north and performed in clubs and soon Americans were hooked by the new form of music. This coincided with the Harlem Renaissance. As African-Americans moved from the south they took residence in Harlem in New York City. This borough gave birth to literary greats like Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Zora Neale Hurston. Each of them became prolific poets during this time. Despite great strides towards equality, African Americans were still persecuted by the Ku Klux Klan and most white Americans still viewed them with pity at best and hostility at worst.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam will often ask you what social changes the United States underwent through time. You may be asked how women’s roles in society changed and how African-Americans rose from slavery in their fight for equality.

Extending Power

Over the course of this era the United States was set on competing with the preeminent European superpowers of the time. There were many routes that the United States set out upon to achieve this goal, all with varying levels of success. Beginning with President Roosevelt’s presidency and continuing up until the Great Depression Americans pressured the federal government to extend its reach beyond the North American continent into Latin America. This resulted in many important pieces of legislation and this expansionist policy set the tone for the early 20th century.

The Roosevelt Corollary

Beginning with the Monroe Doctrine the United States believed it well within its rights to intervene in events in the western hemisphere if it threatened national security. This was further expounded upon by the Roosevelt Corollary. The Roosevelt Corollary was sweeping declaration by the President Theodore Roosevelt made in 1904 that pronounced the right of the United States to prevent meddling by any European power in Latin America. From 1904 to 1912 the United States would take responsibility for the economic crises that often swept
through Latin America. During this time the United States would do everything from seize control of the Dominican Republic’s customhouses to properly distribute duties to deploying American marines in Nicaragua in order to suppress a rebellion that threatened American economic interests. The Roosevelt Corollary caused two important changes in American diplomacy. First, it did spread the influence and international power of the United States. Europe was forced to recognize that the United States was the preeminent power in the western hemisphere and to disregard that fact was dangerous. Second, it bred Latin American mistrust in the United States. This was due to the fact that the United States only saw fit to intervene when American business interests were threatened by upheaval in Latin American countries. In any other case, the countries would be left to their own devices which often left the populations of Latin American countries at the mercy of revolutionary violence.

For the Test

There are many instances in American history where the United States sought to extend its influence to foreign soil, and this era was one of the first examples. The AP US History exam could potentially ask you to identify several key points in American history where the United States demonstrated its capability as a world power.

The Wrap Up

It is clear that this was an era of change for the United States. Starting in 1890 the United States was becoming aware of how powerful it exactly was. Americans believed in the superiority of American culture and that it should be planted and grown all over the world. American expansionism was the pervasive idea of the time. Simultaneously America was changing from within. Industrial growth in metropolitan areas drew families from the countryside and traditional norms were beginning to be challenged. Women began to see that they were equal to men and African-Americans began their long journey towards equality and respect in society. Immigrants poured into the maturing nation as they saw the potential the United States had yet many Americans believed they should shut their doors to these huddled masses. America saw unprecedented growth and development, but it was only till the nation was swallowed by two World Wars and a Great Depression.
Period 7 (1890-1945): Global Conflicts and Emergence as a World Power

General Overview

With the gaps in the contiguous United States slowly being filled the young nation was finally within reach of its goal of Manifest Destiny. However many began to look towards the future, to a time when the nation would be completely unified from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Many believed that the United States was destined to expand beyond the realm of North America and through this belief supported an American Empire that would bring its new type of democratic freedom to all corners of the globe. This was further compounded by the upheaval in the geopolitical status quo. Europe sought to further expand their influence into Asia and Latin America and the United States found this repugnant. Not only did the US fear missing out on potential economic gains in Asia, but a strong European influence in Latin America threatened American security. With all this in mind the United States was not completely sure what direction to take, but at long last we were ready to become a major player in international politics. If you are looking for a briefer outline to guide or accompany your reading turn your attention to the AP US History Course and Exam Description. This study supplement corresponds to Section 7. Then after you have completed your review make sure to test your knowledge with some practice questions.

Age of Empire

Early in American history there was a push to spread American culture to every country in the world. We believed that American principles and values were superior to the rigid traditions of Europe and the mystery of Asia. In addition to this, early Americans saw the power that came from maintaining an active colonial presence and wanted to grow in the same way. These two ideas supported synergized and made the early Americans want to spread their influence beyond the contiguous United States.

China and the Open Door Policy

Under the Presidencies of William McKinley and afterwards Theodore Roosevelt the United States found itself at odds with the major European powers. Through colonialism and imperialism Europe was able to subjugate most of the known world. Their massive colonies spurred their growth and combined with industrialization clearly set Europe ahead of the rest of the world. Europe then turned its gaze towards China. After China lost the first Sino-Japanese War
Europe swooped in and began to divide China into several spheres of influence. In our own quest for empire the United States proposed the Open Door Policy. Invented by John Hay, who was Secretary of State at the time, the policy suggested that China should not be divided and that all nations should have access to trading with that nation. This plan by John Hay had a dual purpose; it allowed the United States equal access to the luxury goods of China, and prevented Europe from dominating both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

**American Victory in the Spanish-American War**

As mentioned earlier the United States believed that it had a culture superior to any other. Merge this belief with a fear of being left behind by European superpowers and you have an American population backing American imperialism and the proliferation of American culture. This type of thinking reared its head during the Spanish-American War. The Spanish-American War started because of a malfunction on the USS Maine that resulted in its explosion while sitting in Havana Harbor. The United States, seeing this as an act of aggression and goaded on by the yellow journalism in its newspapers, declared war on Spain. The war between the United States and Spain was an uneven one, despite the seemingly-superior forces of the Spanish, the United States armed forces were newer and closer to home versus the Spanish military that was battered by decades of use. The United States began its campaign in the Philippines. The United States Navy easily crushed the Spanish Navy at the command Commodore George Dewey. Then upon making landfall the American army joined forces with the rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo. They made short work of the Spanish army and captured Manila. Following the victory in the Pacific the United States took the fighting to Cuba. Just as the US Navy had dispatched the Spanish in the Pacific they easily destroyed them in the Atlantic. In fact, during the Cuban theatre the greatest threat to American lives were the climate and tropical diseases that we had no experience treating. The war ended with the Pact of Paris and the United States had a new colony: the Philippines.

**Anti-Imperialism and the Roosevelt Corollary**

America’s new far-reaching grasp was not embraced completely. There were those who believed that the United States should not get involved in world politics and instead focus on self-improvement from within the nation. These Americans were the anti-imperialists and they firmly believed that interference in foreign affairs could only lead danger. Famous anti-imperialists included Mark Twain, one of America’s first literary giants, and Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate. Anti-imperialists believed that the principle of anti-imperialism was abhorrent to the ideals that the United States itself had been founded on. By expanding outwards and forming American colonies they would be depriving other people of their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This outcry against America’s expansionism was largely ignored however. A primary example of this lies in the actions of President Theodore Roosevelt and the
document that bears his name. During this time period Europe had loaned money to several countries in Latin America, these countries took advantage of the loans and defaulted on them. In retaliation England and Germany took military action. This worried the United States and President Roosevelt. If Europe maintained an active military presence in Latin America it could potentially threaten the safety of the United States. Because of this incident President Roosevelt announced the Roosevelt Corollary. This legislation allowed the United States to “police” Latin America and made the United States the debt collector, acting as a cosigner for the loans and thus guaranteeing that Europe would be paid back. 

For the Test

You may need to list or recall several instances of early American imperialism and where they occurred. In addition you might have to be able to identify whether all Americans supported an American Empire.

Mobilization

American society saw massive amounts of upheaval during this period. There were many reasons for this that lead to massive changes in the underlying structure of American society. The United States also mobilized in other ways especially during the beginning of both World Wars, President Franklin Roosevelt promised that the nation would be the “Arsenal of Democracy” and so that is what we became.

Mass Mobilization of American Society

When the United States entered the war there was a need for soldiers to man the war machine and fight the Axis. However there was also a need for a working population to fund and supply the war machine. This role was filled by members of the American population who were at the time generally marginalized or discriminated against. A large portion of the labor force was comprised of African-Americans. Originally prejudice prevented African Americans from working in factories and they could not serve in the armed forces. World War II changed that when African-Americans began migrating from the south to work in northern factories and construction sites to help support the United States’ armed forces. The war saw explosive growth for the NAACP as more and more African-Americans began to fight for equality. Women also enjoyed greater freedom during this period. Most women prior to World War II were simply housewives, but when their husbands were called to war they helped fill their jobs and over six million women worked in factories and farms. Women also helped serve in the armed forces in the form of auxiliary corps. These corps didn’t see direct combat but did act as support units. These groups came in the form of WAVES, or Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. These groups would eventually be forced out of the workplace temporarily when men returned.
from the war, but its effects would be seen in the permanent increase of women joining the work force. Native Americans and Mexican-Americans were also further integrated into American society. Native Americans worked for the United States armed forces as “code talkers”. Comanches in Europe and Navajos in the Pacific would use their native language as an unbreakable code that could not be translated by enemy forces. Mexican-Americans were not segregated like African-Americans and fought in both the Pacific and European theatres.

For the Test

You may potentially be asked to identify fundamental changes in American society that resulted from World War II, and the eventual effects these changes had on post-war society.

Fight for Freedoms

World War II was being fought for the independence of Europe from a fascist government. Despite this external purpose, internally the United States still suffered from the bigotry and injustice on the home front. Regardless of the service performed both during and after the war, many minorities were still mistreated and abused often to the point of violence. American citizens were deemed threats to national security simply because of their race.

Japanese Internment

As you probably know the United States entered the war because of the Japanese. The morning of December 7, 1941 the Japanese launched an attack on Pearl Harbor that caught the United States unaware. Prior to this the United States had pledged neutrality in the war, but because of this aggression Americans refused to hold back any more. However because of this attack many began to view Japanese-Americans with suspicion. This is in contrast to Italian and German Americans who were not persecuted for the actions of their homeland. First generation immigrants from Japan were called Issei, and second generation, native-born Japanese-Americans were called Nissei. In spite of this distinction these Japanese-American citizens were rounded up and forced into internment camps. While not as harsh as Nazi concentration camps these Japanese-American internment camps still treated them like prisoners and enemies of the state. Many Japanese-Americans joined the armed forces to prove their loyalty and so the United States Army formed the 442nd Regimental Combat Team that was composed primarily of Japanese-Americans. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team went on to become one of the most distinguished units of the war.

Zoot Suit Riots

The increase of the Mexican-American population further contributed to racial tension in the United States, especially in the American southwest. Many
Mexican-Americans moved to California and took up residence in or around Los Angeles. Hispanic teenagers from these families joint together and form gangs, and they could be identified by their style of dress: \textit{zoot suits}. These zoot suit styles were derived from clothing that had been popular in Harlem during the 1930s. These Mexican-American teenaged gangs became targets for white sailors and civilians after a group attacked some American soldiers on furlough. 1943 saw rioting in the streets as mobs of white Americans roamed the streets and attacked anyone who looked even remotely Hispanic or wore a zoot suit.

\textit{For the Test}

For the AP US History Exam you will have to be able to identify crises at home as well as on the front. Many of these problems stemmed from racial issues.

\textbf{The Wrap Up}

From 1890 to 1945 the waves of revolution were sweeping across the globe and the United States was a brand new ship ready to set sail and test its determination on the seas of change. China and Asia in general were opening up to the rest of the world. The luxuries and mysteries of the Orient were being brought to the fore and the United States wanted to partake in uncovering this formerly enigmatic land. While stretching its grasp east the United States also broadened its influence south and began to act as a “policeman” of Latin America. In this way they protected their security from European interference while maintaining stability in their own hemisphere. Then World War II struck and the United States was forced to evolve once more. A formerly suppressed segment of the population was called to duty and they were happy to perform their duty. Women, African-Americans, and Mexican-Americans filled these new roles that previously been closed to them, and because of this life in America would never be the same. Finally while things may have improved at home, for some it worsened. Japanese Americans in particular suffered the most. Regardless of the fact that they had lived in the United States for a full generation, even having been born there, many were taken from their homes on the west coast and pressganged into camps that stripped them of their constitutional rights.

By studying this section of American history you will attain a greater understanding of how America determined how it would act on an international stage. In addition you will see how life changed in the United States for all of its citizens. Finally you will be prepared to answer any question on the AP United States History Exam regarding American policy-making and war-planning at the time of World War II.
Period 8 (1945-1980): Leadership in the Uncertain Postwar Era

General Overview

In AP U.S. History, the time period that can sometimes cause the most trouble is the time period closest to the present. For some reason or another, Time Period 8, 1945-1980, is frequently overlooked. However, it was an incredibly significant time in American history, and it certainly deserves its fair share of attention. The United States was fresh out of a shockingly violent and divisive World War, and was slowly trying to put the pieces back together. As national leaders attempted to develop a healthy and prosperous post-war America, the United States took on a role of leadership in global affairs. America looked to be an international peacekeeping force while struggling to stay out of conflict itself. Furthermore, as America settled into a time of global peace, social and cultural ideas rose to the forefront.

In this AP U.S. History guide, we will cover Period 8. The different time periods in American history are outlined in the AP U.S. History Official Course Description. Within each time periods there are a couple of Key Concepts for you to know. This particular guide outlines Key Concept 8.1 The Key Concepts outlined in the course description are great indicators of what you will be expected to know for the AP test. If it helps you to answer some realistic questions about the material, there are a plethora of practice questions available that line up with the key concepts available for you to use. These can help you stay on track and make sure that you really understand the material.

Aftermath of World War II

In the wake of World War 2, fear of Communism was high and international relations were still relatively tense. People had been exposed to the enormous potential for destruction. Modern warfare, and everything that came with it, created an elevated sense of violence and fear. America, who in the last couple of decades had emerged as an international superpower, took on enormous responsibility in curbing these fears, and in bringing communist powers to an end.

They first attempted to do this through economic means. American economic and political leaders theorized that if the Communist economy were crippled, than these Communist nations would cease to have power. Also, the war had disastrous effects on many economies, and there was significant potential for
recessions and depressions to wreak havoc on world markets. Thus, economic reform was a key focus for America in the years following World War 2.

The Marshall Plan

United State’s attempts to help recover international, and specifically European economies began with the introduction of the Marshall Plan. Secretary of State George Marshall proposed the Marshall Plan in 1948. At its core, it was a plan to rebuild the European economy in the years after the war. The war had numerous devastating effects on many of the European economic powers. American leaders, and George Marshall in particular, were concerned that the weakened foreign economies would have a negative effect on the American economy. For this reason, there was increased motivation to get involved with the international economy.

The Marshall Plan, formally known as the European Recovery Plan, was essentially America investing a lot of money to bail out the European economy. In fact, they ended up investing over 13 billion dollars. The plan not only helped rebuild economies, but it was also aimed at creating an open international market. The plan was also part of the larger plan of containment. The policy of containment, fueled by fears of Communism, was ultimately supposed to put an end to the spread of communism. Not all European countries accepted the Marshall Plan, but for those who did, it was largely successful. None of the countries that accepted the Marshall Plan fell under communist influence, and there was a significant increase in international cash flow.

The United Nations

Another crucial international development was the formation of the United Nations. In 1945, a group of leaders from 50 different nations met in San Francisco to formally establish the United Nations. However, talks of such an organization had been in the works for a couple of years. In 1943, the United States Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, met with a British leader and agreed that some kind of international organization ensuring the equality of all nations needed to be created. President Roosevelt, in that same year, worked an agreement with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to create an organization with representatives from each member nation. Further, it established the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China as the main powers that would help keep the peace.

This international organization was not exactly a new idea. The League of Nations was created in 1920 and brought an end to World War I, with the intentions of maintaining world peace. This was, however, an obvious failure in that it was unable to prevent World War II. As the United Nations was developed, one of the main goals was to strengthen some of the weaknesses revealed in the League of
Nations. The League of Nations had shown the difficulty of international peace keeping, and this influenced a lot of ideas involved in the United Nations.

One idea central to the League of Nations did remain in the United Nations: Woodrow Wilson’s 14 points. Wilson’s ideas were crucial in developing the League of Nations, and despite the League’s inability to maintain world peace; Wilson’s intuitive visions for world peace and international unity were not invalid. The United Nations embraced many of his points, just with a few modifications that would hopefully prove to be more beneficial. Overall, America’s involvement was a sharp contrast from their previous policy of isolationism, in which they had avoided getting involved in most foreign affairs.

For the Test

One main skill for you to learn in AP U.S. History is how to address change over time. In this section, you will want to assess how America’s foreign policy changed throughout the decades. Also you will need to be able to explain how the war directly impacted the years following 1945.

Containing Communism

America’s involvement in the United Nations and the development of the Marshall Plan make it very clear that the United States was certainly concerned with limiting the influence of communism. This became a primary focus for America moving forward, and it was a deciding factor for many of their foreign policy decisions. Their foreign policy came to be synonymous with the term “containment”. Containment is pretty much exactly what it sounds like. America was not out to bring an end to communism as a whole, and they didn’t plan to convert communist nations into capitalist nations. However, they did hope to contain the influence of communism. At the time, communism was mostly centered in the Soviet Union. America’s best bet was to try to keep it that way. Therefore, containment became the domineering policy for American foreign affairs.

One key figure to be aware of during this time period was George F. Kennan. Kennan was a United States diplomat to the Soviet Union, and he was very knowledgeable on the Soviet Union. Kennan was concerned with the potential of Soviet Influence to spread throughout Europe, as many American leaders were. However, Kennan was in a unique situation to do something about it. As an expert on the Soviet Union, his input was extremely valuable to the United States, particularly when deciding on foreign policy. George F. Kennan, therefore, took on the responsibility of creating a plan to limit the power of the Soviets.

In 1946, Kennan outlined his plan for containing the Soviet threat in a telegram to the State Department. The telegram was about 8,000 words long, and for that reason is often referred to simply as the “Long Telegram.” Kennan believed that if
the United States did not make an effort to prevent them from doing so, Stalin and the Soviets would expand their power whenever and wherever they could. However, Kennan did not necessarily think that it was necessary for the United States to get their military involved with the Soviet Union. Instead, he advocated for America to adopt a firm policy of containment. George F. Kennan is commonly referred to as the “Father of Containment.” Further, his ideas sparked policies like the Marshall Plan (mentioned earlier) and the Truman Doctrine (mentioned below).

The Truman Doctrine

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman appeared before Congress to present his new idea for foreign affairs, known as the Truman Doctrine. At its core, the Truman Doctrine was another political attempt to limit the growth of communism. While the Marshall Plan focused more on economic developments, the Truman Doctrine featured a much more militaristic focus. Essentially, President Truman affirmed the impending threat of Soviet communism, and implored the United States to take action to oppose it. Specifically, the policy required the United States to support any nation that was attempting to remain free from communist control.

This policy shows that Truman felt it was necessary for the United States to come alongside nations struggling to maintain democracy and independence. This is a direct example of containment. This policy was especially relevant to events happening in Europe at the time. Greece and Turkey, two democratic nations, were on the brink of falling to communism. Aid from the United States was one of the few things that could prevent that from happening, and Truman realized this. America was able to successfully provide this aid and prevent the countries from falling into Soviet control. More importantly, this set the precedent for U.S. foreign policy, and the Truman Doctrine shaped American attitudes towards the Soviet Union for years to come.

Conflict in Korea

The Communist scare in Greece and Turkey was just the first example of the Truman Doctrine in action. In the years following its creation, America’s adherence to the Truman Doctrine eventually led them to military action in certain parts of the world. One key example of this was the issue of Korea. North Korea was under the control of a communist leader, and the Soviet Union was quick to support them in their conflicts with South Korea. As a result, the United States quickly got behind the South Korean government, which was attempting to remain free from communist control. However, Soviet military and financial aid was superior to the aid being given by the Americans, and the North Korean forces continued to have advantages over South Korea. Truman and leaders of the United Nations were greatly concerned by this.
In response, Truman proceeded to seek negotiations, although some Americans advocated for more aggressive military actions against China and North Korea. Tensions continued to rise as American and Soviet powers indirectly opposed each other through their support of the respective nations. Thankfully, through Truman’s persistence on a “limited war”, another world war was avoided. However, the conflict was not brought to an end until 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower was elected President on a platform that emphasized establishing a peaceful negotiation with North Korea.

*For the Test*

It is essential that you understand why American leaders felt it was so important to limit the influence of communism throughout Europe. Also, you should be able to explain why events like the conflict in Korea serve as examples of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

**Peopling**

As tensions heated up abroad, people in America grew increasingly weary of communist influences at home. There was a growing fear that communist ideas had infiltrated American society and had created an overall communist movement. This manifested itself in many different ways. It was increasingly known as the *Red Scare*, and it was a time of extreme confusion, cautiousness, and uncertainty in America. Anti-communism was at its peak, and many people greatly feared the idea of a communist takeover in America. As a result, people were willing to go to drastic measures to make sure that didn’t happen. Many citizens feared that their neighbors, coworkers, and even family members could potentially be communists. These general fears eventually resulted in several significant government actions.

**The Interstate System**

One long lasting effect from this national fear of communism was the development of the [interstate system](#). President Dwight D. Eisenhower was one of the earliest advocates for the development of an interstate system of roads, and his support of the idea eventually led to the authorization of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. This act allowed for a significant amount of government money to be apportioned to the construction of this system of roads. The project was expansive and costly. Eisenhower’s act intended to create 41,000 miles of roads that would be much more efficient than the present system of roads. Eisenhower argued for a number of benefits to creating this system of roads. It established roads that were in better shape and kept up with more frequently.

Also, before the interstate system were established people had to take indirect and inconvenient routes to get to some places. A person may only have needed to travel to a destination that was 3 miles away, but the old system of roads might
have led him on a path that was 15 miles long, or covered with dirt roads. The newer, nicer interstate roads would allow for quicker and more direct travel. There were a number of very practical reasons for the development of the interstate system. However, there was also a very unique, lesser-known motivation for creating the interstate system.

People were generally on edge about foreign affairs. The fear of communist expansion brought with it an intense fear of aggressive communist action. The early 1950’s witnessed the development of weapons with extensive destruction capabilities, such as the hydrogen bomb, and the world had already witnessed the deadly effects of the atomic bomb. Many Americans feared an atomic bomb strike at home in the states, and sought various ways to prepare. The interstate system was cited to be one of those things.

Some advocates for the road believed that having the interstate system would allow people to evacuate major cities quickly and efficiently in the case of an atomic bomb threat. This shows how significant the communist fears had become, and how real the threat of nuclear action came to be. Of course, the interstate system came to be a valuable asset to America and is still a productive means of transportation. However, it is also a good reminder of the very real fears of apparently imminent Soviet action.

For the Test

You should be aware of some of the key motivations for creating an interstate system. Also, you should be able to explain how communist fears affected government actions.

The Communist Menace

Despite America’s emphasis on communism in the Soviet Union and certain areas of Europe, the issue was much more expansive than those key areas. The United States also struggled to maintain peaceful relations with many Latin American countries as well as a few areas in Asia. The 1950s saw a number of international conflicts between the United States and nations involved in varying levels of communism. These conflicts often escalated just to the brink of violence, and a resolution was typically decided on before any significant violence took place.

However, that was not always the case, and the 1950s were a really uneasy time in America as a result of this. At this point, the rising tensions and fears in America should be a very clear theme to you. Indeed, it is one of the key identifying factors for this time period. The broad theme is not too hard to understand. However, as an AP US History student it is important for you to understand some of the specific conflicts that took place. You certainly won’t need to know every single
detail of every single event, but you will need to have a general idea of what happened with each one. We’ll break down a couple of specific examples.

The Cuban Missile Crisis

America had not been on great terms with Cuba for many years, and this was no secret. However, during the middle of the 19th century, the relations between these two nations deteriorated to the point almost causing extreme violence. Cuba had been considering relations with the Soviet Union for some amount of time. America, as indicated by their policy of containment, was not in favor of this. More than that, they were directly opposed to it. The idea of communist influence spreading across the Atlantic and throughout Latin America seemed like a direct threat to democracy in the Western Hemisphere, and the United States simply would not stand for that. In fact, one of the key facets of the Truman Doctrine was that no European power should have any involvement with nations or states in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States initially tried to get involved with the Cuban situation through an incident known as the Bay of Pigs. Cuba was under the control of communist Fidel Castro. In the Bay of Pigs, America had attempted to send in a secret military organization to overthrow the communist government. Unfortunately, the Bay of Pigs invasion was nothing but a humiliating defeat for the United States. Not only was it an embarrassing loss, but also it greatly heightened tensions between the United States and Cuba and opened the door to a decade of conflict. This incident not only created very tense relations between the United States and Cuba, it also further solidified Cuba’s bonds with the Soviet Union. Castro confirmed that Cuba was a communist state and had aligned himself with Soviet forces. These events, occurring in 1961, opened the doorway for the incredibly stressful Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

The Cuban Missile Crisis, at its core, was a classic stand off, with extremely high stakes and very powerful weapons. Following the Bay of Pigs invasion, America had scrambled to make up for their embarrassing defeat. They even made numerous assassination attempts on Castro. The United States had made it very clear that they were not pleased with how Cuba was being governed. As a result, Castro was concerned that the United States was going to invade Cuba. Feeling like his back was up against a wall, and knowing the power of the U.S. military, Castro looked to their powerful ally, the Soviets. Cuba, under Castro’s direction, allowed for Soviet missiles to be launched in Cuba.

The United States was quickly made aware of this, and American leaders were quick to let the USSR know that America had seen the action. While the Soviet Union held missiles in Cuba, the United States had nuclear missiles set up in Turkey. The two powerful nations commenced in a two-week long staring contest, in which they dared the other nation to blink first. The only likely result was that
if one country decided to launch their nuclear missiles, the other country would do the same, and mass destruction would occur.

Thankfully, after a stressful couple weeks worth of negotiations, John F. Kennedy of the United States and Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union reached an agreement. The Soviet Union would withdraw nuclear missiles from Cuba, and the United States would withdraw their missiles from Turkey. In addition, the United States had to agree not to invade Cuba without any direct reason to do so.

One significant result of the Missile Crisis was the newfound importance of a direct line of communication between Soviet and American leadership. Kennedy and Khrushchev established a “nuclear hotline” which allowed for instant and efficient contact between the two leaders. This way, in the event of another potentially catastrophic crisis, the leaders could quickly work out a deal before things got too intense. Through this implementation, and a number of other actions, Soviet and American tensions slowly eased and became slightly more cordial. The United States, while not in direct conflict with Cuba, still does not have great relations with the country.

**The Domino Effect**

George Kennan’s policy of containment dominated American foreign affairs for most of the 1950s and early 1960s. The policy guided America’s actions through many climactic events and led them through such events as the Cuban Missile Crisis. The policy of containment eventually diverged into the theory of the domino effect. Essentially, the domino theory was the idea that once communism spread to one country, it would quickly spread to another, and lead to an overwhelming spread of communism. Americans believed that the spread of communism would begin with an influential nation such as China, while having a trickle down effect towards other countries. This fear was almost realized when China fell to communism during Harry Truman’s presidency. This was particularly frightening to many citizens because China’s population made up so much of the world’s population.

When Lyndon B. Johnson came to office, he was determined that the world would not experience another devastating move towards communism. Thus, he believed in the domino theory, and made it a significant priority to prevent the rest of the dominoes from falling. The belief in this theory gave the United States justification to get involved in an extensive range of foreign affairs. America frequently intervened in foreign affairs where it was questionable if they had any right to be doing so. Ideas like containment and the domino theory further motivated them to take riskier actions, all for the sake of limiting the spread of communism.

The domino effect especially came into play during American affairs with some significant Asian nations. The United States got involved just about anywhere.
that the Soviet Union or China got involved. These powerful communist nations, as a way of igniting the spread of communism, frequently supported smaller nations in their conflicts. This kind of support and defense system is what eventually led to the Vietnam War.

For the Test

One important theme from Period 8 is that it was a time of extreme fear and concern about the threat of communism. The fear of communism spreading throughout the world motivated America to be active in many foreign affairs and got them involved in numerous conflicts. This is a major theme that you need to be aware of.

Separate is Unequal

As the fear of communism spread throughout America, domestic affairs also adopted some other significant causes. Chief among these issues were the questions of Civil Rights, racism, and segregation. Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, passed in 1896, had established a legal precedent for segregation. It made segregation very much legal, so long as there were always “separate but equal” facilities.

This was especially significant in the instance of public schools, where African-American students were prohibited from attending most public schools. The benefit to *Plessy v. Ferguson* was that it, in theory, guaranteed that African-Americans would have access to public education through high school. However, the law was rarely enforced justly, and there was a growing fundamental, ideological issue with the idea of “separate but equal” facilities.

A great deal of Cold War rhetoric, especially in the United States, emphasized the idea of freedom and liberty. Many of America’s foreign conflicts were fought on the basis of protecting freedom and liberty nationally. These ideas became synonymous with American patriotism, and they were at a peak during the Cold War. Civil Rights activists saw that it was an opportune time to use this type of rhetoric to support their own agendas for freedom and liberty. They started to question the fairness of fighting for these apparently important ideas internationally, while there was a significant lack of freedom and liberty at home in America.

One idea that Civil Rights leaders particularly dug into was the “separate but equal” law introduced by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* court case. The law was now over 50 years old, and the 5 preceding decades had revealed that almost always, separate was synonymous with unequal. Just because a city might have had a high school for white students and a high school for black students, did not mean that those two schools were equal. In fact, that was rarely the case.
Generally, black schools received much less funding, and provider fewer opportunities. The access to school may have been equal, but the access to a solid education was not. Civil Rights activists actively opposed this law, and their opposition eventually led to the Brown v. Board of Education court case. This Supreme Court decision, surprisingly, overturned the previous ruling made in Plessy v. Ferguson. The Brown v. Board of Education court case made segregated schools illegal, and brought an end to state sponsored segregation. Unfortunately, the implications of this court case were slow going, and took a long time to actually come to fruition. Segregation in public schools was legally overturned, but it did not actually come to an end until the mid 1960s. Governor George Wallace of Alabama famously ran on a platform of “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever.”

Racism and segregation did not exist in all parts of the United States. However, because of persistent leaders like George Wallace, the eradication of segregation from many public spheres was a decades long struggle. Eventually, government action had to be taken to integrate public schools in a few areas that attempted to hold out.

For the Test

It is of course important to understand some of the important Civil Rights events and court cases. One important thematic trend to pick up on is the way that the communism issue abroad sparked Civil Rights changes domestically.

Campus Tragedy

Another significant trend during this time period was the growing discontent among Americans in the United States. Progressive actions in Civil Rights affairs revealed many aspects of the United States in which injustices were consistently being enforced by government actions. The outcome of Brown v. Board of Education made it clear that state sponsored segregation was clearly oppressive and prevalent. Although this issue was of course primarily related to racial injustice, it was a catalyst for many other ideological shifts.

More than ever, people started to look at actions of the United States with a critical eye. There was no longer a natural and consistent trust in the goodness and benevolence of the U.S. government. This was especially true among younger generations of Americans. People started to ask the question: If our nation is capable of allowing extreme racism to endure over so many decades, what other injustices was it capable of? And this critical perspective was not just inward, but also to America’s foreign affairs. Communist fears had allowed America to be rather liberal in the foreign affairs that they got involved in. This was especially true in the years after the height of the Civil War.
One key example of this was the occurrence at Kent State in Kent Ohio. The incident, which culminated in the violent killing of 4 Kent State students, was a result of protests about the Cambodian Campaign. Many Americans were already weary about the United State’s active role in Vietnam. When President Nixon announced this series of invasions, there was a pretty significant uproar. Students seemed to be leading the way in their outrage about the series of invasions. At Kent State, the frustration of students led to direct protests against the war. The protests turned towards a riot, and the police soon stepped in. Eventually, the National Guard got involved. Through an unfortunate series of events, the incident eventually led to violence when National Guardsmen apparently opened fire on a group of students, leading to 4 deaths and several injuries.

For the Test

The event at Kent State was significant because it even further led to the massive distrust of the American government that had already developed over the years. You will need to be able to explain the role that this event had in the general trend of domestic unrest in America.

Energy Crisis

In addition to all of the foreign concerns about communism and domestic concerns about social justice, the U.S. government was also dealing with concerns about energy consumption. America had come to be very dependent on other nations for energy sources, and as foreign affairs were heating up, this was troublesome to many people. As a result, American leaders started to come up with different methods of reducing energy consumption. One such method was by implementing a nationwide 55 mile per hour speed limit, while also asking people to not use as much energy heating their houses to conserve oil use.

For the Test

Think about ways that these actions were significant actions for the federal government to take. Also, you need to understand how foreign events led to these domestic policies.

The Wrap Up

In many ways, this study guide may have been hard to follow. There was a wide range of events going on, from drastic changes in foreign policy to huge advances in Civil Rights, and much more in between. As confusing as the guide may have been to follow, this time was even more confusing for political leaders in America at the time. The nation, while thriving as an international superpower, was struggling to find their role within the global context.
Meanwhile, leaders had to find ways to keep peace and support a prosperous way of life within the states. This proved to be quite the challenge, and is a primary reason for so many different theories and administrations occurring. Often times, America struggled to accomplish these things. This is evident by the fact that there was growing unrest among many young Americans. People were often questioning the authority of the federal government, and were often looking for significant changes to occur. Also, foreign affairs were often wrapped up in domestic affairs, and their interplay was a significant theme in American history. America’s emergence as an international leader was certainly not an easy transition.

General Overview

During Period 8, which spans the years 1945-1980, there was a significant focus on the frightening Cold War, communism, and all of the conflicts that came with it. It was certainly a tumultuous time for America in regards to its foreign affairs. However, it was also a time of great uncertainty in domestic affairs. The threat of nuclear warfare and the violence that occurred through military conflicts in Korea and Vietnam had created a political and social atmosphere in the United States that was ripe for change. Questions of social justice, civil rights, and civil liberties came to the forefront of contemporary life in the United States. Culturally and politically, the decade of the 70s was a very interesting time for American citizens. These aspects of American history are certainly worthy of your time and attention, especially as you prepare for the AP U.S. History exam.

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The Great Society

Lyndon B. Johnson originally came to the American presidency through dire circumstances, following the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Kennedy left Johnson with tough shoes to fill, which Johnson did reasonably successfully. He then ran for President in 1964, in hopes of continuing the progress he had made over the last couple of years acting as president. The 1964 election pitted Johnson against Barry Goldwater. In the campaign leading up to the election, Lyndon B. Johnson introduced a platform that was known as “The Great Society.” Thanks to Johnson’s ability to continue, and improve upon, the work done by JFK, he won the election in a landslide. As a result, the “Great Society” became a heavily influential part of American politics during the 60s and 70s, and his presidency is most closely associated with this platform.
Johnson drew many ideas from a book titled, *The Other America*, which suggested that almost a quarter of American society was living in poverty. The book also argued that the federal government could, and should work to improve this situation. Therefore, a large majority of the ideas included in the Great Society were meant to help with the problem of poverty in America and improving the quality of life enjoyed by most Americans. Johnson also drew heavily from the New Deal plan put into place by Franklin Roosevelt. Some historians even consider it a direct continuation of the New Deal. Overall, Johnson’s plans for the Great Society were most directly concerned with civil rights, poverty, and education. These would indeed be the issues that marked the end of this time period, and the Great Society’s role within them is extremely significant.

**Healthcare**

Some of the most significant actions of the Great Society occurred in the field of healthcare. Some of the policies put in place by Lyndon B. Johnson actually still exist today, and played a formative role in creating our system of healthcare. Primary implications of the Great Society include the creation of Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare was part of the Social Security Act that was signed by Johnson and passed into law in 1965. Basically, Medicare made healthcare available to anyone who was over the age of 65, regardless of their financial ability to pay.

These health care reforms gave the federal government a much larger role in the health care industry then they had previously held. Many people criticized the creation of Medicare because they felt that it “socialized” health care, and took it out of the hands of the private sector. This was an extremely liberal, and seemingly progressive move for Johnson to make, and the backlash he received for the establishment of this law should not be surprising. Especially given the harsh view of socialist policies and the general fear of falling into socialist power.

Another facet of Johnson’s Great Society was the creation of a welfare program. This too seemed like a rather socialist idea for an American president to be advocating. Along with the welfare program, Johnson created a program known as Medicaid. Medicaid ensured that all people receiving welfare could also receive health care, regardless of their age. One key difference between Medicare and Medicaid is that Medicare was applicable to all people over the age of 1965, no matter how poor or well off they might have been. Medicaid on the other hand, was limited to people receiving welfare, which meant people who were living in poverty. Also, Medicare was under more federal jurisdiction, while Medicaid was mostly run by each individual state.

Either way, these two programs ensured that almost all Americans had some kind of access to health care. While this, practically, seems like a wonderful thing, many people found issue with these programs. Again, it came back to the
question of drifting more towards a socialist state, which people greatly feared. It was a very socially and economically liberal move for Johnson to make, and it earned him much harsh criticism. At the same time, it was a progressive move that was cheered on by many. Johnson, as with any president in America, was subject to the conflicting and often opposing views held by the American people. Either way, his advances in healthcare provision were one big step towards the Great Society that he envisioned.

**The War on Poverty**

Medicare and Medicaid are two well-known, long lasting examples of actions put in place in an effort to establish Lyndon B. Johnson’s “Great Society.” However, these health care reform efforts were just one small part of Johnson’s greater plan for social reform. Another significant aspect of his plan was what he called a “war on poverty.” This was an extremely important part of Johnson’s vision for American life. Since the entrance of industrialization into American society, there was a growing disparity between the poor and wealthy. As the 20th century progressed, these disparities became more and more apparent. It was clear that there was a large portion of society that was, in many respects, getting the short end of the stick. Racial minorities, immigrants, women, and many other groups were receiving less than standard treatment.

As a result, their means of bringing in an income were extremely unequal. Consequently, there was a significant portion of American society that was living in poverty. Johnson was well aware of this, and he wanted to see the financial inequalities that had plagued America to come to an end. In a speech to Congress, he literally declared an “unconditional war on poverty” in which he hoped to eradicate it from America. Johnson’s “Great Society” was committed to providing assistance to groups of people that were typically overlooked, including those suffering from poverty.

Johnson hoped to attack poverty aggressively and efficiently. He not only made the speech to congress declaring war on poverty, but he also introduced a piece of legislation that would actively fight against it, known as the Poverty Bill. This piece of legislation is often referred to as the Economic Opportunity Act, and is most well known for its creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity. The Office of Economic Opportunity was established to oversee the distribution of funds designated towards taking action against poverty. The war on poverty also led to the passage of the Social Security Act in 1965, which created Medicare and Medicaid. The advances made in health care, (such as Medicare and Medicaid) were made possible by Johnson’s war on poverty, as he hoped that the reforms made in the health care and education sectors would help reduce poverty.

The war on poverty also led to the creation of the Food Stamp Act. This essentially provided free food for families living in poverty that could not afford to feed themselves. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed in
1965. This act provided extensive funding to public schools that were traditionally lacking in financial means. This would hopefully help alleviate the drastic disparities in the qualities of education received by students at lower income area schools. This act has continued to be renewed by Congress consistently.

Johnson’s plan for his Great Society was clearly a very active one. He made quick work of passing several important pieces of legislation with far reaching implications. The acts that he introduced required a considerable amount of federal funding, but they also made great strides in accomplishing Johnson’s goals. However, he received a pretty significant backlash. Many people felt that he, along with the federal government, was overstepping his bounds and getting involved in parts of American society in which it did not belong. A popular theory of economics at the time was the *laissez-faire*, hands off approach. This theory did not account for federal systems of welfare, or handouts as some people saw them. In the eyes of many critics, Johnson’s actions were bringing the United States one step closer to a socialist state.

In addition, the threat of communism abroad was still very real, and required much of America’s attention, both physically and financially. People began to question the country’s ability to fund a war against communism abroad while also making such drastic measures to fight against poverty in the states. The backlash that ensued following the successive passage of these progressive acts made it difficult for them to be as successful as they possibly could have been, and certainly slowed the rate at which things were being improved upon.

For the Test

There are some pretty major themes that you need to be familiar with in dealing with this time period. To begin with, you will need to understand the general idea behind Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society. You should also be aware that in many ways, the Great Society was a continuation of Franklin Roosevelt’s *New Deal* program. For the AP test you will need to know at least a couple of the specific actions taken in Johnson’s war on poverty. Lastly, it is important that you understand why the actions taken in the war on poverty might have been troublesome to supporters of the war on communism.

Civil Rights

It is often said that if the Civil War was a victory for the North, and more importantly for African-Americans, than Reconstruction was a victory for white southerners. Reconstruction efforts and programs were largely beneficial to southern states, and many attempts at making significant progress towards equal civil rights were undermined by various circumstances. As a result, the inequalities and injustices experienced by African-Americans in the late 1800s persisted throughout the first half of the 1900s.
However, the effects of the United States’ struggle with communism infiltrated their way into American society and caused people to question the values of freedom and liberty. What sense did it make for America to be fighting for freedom and equality throughout Europe if there was not even freedom and equality in America? This ideological trend, in addition to a number of successive liberal minded administrators made this time period one that was ripe for change in regards to Civil Rights.

**Exclusion and Discrimination**

The later years of Period 8 represent over one hundred years since the eradication of slavery. Of course, the end of slavery in America was a significant step of progress towards equality and justice for African-Americans. In some parts of the countries, African-Americans had managed to seamlessly become part of everyday American life. However, in some areas, like the south, African-Americans still faced significant oppression. They were generally treated like second-class citizens, and sometimes seemingly had the rights of second-class citizens. The court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in which state sponsored segregation was upheld, only contributed to this dynamic in American society. However, that court case was not the end of the road. Thankfully, during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower, this court case was overturned by the ruling made in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

This historic ruling made it clear that state sponsored segregation was not acceptable and it called for the integration of schools. The progressive thinking of American leadership certainly contributed to this decision. However, there were also some major ideological trends and shifts in thinking that contributed to the outcome of this court case.

One factor that created a convincing argument against segregation was the famous “doll test.” In this test, black children were given two different dolls to play with. One was white, and one was black. The black children consistently said that they preferred the white doll and described it with much more favorable characteristics than they did the black doll. The results of this test, along with the testimonial of Kenneth Clark, the psychologist who performed the test, were used as evidence of the devastating effects of segregation. This testimonial proved to be largely successful of convincing the Supreme Court of the overwhelmingly negative effects of segregation.

The results of the “doll test” served as an informative narrative for many people outside of the Supreme Court as well. Many African-Americans saw how the state’s actions in regards to race relations had such a significant trickle effect into the mindset of even young children. In many ways, this was a wake up call for African-Americans to see the direct effects of the consistent injustice they had been dealing with. The question of racial quality was brought to the forefront of many American households, all the way up to the national administration.
The philosophies of Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society included a deep concern for the question of civil rights. Johnson, in general, was concerned with assisting minorities, the elderly, and those struggling with poverty. Being concerned with minorities meant that he actively sought reconciliation for the extreme racial injustices that African-Americans had been forced to deal with over the years. Johnson’s motivations for action in regards to civil rights was also a result of the leadership of John F. Kennedy’s promise for Civil Rights action. After Kennedy’s death, LBJ hoped to step up and finish what he had started. This was seen through the victories of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964**

One significant victory for Civil Rights activists during this time period was indeed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, passed under the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson. It was originally drafted under John F. Kennedy, and was an important act for him. This act, highly sought after for many years by activists, was a landmark piece of legislature, which at least marked a step towards justice and equality for minority groups that had been discriminated against for so long. Although racial issues had been at the forefront of civil rights issues for many years, this congressional act was much more inclusive and made progress for the rights of many traditionally underserved and discriminated against groups of people. Basically, the law made discrimination based on any disposition, whether that be race, color, religion, gender, or nationality, illegal. The ability of the act to make discrimination as a whole illegal was questionably enforceable. This was a very broad command with vague guidance as to how it should be enforced.

The first couple of years following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not necessarily effectively bring an end to discrimination across the board. The groups that had been charged with monitoring, controlling, and eliminating discrimination were pretty weak in their power to enact change. However, the fact that the act was even passed while addressing the issue of discrimination was a significant step towards equality. In the years to come, the act was bolstered with stricter enforcement and clearer definitions as to what exactly was meant by discrimination. So although this specific act may not have had significant implications for minority groups at the time, it made extraordinary headway in sparking a lasting change later on.

**Voting Rights Act of 1965**

Another significant piece of legislation passed during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson was the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Technically, the 14th and 15th Amendments of the Constitution, passed almost one hundred years earlier, should have granted all American citizens the right to vote. However, for many years, political leaders, corrupt businessmen, and racist government officials had managed to find ways to keep certain groups from voting. This was especially true...
of African-Americans. In many southern states, minorities had consistently been excluded from participating in public elections. Many African-Americans were disenfranchised through bogus rules like the Jim Crow laws. These were a bunch of qualifications for voting that allowed southerners to control the vote without technically discriminating based on race or color.

However, these qualifications for being a voter were completely arbitrary and ultimately subjective. For example, states might have made literacy tests a requirement for voting. When an African-American went to take a literacy test, it might have been in a different language, or he may have been subject to a crooked test taker. The worst part of all this, is that these actions, and the use of Jim Crow laws, was traditionally enforced in the courts.

Civil Rights activists were extremely excited about the forward progress made by the Civil Rights Act. However, it did little to deal with the issue of many people being excluded the right to vote. As a result, the Voting Rights Act was formed. The act put many regulations in place on elections, which would hopefully prevent them from being run in a way that disallowed certain groups the ability to vote. Some provisions were made to the act after the fact, which only made it stronger. Overall, the Voting Rights Act was extremely successful in that it granted many people the right to vote and set a standard for the administration of elections.

**Bus Boycotts**

The extraordinarily progressive acts passed by Congress under the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson did not come without a price. Johnson was proactive about Civil Rights, and he was motivated by ambitions of carrying on the legacy of JFK. However, he was also greatly motivated by the extensive actions of civil rights activists that served as catalysts for these significant changes. One such action of civil rights activists was the **Montgomery Bus Boycotts**. These boycotts, of course, were part of a larger movement of non-violent resistance to the oppression of white southerners. They also had very historically memorable roots, as they began with the actions of Rosa Parks, who chose to sit in the front of the bus and refused to give up her seat when asked to. She was famously arrested for her actions, and she sparked a movement that picked up considerable steam and made a substantial impact on the Civil Rights movement.

Martin Luther King Jr., an advocate of non-violent civil disobedience helped shape and orchestrate the movement. The bus boycott represented a chance for African-Americans to peacefully stand up in a very substantial way. These acts of civil disobedience eventually led to the Supreme Court ruling that segregated busing was unconstitutional. Many southerners were furious by the fact that African-Americans had seemingly achieved a significant victory. It sparked a number of violent backlashes throughout the country. Meanwhile, the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts only further motivated Civil Rights activists to take
action. This was the foundation of the beginning of what would be known as the Civil Rights Movement.

Ultimately, the Civil Rights Movement proved to be very successful, although it went through numerous ideological shifts. For example, some groups, like the Black Panthers, questioned the value of non-violence and called for more drastic actions. Then there were the disagreements between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, who saw very different methods for African-Americans to improve their situation in America. Washington believed that black citizens needed to prove their economic value, while DuBois saw the ideological significance of equality and thought that African-Americans should demand that kind of equality. Even Martin Luther King Jr. went through a couple patches of more radical strategies throughout his time. Overall, the outcome of Brown v. Board of Education, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 all indicate steps of progress.

For the Test

The fight for Civil Rights is obviously a big part of this time period. There is a lot of knowledge for you to be aware of. Specifically, you should understand the role that Lyndon B. Johnson played in pushing for civil rights changes. You should know about key Civil Rights events, and their outcomes. Also be familiar with several important leaders and their ideology. Thematically, it is important that you understand why the United States was ripe for change during this time.

Civil Liberties

The Civil Rights movement was largely successful during Period 8. Thus far, the question of Civil Rights seems to have mostly centered on race relations. Specifically, it has dealt with the status of African-Americans in society. The success of these movements opened the door to broader questions of civil liberties. While the civil rights movement worked to ensure that all people were treated fairly and equally, the movement to protect civil liberties was more focused on the general rights of the people, particularly as outlined in the Bill of Rights. This meant that issues about freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and other similar ideas were at the forefront of this movement.

In actuality, it wasn’t so much a specific movement of any kind. Instead, the tumultuous and ever changing social climate of the mid-1900s allowed for many questions of civil liberties to come up. There wasn’t exactly a certain trend or a certain group that was seeking to defend their place in society. Rather, it was a time where people were constantly considering what the fair and ethical role of government was, and what it meant for people of various backgrounds to experience the same liberties while getting along peacefully. For your purposes as an AP U.S. History student, we will run through some specific examples of civil liberties issues.
Engel v. Vitale (1962)

This court case originated at a public school in New York. Basically, the school in question had adopted the habit of starting every school day with a voluntary prayer. This prayer made mention of, and was directed towards “Almighty God.” A couple of families of students felt that this prayer contradicted their religious beliefs. More than that, they felt it was unconstitutional for the public school to support its recitation by students. Specifically, they felt that it violated the First Amendment, which states that no government organization should make any law regarding religion. Many people hoped that the state would uphold that the prayer was constitutional. However, the courts ultimately decided that government sanctioned prayer in schools was indeed unconstitutional. This was, in general, a classic example of the separation of church and state.

Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

Chances are, you know a little more about this court case than you thought you did. The list of rights that an officer reads a person as they are arrested is a direct result of this court case. In fact, that list of rights is known as the Miranda Rights. This issue came to the courts after the arrest of Ernesto Miranda. Miranda was apparently arrested due to circumstantial evidence. He was then interrogated by police officers for quite some time, until he eventually signed a confession. Throughout that time, Miranda was never made aware of the fact that he had a legal right to seek counsel, and that he also did not have to participate in the interrogation. He was largely unaware that his responses given during the interrogation could be used against him.

When the case went to the Supreme Court, Miranda’s conviction was overturned based on the fact that his confession was deemed to be coerced. The effects of this court case were monumental. As a result of this trial, all police officers are required to remind an arrested person of their rights, which came to be known as the Miranda warning, or the Miranda Rights. This case was especially significant in that it maintained the importance of protecting citizens rights as outlined in the Bill of Rights, even if that person was possibly guilty of a crime.

Sweatt v. Painter (1950)

It is important to note that this court case occurred prior to the Brown v. Board of Education court case. That means that the “separate but equal” doctrine established in Plessy v. Ferguson was still in effect. In fact, the “separate but equal” idea was at the center of this court case. In many ways, this case was a precursor to the Brown ruling that took place only four years later. Basically, an African-American student named Heman Marion Sweatt was hoping to attend the law school at the University of Texas, but was not allowed in because of his race. In addition, there wasn’t a law school in Texas that would allow an African-
American student to attend. This created a significant problem for Sweatt, but also for the idea of “separate but equal.”

This case brought up this question: what happens when a separate, and equal, facility is not available? The state attempted to circumvent the issue by creating a law school for black students. When the issue went to the Supreme Court it was deemed that this law school was far inferior to the University of Texas Law School. As a result, Sweatt was admitted to the University of Texas Law School. This case was overall significant for the fact that it was a direct challenge to *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

**Stonewall (1969)**

This was not a court case, but rather a series of riots. These riots were in reaction to the harsh treatment of the LGBT community. Essentially, the riots developed out of a police raid at a function populated by members of the gay community. The riots were a reaction to the raid and to the overall tense relations between the LGBT community and the general United States population. The details of these riots aren’t particularly important. It is, however, important for you to know that these riots were the start of the gay pride movement and started the movement towards gay rights.

*For the Test*

There was a lot going on during this time in regards to questions of civil liberties. You will need to be familiar with some of the examples listed above. You will also need to know how this trend of civil liberties issues is part of the larger trend during this time period.

**Stormy Seventies**

There were a significant number of social and cultural issues that dominated domestic affairs in the United States for quite some time. However, it should not be forgotten that there was still an ongoing conflict with communism abroad, and that conflict was having significant effects on various parts of life back in the States. There was a great fear of communism spreading, and many people feared that communists were actually living in the United States and were going to spread their communist ideas. This was just one example of the political turmoil of the time.

One notable group from this time period was the *Weathermen Underground Organization*. This revolutionary group apparently hoped to overthrow the government, and launched a series of bombs used as protests. Generally, the group would announce that a bomb was going to be set off in enough time for people to evacuate the area. They also announced what exactly they were protesting with each bomb. Mysteriously, the group started to disappear when
the Vietnam conflict came to a close, and they never made any significant moves towards revolution. However, they did reveal a lot about the political climate during the time. People were very distrusting of the government, and there was often significant disapproval of government actions in foreign affairs. The existence of groups like this was an interesting contrast to the growth of groups seeking to expand civil rights and civil liberties. Also, this group further heightened the already existing fears of communism spreading in the United States.

For the Test

It is important for you to recognize examples of effects of the communist scare, such as the Weathermen Underground Organization. As always, think about how this plays into the larger themes at work in this period.

The Wrap Up

Period 8, 1945-1980, was marked by a couple of extremely significant trends. Abroad, America was struggling through a very intense cold war with very serious implications. At the same time, events in America were tumultuous, and within just ten years time there was greater progress in Civil Rights then there had been in an entire century. It is easy to think that these two themes are unrelated. However, they are almost always intermingled in one way or another.

Overall, the Cold War rhetoric sparked many of the Civil Rights changes that occurred during this time. There was a newfound appreciation of freedom and equality, both domestically and abroad. As people began to question American ideologies and wonder about the role of government and leadership, the status of many minority groups was improved upon, while a series of civil liberties were upheld. All of this occurred through numerous strong administrators of varying political views. Notably, Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society led the way in making many of these social and political changes within the states.
Period 8 (1945-1980): Postwar Economic, Demographic, and Technological Changes

General Overview

The period following World War II was a very significant time in American history. For your purposes, as an AP U.S. History student, that period is known as Period 8, and it spans from 1945-1980. However, this time period has many unique characteristics that make it a remarkable time in United States history. America was coming off of deadly, yet triumphant World War that allowed them to emerge as an international superpower. American leaders spent the first couple of decades after the war determining what America’s role should be in the greater global context. Meanwhile, there were significant social and political changes occurring within the United States, giving U.S. leadership another set of issues to tackle. In addition, America’s economy, technology, and demographics were rapidly changing. This led to a number of political, societal, and environmental changes.

In this AP U.S. History guide, we will cover Period 8. The different time periods in American history are outlined in the AP U.S. History Official Course Description. Within each time periods there are a couple of Key Concepts for you to know. This particular guide outlines Key Concept 8.1 The Key Concepts outlined in the course description are great indicators of what you will be expected to know for the AP test. If it helps you to answer some realistic questions about the material, there are a plethora of practice questions available that line up with the key concepts available for you to use. These can help you stay on track and make sure that you really understand the material.

Cold War

Up until this time, America had not experienced any conflicts within the boundaries of the United States since the divisive Civil War. Since then, America had been involved in a number of military conflicts. However, each of these conflicts had occurred outside of the nation’s boundaries, and there was relatively little risk to average American citizens. Of course, there was the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which catapulted the United States into the middle of a war that had engaged almost all major European powers. However, that was an isolated event, and America’s swift response prevented any other major violence to occur within the states. Americans had enjoyed lives of relative peace and safety. For that
reason, the developments of the Cold War were especially frightening to United States citizens.

The fear of the spread of communism was one thing. The Red Scare did indeed cause quite a commotion and was a focus of attention for quite some time during this time period. However, even through such radical circumstances as the Red Scare, the biggest threat to American safety was perceived to be from the outside. And the threat wasn’t necessarily just about the spread of communist power. The power of nuclear weapons had been revealed, and it was a frightening reality that one of America’s enemies, the Soviets, had access to such weaponry. The apparent fear of a nuclear attack was prevalent in American society and culture, especially at the peak of the Cold War. This can be seen through such advertising campaigns as one entitled, “Bert the Turtle,” who instructed children on how to properly hide in the case of a nuclear attack.

Campaigns like this one were not uncommon. For many years, America was the only nation with access to an atomic bomb, which left American citizens feeling rather safe and secure. However, in 1949, the Soviet Union also exploded an atomic bomb. Once it was established that the Soviet Union was capable of producing weapons with such massive capabilities for destruction, the idea of an attack on America was often assumed to be highly probable.

Bert the Turtle attempted to provide a light hearted insight into a very real and serious fear of many Americans. Campaigns like this one are especially helpful for assessing the social and political climate of America during this time. This shows that there was obviously a significant amount of fear, and tensions were high. It was a challenging time for American citizens. In many ways, these fears and anxieties may have contributed to the activity of the Civil Rights movements and other social movements. They provided a welcome distraction from the frightening events happening overseas.

For the Test

Determine why fears about a Soviet nuclear attack would have been so high at this time. Explain the effect that this might have had on American society. Also, you should be able to describe how America’s past experiences with warfare would have contributed to the fears described above.

Peopling and Labor

One significant part of the story of America is the importance of immigration to our country. While it is now with great pride that people refer to the nation as a “melting pot,” the mixture of cultures and people groups was not always so readily accepted. There was certainly a great deal of nativism present in the attitudes of many American citizens. Events of World War II, where many Japanese-Americans were brought into containment camps, and the Cold War,
where people of foreign descent were often labeled as communists and were subject to harsh treatment, created a society that was not exactly welcoming of foreign immigrants.

In addition, there was a lasting concern that immigrants were going to take away jobs from natural born Americans. There were also concerns about overcrowding and urbanization. Remnants of the Industrial Revolution had created enormous cities centered on factories and industries. Overall, there was a general mentality that immigrants were not enthusiastically welcomed into the United States.

However, Lyndon B. Johnson sought to change this. Well, rather, Johnson inherited the presidency from JFK, who desired an abolishment of the quota system of immigration. Thus, Johnson signed the **Immigration Act of 1965**. Previous immigration laws had been particularly harsh to Asian countries, and the allowance of immigrants was determined strictly based on where they were from. The Immigration Act, however, required that immigrants be considered for U.S. citizenship based on their skills and family relations within the United States. As Johnson not so plainly expressed, the new immigration system would focus on what the potential immigrant could do for the country.

Johnson’s approval of this act, as with most of his other progressive acts, garnered quite a bit of negative feedback. Many people were concerned that the act would allow such an influx of immigrants to join the American society that it would create a major shift in demographics and drastically affect American culture. Johnson and other proponents of the bill had to convince people that this would not happen. However, the fact that people had such significant fears of a changing culture indicates a lot about the society of the time. People were weary of any kind of foreign influences, and were especially protective of their inherently American way of life.

**Women Workers**

Another significant change being experienced by the American people of this time was the rapid introduction of women to the common workplace. This had been a growing trend for quite some time in the United States. However, during the mid-20th century, the number of women involved in the workforce skyrocketed. This was largely an effect of the back-to-back World Wars. During each of these wars, women had assumed jobs that were typically held by men. After the war, men usually came in and resumed their places in these jobs while women stepped to the side.

However, the fact that they were able to maintain these jobs during wartime had shown their value in the workplace, and had laid the foundation for an influx of women in the workplace. After 1950, there was considerable growth in the percentage of women working, often alongside men. This created a lot more financial and social liberty for women. Conservatives were concerned that this
was going to lead to the devolution of the nuclear family structure. The prevalence of women in the workplace caused Americans to question the role of women in society, and women used this as a launch pad for claiming a more active role in society.

For the Test

Despite the fact that America was involved in consecutive world wars to start off the 20th century, Americans had enjoyed a relatively comfortable, stable lifestyle. You will need to be able to explain how the influx of immigrants and the growing number of women in the workplace challenged the status quo and created a new national culture.

Suburbanization

The Industrial Revolution was marked by a time of rapid urbanization. Massive amounts of people moved from the suburbs and rural areas of towns to downtown, highly industrialized cities. A movement in opposition of that urbanization marked the mid 20th century: suburbanization. It is essentially just what it sounds like; a movement of people towards the suburbs. The idea of a suburban lifestyle is relatively common to most people in America these days. However, for a time it was a progressive idea with a wide range of causes and effects.

Before diving into the causes and effects of suburbanization, let us establish a standard definition for a suburb. A suburb is an area or neighborhood located on the outskirts of a town. They are often less populated than cities, and feature more houses than apartments. These neighborhoods are often removed from factories or industries and are built based on the idea of providing a comfortable living arrangement. They often featured the mass production of houses, creating large neighborhoods. So why did people start moving towards the suburbs in the wake of World War II?

Causes of Suburbanization

For one, the economy of the United States was thriving following the war. Many Americans were experiencing a surplus of wealth that allowed them to provide for their families just beyond their basic needs. Many families were no longer limited to just getting by. Instead, they were able to seek the comfortable lifestyle that suburban neighborhoods allowed. Also, the booming economy made it possible for contractors to buy and build on large tracts of land. Another significant cause of suburbanization was the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act. This act created an efficient system of transportation throughout the United States. Specifically, it linked urban areas to the surrounding outskirt areas of town. This way, people could work in an urban area while living in a rural or suburban area.
Overall, the suburbs seemed to provide a welcome escape from urban life and a comfortable lifestyle for many families.

**Effects of Suburbanization**

While many Americans reaped the benefits of suburbanization, some critiqued the movement. One aspect of suburbanization that many people took issue with was the fact that it created a very homogenous culture, in which almost all houses looked alike and all family structures were the same. Culturally, this time period seems to mark the height of the American dream. Suburban life was often a significant part of that American dream. There were many subculture movements that did not buy into that American dream, and emphasized the importance of maintaining individuality. For these groups, suburbanization was just another step towards conformity.

*For the Test*

Make sure that you are familiar with the reasons for suburbanization. Recognize the role that it plays in the changing culture and demographics of the average American citizen. Identify weaknesses of such a movement.

**Conservatism**

For much of the mid-20th century, the United States was run by a number of progressive liberal presidents, such as John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson, perhaps more than most liberal presidents, wasted no time in implementing his strategies into government. His passage of the Social Security Act, the creation of Food Stamps, and the development of Medicare and Medicaid had created a very progressive system of government that provided quite a few services to those suffering from poverty in America. These were all, of course, funded by the federal government. This means that they drew heavily upon taxes to fund these programs. While they were providing a considerable service to many people, the use of taxes in such a way was certainly opposed by many politicians, particularly those with a conservative bent.

One early opponent to Johnson’s liberal tax and welfare programs was Barry Goldwater. Johnson took over the presidency following Kennedy’s assassination, and ran for re-election in 1964. His opponent was Barry Goldwater. Goldwater was very critical of Johnson’s reliance upon taxes for funding so many federal programs. Particularly, he did not like that the wealthy were often taxed at a higher rate. Goldwater was very much of the mindset that the laissez-faire approach to government was supreme, and that people should be allowed to make as much money as was feasible for them.

In broad terms, Goldwater was worried that Johnson’s programs and his revered “Great Society” would eventually lead America into a welfare state. Given the
anti-communism, anti-socialist attitudes in America, this was a convincing campaign platform. However, Johnson, riding the momentum provided by Kennedy, was able to handily defeat Goldwater in the 1964 election. However, Goldwater’s beliefs and ideas are significant because they represent the attitudes of conservative America during this time. Besides being fiscally conservative, Goldwater represents a nostalgic view of America’s past as a “rugged” nation made up of people who worked hard for what they had and persevered until financial success. It is interesting to note that the opposing views expressed by Johnson and Goldwater accurately represent the currently opposing views of Democrats and Republicans

**Silent Spring**

The divide between liberal and conservative beliefs was not just limited to questions of tax reform, financial well-being, and the welfare state. There seemed to be a conservative or liberal perspective on just about any issue in politics. One such issue was the question of environmental care. The 1970s represent one of America’s most active times in passing legislature aimed at caring for the environment. This was largely sparked by the book *Silent Spring*, written by Rachel Carson. Carson investigated the negative effects of pesticide use in America.

At the time, DDT was used frequently all over the country. There are historic pictures of children playing in the yard as a truck sprays DDT over the grass. It was just an accepted part of society that people did not think much about. Rachel Carson’s book changed that. She drew attention to all of the harmful effects caused by the prolific use of pesticides. Her work, while sometimes criticized, was mostly well received. It eventually led to a ban on the use of DDT, and contributed to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Many conservatives argued that the federal government had no place restricting the use of pesticides. However, this was just one of many future actions taken to protect the environment.

*For the Test*

You should recognize why conservatives would have opposed many actions taken by Johnson and other liberal leaders. Explain how the environmental movement is an example of the federal governments broad reaching ability to enact change.

**Nixon**

One extraordinarily significant event closed out Period 8: the Watergate Scandal. Richard Nixon was serving as President when a group of burglars was caught breaking into the Watergate offices in Washington D.C. Through a series of evidence, it became evident that the burglars were somehow connected to Nixon. Specifically, they were connected to his campaign for re-election in the coming
presidential election. Nixon did not own up to the incident, and instead resisted the investigation of Congress, which created an even greater incident.

Nixon was historically paranoid about getting re-elected, which often caused him to make questionable decisions. For example, when a document known as the Pentagon Papers was released, which didn’t even incriminate Nixon, he attempted to suppress the papers. This only drew more attention to him and his questionable ethics. A full-scale investigation was launched, both by federal investigators as well as journalists. During a hearing, it was revealed that Nixon recorded pretty much all of his conversations. This meant there was a ton of evidence floating around out there. However, Nixon refuses to give up the tapes.

Finally, in 1974, Nixon was ordered to turn over the tapes. These tapes were full of incriminating evidence, and when the courts obtained them, Nixon virtually knew that he was caught. He finally resigned. This whole ordeal left the American people feeling very jaded and mistrusting of the government. In addition, the economy was struggling and conflicts in Vietnam had proven to be rather fruitless. The optimistic spirit that was so prevalent following the Civil War was now on the decline. Nixon’s resignation marks a considerable turning point in American history.

For the Test

You should have a general idea of the sequence of events involved with the Watergate scandal. You should also be able to explain the social and political effects of such a large-scale scandal. Recognize how this may have served as a turning point in U.S. history.

The Wrap Up

The period of 1945-1980 was a time of considerable change for American citizens. The reality of American life immediately after World War II was far different from the prevalent lifestyles experienced in the late 1970s. A series of liberal Presidents enacted a number of federal programs that frustrated conservatives but provided beneficial services to many people. Immigration laws that had been in place for many years were changed to allow more equitable immigration. Meanwhile, women became a formidable part of the workforce. Suburbanization spread families out from cities, and the nation witnessed one of the grandest political scandals in American history.

As you look ahead to the end of the 20th century, all of these factors will play a considerable role in shaping the culture and society of the United States. The fearless and exuberant optimism of 1945 had long worn off, and Americans were questioning what it meant to be part of American society. The coming decades of the 80s and 90s were largely a reaction to the events at the end of this time.
period. As an APUSH student, if you understand the way that one period flows into another, you will be set for the test.
Period 9 (1980-Present): Renewed Conservatism in Culture and Politics

General Overview

The 1980s were brought to the United States a mixed bag of experiences. In the previous decade the American people were deceived by the actions of former President Nixon and appalled by his willingness to compromise democracy. The Watergate Scandal left the American people with a distrust of the White House and the Oval Office. Also as a result of the Watergate Scandal the executive branch realized that the media was no longer on its side leading to a standoff between the two that persists to the present day. Also the Vietnam War had just ended and many young veterans were brought back from the jungles of Vietnam scarred both physically and mentally. However the ‘80s promised the American people a more transparent government. President Carter hoped to salvage the trust of the American people while focusing his gaze towards the improvement of humanity across the globe. Unfortunately President Carter’s presidency was wracked by international crises and he lost his second term to President Reagan. Following President Reagan’s lead the United States entered a period of political and economic conservatism. This study guide corresponds to Period 9 of the AP US History Course and Exam Description; make sure to use it to help your studies. Then when you feel you have reviewed your history take these practice questions!

Carter to the Nation

President Jimmy Carter was a Democratic Party member who ran against Gerald Ford in the election following the Watergate Scandal. He ran on a platform of ethical reliability and government transparency in order to show Americans that the federal government and the president especially, could still be trusted. Furthering his platform was the fact that he served in Georgia’s state government prior to running for the presidency. He made his claim to trustworthiness by stating that he was not a part of Washington’s latest shadowy activities.

President Carter won the election of 1977 and was elected president over Gerald Ford. He began his presidency with good intentions and decided to direct the United States in a more humanitarian and global-minded direction. He began by upholding the Helsinki Accords signed by his predecessor, former President Ford. The Helsinki Accords dictated that all signatories would place greater emphasis on increased civil liberties and prevent unnecessary oppression within their own territory. President Carter censured Moscow and the Kremlin for suppressing dissidents within the Soviet Union and censoring speech that
criticized the Soviet government. Another major success of President Carter’s term was his success in mediating the conflict between Egypt and Israel. This mediation took place at Camp David and came to be known as the Camp David Accords. President Carter guided this negotiation between Egypt’s President Anwar el-Sadat and Israel’s Prime Minister Menachem Begin. This meeting ended hostilities between Egypt and Israel.

Despite these successes, problems both at home and abroad began to rear their heads and overwhelm President Carter. It seemed that the altruistic intentions of President Carter were overwhelmed by his lack of experience dealing with domestic and international issues. The biggest crisis during the presidency of Jimmy Carter was the Iranian Hostage Crisis. 1979 saw the Shah of Iran’s reign toppled by Iranian zealots who supported the power play of Ayatollah Khomeini, a religious leader who promised to save Iran from the evils of western development. During the revolution the American Embassy in Tehran was overrun and 52 Americans were captured and held hostage. President Carter tried many venues to save the hostages ranging from demanding that the United Nations place a trade embargo on Iran to giving the green light for a secret rescue mission by the United States’ armed forces. In the end President Carter was forced to negotiate with the revolutionaries and in exchange for the release of the hostages the United States would have to help fund the Iranian conflict against Iraq.

The conclusion of what began as a hopeful new era was marred by the failures of President Carter to strengthen the American economy; by the end of his term in the oval office the nation was in the worst recession since the Great Depression of the ‘30s. President Carter had not lied to the American people but he had failed to provide the strong leadership necessary to steer the United States back on the right course.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you what international events troubled the United States during the late ‘70s and early ‘80s. It may then ask you what steps were taken by President Carter to combat these issues and whether he succeeded or not.

Falwell’s America

The liberalism of the ‘70s and the anti-war movement helped bring an end to the Vietnam War. For the first time in history Americans were exposed to the carnage of war through their televisions and they realized that they did not support this violence. The pendulum would swing back as a result and American society would become increasingly conservative. This movement was led by a man called Jerry Falwell who forever altered the composition and power base of the political right.
Moral Majority

In 1979 Jerry Falwell was a political commentator with conservative belief that was grounded in his televangelist background. He believed that the United States had become corrupted by the secular influence of the liberal left. He thought that in order for America to become great again we would need to return to our Puritan roots and allow religion to once again play a larger role in the legislative and political process. In pursuit of this ideal Falwell formed the Moral Majority a political organization that tapped into the fundamental Christian population of the conservative right. The purpose for its foundation was to effect change in national politics that would allow religion to once again act as a guiding force for legislation.

Activity of the Moral Majority was centered in Lynchburg, Virginia where Falwell maintained a congregation. It eventually evolved into a full-blown political action committee dedicated to allowing prayer in school, repealing the decision of the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*, and general opposition to the organization and growth of LGBT groups in the United States. A majority of their political action took the form of televangelist broadcasts and rallies, but its greatest accomplishment was the establishment and consolidation of the United States’ conservative Christian population. Their organization was so successful that they were able to influence the elections of 1980 and defeat President Jimmy Carter’s campaign for re-election. Instead they supported Ronald Reagan who won the election and kept an open line for advice from the leadership of the Moral Majority. They were also able to help President Reagan get re-elected for his second term in 1984. After the Reagan Administration the Moral Majority as an organization would be dissolved, but Christian fundamentalism became associated with the Republican Party as a result of their efforts and this has altered the composition of the Republican Party’s roster to this day.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you to identify what point in history the Republican Party became associated with fundamental Christian traditions. It may also ask you how fundamental Christians originally organized and who led them.

Gingrich Takes Charge

The ‘80s began a dismantling of liberal domination in Congress that had a developed as a result of the work of President Franklin Roosevelt during the Great Depression and World War II. For the first time in decades the Republican Party was able to truly influence politics without being railroaded by the Democratic Party. The Republican Party was riding a wave of modern conservatism and was determined to reverse the damage they perceived came as a result of legislation passed by a Democratic majority in Congress.
Their influence reached a boiling point with the Republican Revolution of 1994. For the first time in four decades the Republican Party was able to get a majority in the House of Representatives that had not been seen since 1954. The November elections for seats in Congress were filled with 54 new Republicans who wrested control from the Democratic Party. Gingrich managed this by working with other prominent Republicans to draft a “Contract with America”. The document promised that if the Republican Party was able to win a majority in the House of Representatives they would immediately turn their attention to ten issues that were the most pressing to America at the time. These issues included how to balance the national budget, cutting welfare programs, and rewarding American families with tax cuts.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you to recognize the Republican Revolution of 1994. It can potentially also ask who orchestrated the rout of the Democratic Party during the Republican Revolution.

Federal Expenditures

A chief source of conflict between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party during this time period was how to balance the budget. The Republican Party believed that it was time to cut back the welfare state that had been established during the Great Depression. The system had been created to support the American people during a time of great hardship but such a system was perceived by Republicans as no longer necessary. The Democratic Party wanted to cut back on military spending in favor of increasing social programs. They believed that by doing so they would help improve the image of the United States on the international stage while simultaneously doing something to benefit the greater American public. During this time period the budget was split mostly evenly between social programs and military/defense spending, but both parties wanted to cut one side of the budget in favor of the other. The surge of conservatism that helped Republicans win the House of Representatives in 1994 tipped the scales in their favor and for more than a decade the Republican Party decreased funding for social programs and increased the size of the defense budget. Yet whenever moves were made to make relatively larger reductions to these programs the American public itself would block the moves of the Republican Party.

For the Test

An argument that was important to the ‘80s, ‘90s, and early 2000s was how to balance the national budget. The AP US History exam may ask which political party eventually did gain enough political clout to finally make adjustments to the American budget in an attempt to balance it.
The Wrap-Up

The United States during the 1980s was a nation lost and in need of direction. The Vietnam War left the country reeling from the violence of the conflict and an American public distrustful of whoever was sitting in the Oval Office. In an effort to earn back American trust President Jimmy Carter developed a platform that appealed to the American sense of ethics and reliability. His idealism however was shattered by global politics that needed more than an optimistic commitment to charitable goals. This was then accompanied by the growth and establishment of an American conservative right focused on the return to Christian morality and led by fundamental Christian evangelist traditions. So strong was their unity that they were able to defeat President Carter in favor of Ronald Reagan, but they were finally able to shift an entrenched Democratic position in Congress that had been in power since the ’50s. The average American was less concerned with who held power and instead how the economy was going to be salvaged and the budget balanced. Both political parties had their own version of the proper solution but in the end it was the Republican Party that gained the right to make an attempt.
Period 9 (1980-Present): The End of the Cold War and New Challenges

General Overview

After World War II President Truman pursued a policy of containment. He believed that Communism and the Soviet Union should not be allowed to spread because it was an ideology that stood counter to democracy and thus everything the United States stood for. For decades after World War II the United States stood at odds with the Soviet Union; ideologically, politically, and economically the United States struggled against the Communist bloc, but never militarily.

This period in American history is known as the Cold War. The Cold War lasted from 1947 to 1991 and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demolition of the Berlin Wall. Despite the size of the Soviet Union it was unable to stand against the United States and the world entered an age of American hegemony. The United States became a global policeman and due to its unparalleled size was forced to mediate conflict between belligerent nations; it acted as the strong arm of the United Nations’ Security Council. This strength would paint the United States as a target though and upon entering the 21st century our nation was attacked. The September 11 attacks would forever change life in America and the world as well. This review guide accompanies the AP US History Course and Exam Description. When you’ve finished reading use these practice questions to review!

“Mr. Gorbachev…”

For the first time in decades President Reagan implemented a policy of cooperation instead of aggression. Presidents prior to Reagan had followed the same hardline that had been set by President Truman directly after the end of World War II. But the people of both the United States and the Soviet Union were tired of the ideological struggle that had consumed both their nations. Both nations had stockpiled large arsenals of nuclear weapons, raced to the moon, and in the process had both amassed massive amounts of debt. Reagan had fundamentally opposed communism, but it was because of an individual’s actions in the Soviet Union that he was willing to negotiate.

On the opposite side was President Reagan’s counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev was a progressive Soviet leader who wanted to help modernize the Soviet Union. He pursued two key policies: glasnost and perestroika. Glasnost is the Russian word for “openness”, and it was a policy meant to expand the civil liberties of Soviet citizens. This included greater free speech, less repression of...
information, a more transparent government. *Perestroika* is the Russian word for “restructuring” and it was an economic policy. Under a policy of *perestroika* the Soviet Union would put an end to central planning by the government, allow for free-market policies to determine the economy, and a general expansion of international trade.

These policies combined with a willingness from the American people to sit down for discussion lead to the dismantling of what President Reagan called the “evil empire”. These new policies heralded the collapse of power in Russia and soon after the Soviet Union dissolved as well. Puppet governments in Eastern Europe crumpled and failed and soon democracies sprouted up all over the former Soviet bloc. Nations like Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania appeared after having been subsumed by the Soviet Union for decades. Finally the Iron Curtain was taken down and east and west Germany were a single nation once more.

*For the Test*

The AP US History Exam may ask you what type of international policy President Reagan's administration pursued during his presidency. It may also ask how helped bring an end to the Cold War while working with Mikhail Gorbachev. Another important concept to understand are the after-effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union on Eastern Europe.

**Clinton on Somalia**

President Bush had failed to live up to the expectations set by his predecessor, President Reagan. Bush embroiled the nation in the Gulf War. According to President Bush an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait threatened geopolitical stability because of Kuwait's ample oil reserves. Another reason for the involvement in the Middle East was the alleged human rights violations by the Iraqi Army during their invasion of Kuwait. Additionally President Bush faced an economy that was suffering from a hundred billion dollar deficit, a remnant of Reaganomics.

All of this contributed to the success of President Clinton's presidential campaign, and he was elected to the Oval Office in 1993. President Clinton received his law degree from Yale and served as governor of Arkansas from 1979 to 1992, he had plenty of experience in politics but had never worked in Washington.

In spite of this fact the American people saw fit to elect. One of the major events during Clinton's presidency was the *crisis in Somalia*. Where Reagan and Bush had seen fit to apply interventionist policies to further political agendas, President Clinton utilized American military strength in favor of a humanitarian goal. Somalia was wracked by civil war as warlords sought to centralize power, but the average Somalian was caught in the crossfire. The soldiers were not meant to engage in conflict, but simply to protect civilians and supply depots.
meant for the noncombatant population. Unfortunately his attempt at peacekeeping was thwarted by his inability to justify the pacification mission and he was forced to withdraw American soldiers. To this day Somalia has yet to recover from the conflict.

One more example of Clinton’s foreign policy was the action he took in the Balkans. The Balkans had been an unstable area of the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was compounded by the fact that the population of that area was highly varied. A civil war erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the population was divided between staying with Yugoslavia or declaring independence. On one side Bosnian Serbs wanted to remain part of Yugoslavia, on the other were Bosnian Croats and Muslims who wanted to declare independence. By pressuring NATO forces and fighting in Congress to intervene, President Clinton was able to intercede in the conflict and prevent the wholesale massacre of the Bosnian Croats and Muslims, who had been losing the conflict at the time.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you to describe President Clinton’s foreign policy. It may also ask you to identify key events during his presidency.

Bush Address the Nation

On September 11, 2001 at 8:46am the United States was attacked. Four flights were hijacked by the Al-Qaeda, a militant terrorist group. American Airline Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center and United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower. The terrorist group also attacked the Pentagon and American Airline 77 was hijacked and crashed into the western wall of the Pentagon.

For the first time in modern history the contiguous United States was attacked. But there was no country held responsible,

Americans had no other nation to blame for these dreadful attacks. The United States had been attacked by the revolutionary Islamist organization called Al-Qaeda. The United States could not deploy its vast military might to fight a faceless, nation-less organization. Al-Qaeda was both everywhere and nowhere because the organization was composed of extremist cells that were based out of multiple countries. President Bush responded to the attacks, denouncing the terrorist acts and simultaneously mourning the 2,977 victims who had died as a result. These attacks would lead to the United States beginning a war on terrorism that would spread to the Middle East as we attempted to root out and destroy the terrorist organization. Consequently the Taliban regime in Iraq was toppled for offering Al-Qaeda agents asylum.
For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you about modern history and recent events and what actions the President and the United States took during the war on terrorism.

A Call to Courage

The war on terrorism was an immediate reaction to the attacks on American soil on 9/11. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks the President and Congress sought to not only protect the nation from further attacks but root out terrorism to prevent a similar event from happening in the future. Congress passed the Patriot Act which granted the federal government extraordinary powers that would allow it to more thoroughly combat the threat of terrorism. Understandably the act was passed with little resistance because the legislation came at a time when most Americans were fearful of a second attack on American soil and they believed that by passing the Patriot Act they would be better protected.

The act itself is split into ten parts that grant extra powers to the federal government and federal intelligence agencies. These powers include: legalization of wiretaps, strengthening anti-money laundering measures, and increased border security.

A second attack never came and Americans began to take a look at the nation they had built out of fear. The United States was dangerously on track to becoming a police state with the draconian Patriot Act, and the American people began to speak out. Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union now feared that the government had given itself too much power while trying to combat terrorism and now it was time to take some of that power back. Americans had begun to question how much was too much when it came to compromising privacy to protect national security. The Patriot Act had been used to legally infringe upon American citizens’ privacy and it was only several years after the terrorist attacks that the wording of the law was truly examined.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam can ask you how the American public reacted to the ratification of the Patriot Act both immediately after the 9/11 attacks and several years after.

The Wrap-Up

After the Cold War the United States entered an era of hopeful optimism. Reagan’s “evil empire” had been defeated and American hegemony took its place. Citizens of the United States experienced an unprecedented amount of influence
on international politics. American military power lead to our nation taking the role of global policeman. Unfortunately our rulings as preeminent nation would not always be agreed with by the rest of the international community. During this period we were entangled in several international conflicts that had causes ranging from protecting American oil interests in the Middle East to humanitarian efforts in Europe and Africa. Yet there were those would not take kindly to the far-reaching grasp of American might and the United States was attacked on September 11. In the wake of this attack security measures were taken that is only now beginning to be thoroughly examined.

General Overview

The United States entered the 21st century with hope. We were no longer in the Middle East, the economy was strong as a result of President Clinton’s efforts, and generally the international community was at peace. Yet as positive as everything seemed, the new millennium had underlying problems left over from the previous century and contemporary trials that developed as American society evolved. The economy was growing as technology progressed but not all Americans were benefiting equally. Welfare programs meant to act as a safety net for the average American during times of tragedy were questioned. Americans were beginning to examine how they powered their cities and the effects of using energy sources that were not renewable. The population has begun to grow as the result of the influx of immigrant populations. Finally conservative and liberal groups began to tackle social issues.

Economic Patterns

Beginning in the 1980s the American economy began to grow gradually, there were ups and downs but for the most part the American economy steadily flourished. This growth was not spread equally throughout American society however. A policy began by President Ronald Reagan began a decentralizing of the federal government to lessen regulation in all aspects of society. This brand of economics was christened Reaganomics.

It involved lessening government regulation in the private sector, lowering taxes for the wealthy, decreasing government spending, and fighting inflation. These techniques were meant to not only lessen government presence in the average American life but indirectly combat problems in the economy. It was colloquially known as “trickle-down economics” because the tactics employed don’t directly affect most Americans. Instead by encouraging large corporations and wealthy Americans by taxing them less, President Reagan hoped to expand smaller business and improve the standard of living of the American people. During his Reagan’s presidency the economy did improve, the average family’s income grew, the inflation rate fell, and business profits soared. However concerns rose after the end of his presidency. In spite of the effort to minimize government influence and presence the federal government ended up retaining billions of dollars of debt. Americans also began to realize that while everyone had become a little wealthier, those who were already rich had their taxes cut so low that their
fortunes grew exponentially. Reaganomics had favored the upper tax bracket of the United States to an absurd amount.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you to determine what caused the economic trends of the United States beginning from the 1980s to the present.

Governor’s Meet

Beginning with President Franklin Roosevelt’s development of social security the United States has had a long history of social welfare programs to help needy Americans. The purpose of social welfare programs like social security and Medicare is to help Americans with financial issues when times are tough. They were born out of the era of the Great Depression, when everyone was suffering from money problems and the average American often had trouble putting enough food on the table to eat. Social security helps older Americans exit the job market when age overcame them but allowed them to maintain a living. Medicare helps pay for medical bills that can become exorbitantly high when dealing with major health issues.

The New Federalism of Richard Nixon in the 1970s was a shift from the conservatives to begin decentralizing the government and shifting powers back to the states. This involved lessening government regulation and overall decreasing government oversight in all facets of society, especially in the private sector. One of the major movements of this shift was the debate over whether to cut social welfare programs because they were perceived to be a drain on government resources.

There was a movement to change “welfare as we know it” because the welfare system at the time was seen as bloated, wasteful, and inefficient. Leading the charge was Democrat, Bill Clinton. Instead of maintaining a hardline policy regarding welfare he decided to take a bipartisan stance and begin a thorough examination of the welfare program to manage waste. His decision to do so streamlined welfare in many ways and allowed him to appease both Democrats and Republicans.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you to describe the beginning of the federal government’s social welfare programs and how it was perceived during the ‘80s and ‘90s.
Energy Consumption

The United States had proved in previous decades that we were willing to go to war over control of key oil reserves. Yet the Gulf War made Americans realize how dependent we were on foreign oil. Oil in the Middle East was even more valuable than gold based on its usefulness, it powered everything cars to construction machinery. If we lost access to relatively cheap oil our country would be stopped in its tracks simply on the basis of the fact that it’s our main source of fuel. The 21st century began a debate over how dependent the United States should be on a nonrenewable resource, especially a nonrenewable resource that we had no control over.

Another major issue that came from our reliance on foreign oil was concern about the state of the environment. The Industrial Revolution had vastly affected the environment and our dependence on oil certainly contributed to environmentally harmful effects. Oil drilling operations harmed the landscape and natural wildlife with constant dangers of oil spills. The danger did not stop there as studies were done on climate change and we discovered that the burning of fossil fuels weakened the ozone layer and contributed to unprecedented levels of climate change. This concern for the environment turned lead to a movement in American society that focused on greater environmental protection with a focus on switching to renewable sources of energy like solar power or more efficient sources of power like nuclear energy.

For the Test

The AP US History exam might ask you why the United States developed a concern for the environment in the ’90s and the early 21st century.

Technological Frontier

A development of the 21st century that you might be most familiar with is the rise of the Internet. Websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have helped popularize the Internet and as a result there has been a greater demand for internet connections and increased development of high-speed internet. The rise in popularity of the Internet has had several effects on American society.

One of these developments has been the improved access to information by all Americans. Formerly you had to go to a library or work in a university to acquire specialized information. The Internet has acted as an equalizer because anyone can put information on a website that shares information or teaches material. Information that you used to only find in library reference books are now easily brought up on your computer or tablet screen as long as you have an Internet connection.
Another major occurrence has been the altering of American social behaviors and networks. The Internet has allowed Americans to connect on an unprecedented level. No matter what your hobby or interest you can use the Internet to find like-minded people to share and discuss ideas. With each passing day Americans are getting more connected with their fellow American, whether it’s through Facebook or some other internet forum. Americans are sharing political and cultural ideas and as a result there examination and criticism of the government has grown sharper.

For the Test

The AP US History Exam may ask you to pinpoint changes in American society that has come from the growth of Internet. It may also ask you what effects this has had on American politics as well.

Most Populous States

Population in the United States during the beginning of the 21st century has seen a shift in geographic population centers. In 1940 the most populous states in the United States were very solidly in the northeast, with the sole exception being California on the west coast. These major states had cities whose populations far exceeded the population of most cities in the United States. As time moved forward however there was a shift in population in the United States. Americans had begun to move west and south thus growing the populations of states like Texas and Florida much faster than New York or Pennsylvania. This migration across the United States has had several effects on the political process and the presidential election especially.

In Congress there can only be a total of 435 representatives. However each individual state’s number of representatives is dependent on their population. In 1940 states like Pennsylvania had great political sway based on the fact that they had a larger proportion of representatives in the House. In 2010 this has changed as the populations of Texas and Florida have outstripped that of Pennsylvania. This has led to greater representation of Florida and Texas in the House while Pennsylvania has lagged behind somewhat.

The focus of presidential campaigns has been somewhat altered as well. Since presidential candidates want to win the most votes they have started changing their campaign path to spend more time in the new batch of states with the largest populations. While their attention has not moved from swing states, states that can vote either Republican or Democrat, they are taking more account of states that have growing populations.

For the Test
The US AP History exam may ask you how shifting population densities affect the legislative branch. It can also ask whether the effect carries over to the executive branch as well.

**Foreign-born Populations**

One of the biggest arguments of the 21st century has been the growing immigrant population in the United States. The population of the United States has grown so rapidly because of extensive changes to immigration laws. This change was first enacted by President Johnson who believed that the United States required a fresh influx of immigrants and that the immigration policies of the time were too restrictive. 1965 saw the elimination of several outdated policies: ethnicity quotas, difficult naturalization procedures, and systemic bias against certain immigrant groups. Instead President Johnson focused on keeping immigrant families together and choosing immigrants based on the specific skills they offer the United States.

Not all agreed with these new, open immigration laws. Conservative America believes that less restriction will lead to the dilution of American culture through the sheer volume of immigrants moving in to the United States. They also believed that they were taking away American jobs, but their arguments are unfounded. Several studies have proved that not only do immigrants not take away American jobs; the immigrant population serves to fill holes in the American workforce.

*For the Test*

How has immigration policy changed over time in the United States? Does increased immigration harm or help the American economy? These are just examples of questions the AP US History exam may ask you on test day.

**DOMA**

In response to growing liberal tendencies in the 21st century the United States the conservative population. One key piece of legislation was the Defense of Marriage Act. The Defense of Marriage Act was passed in response to the growing number of states granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples and granting these couples civil rights normally only limited to heterosexual couples. DOMA allowed states to reject the marriage licenses of same-sex couples who had been married in states that allowed for same-sex marriage. This caused outcry in the LGBT community who believed that they were being denied their constitutional rights as a result of DOMA. In recent times however the Defense of Marriage Act has been heavily scrutinized and has been found to be unconstitutional.

*For the Test*
The AP US History exam may ask you about what current social issues are being debated in the 21st century. It may also ask about how the government has tried to play a role in solving social issues.

**The Wrap-Up**

The United States faces new challenges in the 21st century. Environmental protection and conservation has become a real issue for many Americans. The United States has started to examine its options when it comes to powering the country, but protect the earth as well. The economy and welfare programs have come under scrutiny in order to determine what effects the previous presidencies’ administrations have had and what direction to take in the future. State populations are shifting and with them moves political influence. Technological advances and the expansion of the Internet has made information available to any American with an internet connection, but it has also made information into a commodity. Finally, the 21st century has made the United States consider what it means to be an American in a time of constant immigration.
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