



AP[®] U.S. HISTORY

STUDY GUIDE PACK



Period 1: 1491-1607

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1491 to 1607 and counts for 5% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class. It does not appear on the DBQ question. There are two key concepts for this time period.

KEY CONCEPT 1.1

As native populations migrated and settled across the vast expanse of North America over time, they developed distinct and increasingly complex societies by adapting to and transforming their diverse environments.

KEY CONCEPT 1.2

Contact among Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans resulted in the Columbian Exchange and significant social, cultural, and political changes on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

TIMELINE

- **1491** Christopher Columbus claims the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba for Spain.
- **1512** Spain establishes the encomienda system.
- **1519** Hernan Cortes invades Mexico.
- **1525** The first ship of slaves from Africa arrives in the Americas.

KEY TERMS

Maize

This was the main crop cultivated by American Indians.

Christopher Columbus

An Italian explorer who stumbled upon the New World after convincing the Spanish monarchs that he could sail across the Atlantic to India.

“God, Gold, Glory”

Early European explorers were motivated by a desire to spread Christianity, enrich themselves and their monarch, and gain glory for discovering new lands.

Encomienda System

A forced labor system developed by the Spanish that required American Indians

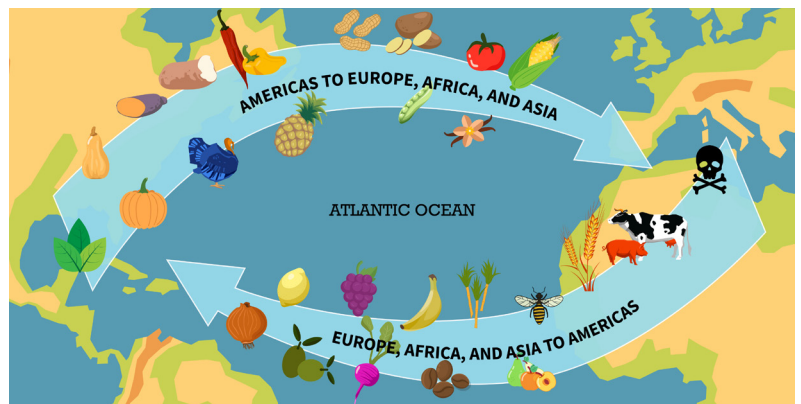


The legacy of Christopher Columbus is still being debated. Some see him as a noble explorer, while others blame him for the wrongs inflicted on the American Indian population. How do images like this shape his image?

AP® U.S. History Period 1 focuses on what life was like in the Americas before European contact and how contact with Europeans forever altered the lives, cultures, and customs of American Indian societies.

Previous to European contact, American Indian tribes across both North and South America had complex societies with distinctive social structures, political organizations, and religious beliefs. Along the American northwest, American Indians had a combination of permanent settlements and hunter-gatherer lifestyles. In the Great Plains, tribes followed the herds of buffalo and lived a nomadic lifestyle. In the American Southwest and modern-day Mexico, the American Indians cultivated **maize**. Maize was a staple crop that allowed tribes to develop a more sedentary lifestyle.

Christopher Columbus and the other early European explorers in the New World were motivated by a combination of economic and religious factors, sometimes described as “**God, Gold, and Glory**.” They were primarily looking for raw materials, especially gold, to take back to their countries to enrich their monarchs. This would bring them glory and prestige. They also felt that they had an obligation to spread Christianity. This combination often proved disastrous for native populations because American Indians were often ensnared into the slave labor system, like Spain’s **encomienda system**, and forced to abandon their native religious practices. The American Indian population was also decimated by diseases brought over by Europeans.



A trade system gradually emerged, called the Columbian Exchange, that moved crops, animals, and even diseases from the Old World to the New World and vice versa. This system introduced American crops like potatoes, tomatoes, and corn to Europe and European crops like wheat, rice, and grapes to the Americans. The Columbian Exchange also brought slaves to the New World to farm cash crops and mine for precious metals.

Period 2: 1607-1754

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1607 to 1754 and counts for 10% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class. There are two key concepts for this time period.

KEY CONCEPT 2.1

Europeans developed a variety of colonization and migration patterns, influenced by different imperial goals, cultures, and the varied North American environments where they settled. They also competed with each other and American Indians for resources.

KEY CONCEPT 2.2

The British colonies participated in political, social, cultural, and economic exchanges with Great Britain that encouraged both stronger bonds with Britain and resistance to Britain's control.

AP® US History Period 2 focuses on what life was like in the Americas between the founding of Jamestown in 1607 and the start of the French and Indian War.

TIMELINE

- **1607** The first English colony in the New World is founded at Jamestown.
- **1620** The Pilgrims sign the Mayflower Compact before settling at Plymouth Colony.
- **1637** Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643) is banished from Massachusetts for organizing religious meetings for women.
- **1675** New England colonists engage in a brutal war of attrition with the leader of the Wampanoag that came to be known as “King Philip’s War.”
- **1692** Eighteen men and women are found guilty of witchcraft in the Salem Witch Trials.
- **1744** The First Great Awakening begins with Jonathan Edwards’s fiery sermons.

KEY TERMS

Mercantilism

An economic system where countries tried to increase their wealth through government control of all aspects of trade

Encomienda system

A forced labor system developed by the Spanish that required American Indians to live on plantations and convert to Christianity

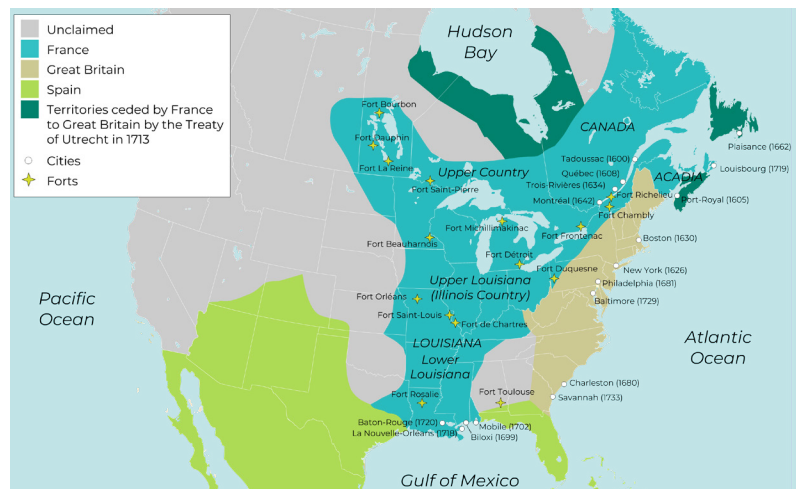
Cash crops

Crops that could be grown in large quantities, harvested, and sold for a profit

First Great Awakening

A religious movement that promoted emotional, evangelical Protestantism, often through “fire and brimstone” sermons and camp meetings

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This map shows French, British, and Spanish territorial claims in the New World. How are each country's goals reflected in the territory they claimed?

AP® U.S. History Period 2 focuses on what life was like in the Americas between the founding of Jamestown in 1607 and the start of the French and Indian War.

The European countries that settled the New World did so for very different reasons. They were often in direct competition with one another because of **mercantilism**.

The Spanish controlled the largest amount of territory in the New World. They were primarily looking for precious metals like gold and silver. The Spanish used the **encomienda system** and slave labor to force American Indians to gather these materials.

The French and the Dutch took a very different approach to the population of the New World. They created alliances with Native Americans to develop trade networks.

The English decided to send migrants to the New World to establish colonies. Some colonists wanted to make money, while others were escaping religious persecution. English colonies were very different from one another. Some colonies, especially in New England, were organized around farming communities. Others, especially those in the south, were based around **cash crops** and an export economy.

“The wrath of God burns against them [sinners], their damnation don’t slumber, the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them, the flames do now rage and glow.”

—Jonathan Edwards
“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

The French and Dutch gradually lost control of most of their American colonies, leading to British control of almost all of the territory along the Atlantic coast. The British government tried to make its colonies into a cohesive unit that would help boost the economy of Great Britain back home. Culturally, the colonies were united by movements like the **First Great Awakening** that sparked a sense of evangelical religiosity among the colonists. Many of the sermons of this time movement were “fire and brimstone” sermons that threatened disbelievers with an afterlife of suffering. Economically, things were not quite as united. The colonies, and the colonists, became increasingly independent because the British government applied its economic regulations in a haphazard fashion.

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1754 to 1800 and counts for 12% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class.

KEY CONCEPT 3.1

British attempts to assert tighter control over its North American colonies and the colonial resolve to pursue self-government led to a colonial independence movement and the Revolutionary War.

KEY CONCEPT 3.2

The American Revolution's democratic and republican ideals inspired new experiments with different forms of government.

KEY CONCEPT 3.3

Migration within North America and competition over resources, boundaries, and trade intensified conflicts among peoples and nations.

TIMELINE

- **1763** The Proclamation of 1763 ordered colonists to stop migrating west of the Appalachian Mountains.
- **1768** British troops arrive in Boston.
- **1775** First battles of the American Revolution take place at Lexington and Concord.
- **1776** Congress declared independence from Britain with the Declaration of Independence.
- **1780** Articles of Confederation were adopted.
- **1781** The British surrender at Yorktown.
- **1788** The U.S. Constitution is officially sent to the states for ratification.
- **1791** The Bill of Rights was adopted.

KEY TERMS

French and Indian War

A conflict between the French and the English over control of the Ohio River Valley

Articles of Confederation

The first constitution of the United States; established a very weak federal government

U.S. Constitution

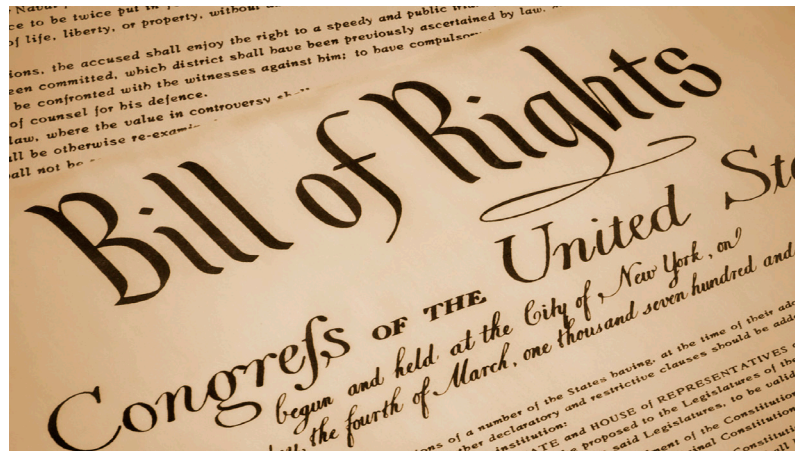
The foundation of the U.S. federal government

Federalist Papers

A series of paper written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison that advocated for a strong federal government

Bill of Rights

The first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution that guarantee different civil liberties



AP® U.S. History Period 3 focuses on how the colonies shifted from independent communities to the United States of America. It covers the period of time from the beginning of the French and Indian War to the election of 1800. The most important documents in American history were produced during this time period.

After the **French and Indian War**, the British government attempted to gain more control over its colonies in the Americas. In particular, the British government wanted the colonists to stop moving westward into French territory and to help repay some of the costs of the war. This was standard practice for the British government. The colonists did not react well. They led a string of protests against the prohibition against moving west (the Proclamation of 1763) as well as the new taxes (The Stamp Act, The Townshend Acts, the Tea Acts...). The colonists argued that all of these perfectly reasonable actions by the British government should not be tolerated because the colonists were not represented in Parliament. "No Taxation without Representation" quickly became the rallying cry for colonists who were unhappy with British rule.

The first government created for the new states was governed by the **Articles of Confederation**. This document created a very weak federal government, very strong states, and very little regulation about important things like currency, the military, and warfare.

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

—Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

The second try resulted in the **U.S. Constitution**. Under this document, the founding fathers developed a government with three branches—the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branches. Even after the disastrous experience under the Articles of Confederation, some people were still hesitant to give the federal government so much power. A group of people in favor of the Constitution got together to write the **Federalist Papers** to help get it ratified. They also attached the **Bill of Rights** to make sure that the rights of the people were protected.

Even after U.S. Constitution was ratified, there was still conflict over how to manage the new nation. Americans continued to move west in French territory, increasing tensions with both France and the American Indians.

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1800 to 1848 and counts for 10% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class.

KEY CONCEPT 4.1

The United States began to develop a modern democracy and celebrated a new national culture, while Americans sought to define the nation's democratic ideals and change their society and institutions to match them.

KEY CONCEPT 4.2

Innovations in technology, agriculture, and commerce powerfully accelerated the American economy, precipitating profound changes to U.S. society and to national and regional identities.

KEY CONCEPT 4.3

The U.S. interest in increasing foreign trade and expanding its national borders shaped the nation's foreign policy and spurred government and private initiatives.

TIMELINE

- **1803** The federal government finalizes the Louisiana Purchase.
- **1807** Congress votes to end the international slave trade.
- **1812** The U.S. declares war against Britain.
- **1820** The Missouri Compromise was the first federal compromise to try to balance slave and free states.
- **1823** President James Monroe declared the Western Hemisphere closed to European colonization in The Monroe Doctrine.
- **1830** Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act to relocate American Indians west of the Mississippi River.
- **1845** *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* was published.
- **1848** The first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York.

KEY TERMS

Judicial Review

The ability of the Supreme Court to determine whether a law is constitutional

Second Great Awakening

A series of religious revivals in the early 1800s that focused on personal religious experience

American System

A plan proposed by Henry Clay that was intended to strengthen the economy of the U.S. through a combination of tariffs, national banks, and infrastructure

Louisiana Territory

A large portion of land that was purchased from France by the U.S. Federal government in 1803 for \$15 million

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Albert Bierstadt, Rocky Mountain Landscape

The Hudson River School was one of the first truly American artistic movements. It focused on American landscapes. What does the representation of the landscape in this image show about the American character?

AP® U.S. History Period 4 focuses on the time period from the election of 1800 to the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. Period 4 is a primarily a period of gradual change that lays the foundation for later periods.

By this point in American history, the U.S. Constitution was firmly the law of the land. However, the new country needed to figure out the limits of the Constitution and work to shape itself into a modern democracy. One of the first steps was to establish the idea of **judicial review** as a way for the judicial branch to check the power of the legislative and executive branches. The American democracy also expanded its democratic participation to gradually include all [free] men.

Beginning in the early 1900s, Americans also began to think of themselves as Americans—not British, or colonists, or settlers in different communities. As part of this movement, artists began to use distinctively American styles to paint landscapes. Likewise, a distinctive American religious identity started to emerge in the **Second Great Awakening**.

Economically, the United States began to change from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing economy. There were several important inventions during this time that helped the transition, including the invention of the telegraph and textile machinery. Henry Clay's **American System** ensured that goods and services could move quickly around the country. The North gradually became a major industrial center. The South maintained its agricultural character with large plantations fueled by slave labor. While the division between North and South started with these economic differences, the two areas gradually came to develop distinct cultural identities and worldviews.

Americans continued to expand westward. As a result of this, Native Americans were continually displaced and treated unfairly by the federal government. Many were forcibly relocated onto reservation lands in Oklahoma and the American



southwest. The federal government purchased the **Louisiana Territory** from France in 1803 and doubled the size of the country overnight.

Period 5: 1844–1877

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1844 to 1877 and counts for 13% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class.

KEY CONCEPT 5.1

The United States became more connected with the world, pursued an expansionist foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere, and emerged as the destination for many migrants from other countries.

KEY CONCEPT 5.2

Intensified by expansion and deepening regional divisions, debates over slavery and other economic, cultural, and political issues led the nation into civil war.

KEY CONCEPT 5.3

The Union victory in the Civil War and the contested reconstruction of the South settled the issues of slavery and secession, but left unresolved many questions about the power of the federal government and citizenship rights.

TIMELINE

- **1850** The Compromise of 1850 admitted California to the Union. Part of this compromise imposed the Fugitive Slave Law on northerners.
- **1852** Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- **1857** The Dred Scott decision ruled that slaves were not considered citizens and did not have the right to sue in federal courts.
- **1860** Abraham Lincoln elected president of the United States. Almost immediately, South Carolina seceded from the Union.
- **1863** President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free the slaves in the states currently in rebellion against the Union.
- **1867** Congress gained greater control over the South through the Reconstruction Acts of 1867.
- **1877** The Compromise of 1877 withdrew federal troops from the South in exchange for electing a Democratic leader to the president's Cabinet.

KEY TERMS

Nativist

A native born person or group that opposes immigrants

Manifest Destiny

The belief that Americans were destined to spread the United States from coast to coast

Abraham Lincoln

The 16th president of the United States who was determined to preserve the Union at all costs; his election set in motion the Civil War

Reconstruction

The period after the Civil War during which Northern political leaders imposed strict regulations and governance on the South so that the South could rejoin the Union



John Gast, *American Progress*

The American history in the 19th century was dominated by a belief in Manifest Destiny. This depiction of the “spirit of the frontier” was widely distributed. In it, the figure of Columbia leads settlers west and pushes Native Americans out of the territory. What does it represent about how Americans saw westward expansion?

AP® U.S. History Period 5 focuses on the social and political effects of the antebellum period, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.

During this period, the United States also experienced a wave of immigration from western European countries, especially Ireland and Germany. The “Know Nothing Party” and other **nativist** groups used anti-immigrant rhetoric to try to influence the power of these new immigrant groups.

American history in the middle of the nineteenth century was dominated by a push to expand the country from “sea to sea” under an ideology called **Manifest Destiny**. The discovery of gold in California in the late 1840s caused hundreds of thousands of people to rush to the west coast.

The expansion into new territories intensified the tension between free and slave states in the Union. While the United States was able to maintain a rough balance for much of its history, by the 1850s, the balance was tipping toward free states. Political tensions came to a head with the election of **Abraham Lincoln** in 1860. Lincoln came to power without a single Southern vote. Almost immediately after his election, the Southern states voted to secede from the Union.

While slavery was a major issue dividing the North and the South, there were also other factors that served to divide the two parts of the country. The North and the South had very different economic landscapes. They also had different value systems and ideas about states’ rights.

Many of these tensions were still unresolved when the Civil War officially came to a close. The period after the war was called “**Reconstruction**” because the goal was to “reconstruct,” or “rebuild,” the Union that had been broken by the war. The initial goal of Reconstruction was to guarantee rights for African-Americans, a goal that came to fruition in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments. In 1877, however, Reconstruction was abandoned. Almost all of social improvements made in the lives of African Americans were eliminated as Southern politicians began the process of reversing the federal guidelines implemented during Reconstruction.

Period 6: 1865–1898

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1865 to 1898 and counts for 13% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class.

KEY CONCEPT 6.1

Technological advances, large-scale production methods, and the opening of new markets encouraged the rise of industrial capitalism in the United States.

KEY CONCEPT 6.2

The migrations that accompanied industrialization transformed both urban and rural areas of the United States and caused dramatic social and cultural change.

KEY CONCEPT 6.3

The Gilded Age produced new cultural and intellectual movements, public reform efforts, and political debates over economic and social policies.

TIMELINE

- 1867 Secretary of State William Seward arranges for the United States to purchase Alaska from the Russians.
- 1869 Transcontinental railroad completed.
- 1872 Yellowstone National Park was established.
- 1876 The Battle of Little Bighorn. General Custer and more than 200 of his soldiers die.
- 1882 The federal government enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act.
- 1886 The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was formed to organize skilled workers.
- 1892 Ellis Island opened.
- 1896 The Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* implemented the idea of segregation and "separate, but equal" accommodations.

KEY TERMS

Second Industrial Revolution

A movement toward manufacturing, especially in the North, that transformed the United States from an agricultural economy to an urban economy

Robber Barons

A term applied to business leaders who were considered corrupt in some way

Union

A collective bargaining unit that helped urban dwellers and factory workers improve their working conditions, pay, and retirement

Reservations

An area of land, often with very poor agriculturally, where Native Americans were required to live

The Gilded Age

A term that describes how many aspects of this life appeared beautiful, but were flawed after closer inspection

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AP® U.S. History Period 6 covers from the end of the Civil War to the Spanish American War of 1898. It focuses on issues in the post-war United States that were not addressed in the discussion of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Period 5.

During this period, the United States experienced an economic boom known as the **Second Industrial Revolution**. Just like in the First Industrial Revolution, technological innovation and the availability of cheap labor meant that consumer goods could be produced very quickly. Railroads, electricity, and skyscrapers all came into fruition in the post war years.



While the rich got richer through their ownership of factories, the poor became poorer. The business leaders, often called "**Robber Barons**" concentrated their wealth at the expense of their workers. Workers soon began to organize into **unions** to demand higher wages and better working conditions.

"The one moral, the one remedy for every evil, social, political, financial, and industrial, the one immediate vital need of the entire Republic, is the Pacific Railroad."

—Rocky Mountain News, 1866

Society in the United States was also getting more diverse. New immigrant groups from southern and eastern Europe started to immigrate to the states in large numbers. This represented a change from the primarily western European immigrants of the previous generation. Some of these immigrant groups developed distinct ethnic enclaves, such as Chinatown in San Francisco.

Americans also continued to push westward, this time using the Transcontinental Railroad to more quickly travel to the frontier. The railroad, and western expansion more generally, led to increased conflict with American Indians. The federal government frequently violated its treaties with American Indian populations. During this time period, the government also began forcibly relocating American Indians onto **reservations**.



This was a time of great social conflict. Mark Twain called this period of time "**The Gilded Age**" because it looked good, but was less beautiful when examined closely. People began to apply Charles Darwin's ideas of "survival of the fittest" to humans in order to argue that the rich and the poor deserved their lots in life. This approach hid, or "gilded," the reality that many social group, such as women and African-Americans, led very difficult lives. Reformers like Jane Addams argued that women and immigrants should be supported in their lives. Andrew Carnegie supported a similar view by advocating for the "Gospel of Wealth."

Period 7: 1890–1945

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1890 to 1945 and counts for 17% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class.

KEY CONCEPT 7.1

Growth expanded opportunity, while economic instability led to new efforts to reform U.S. society and its economic system.

KEY CONCEPT 7.2

Innovations in communications and technology contributed to the growth of mass culture, while significant changes occurred in internal and international migration patterns.

KEY CONCEPT 7.3

Participation in a series of global conflicts propelled the United States into a position of international power while renewing domestic debates over the nation's proper role in the world.

TIMELINE

- **1898** The United States annexes the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam.
- **1917** The United States enters World War I.
- **1920** The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, extending suffrage to women.
- **1929** The U.S. stock market crashed dramatically over a period of five days.
- **1933** The Twenty-first Amendment was ratified, repealing Prohibition.
- **1935** President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act.
- **1941** Japanese planes attacked American naval bases at Pearl Harbor.
- **1942** President Roosevelt signs Executive Order #9066 to remove Japanese Americans to internment camps.

KEY TERMS

Second Industrial Revolution

A movement toward manufacturing, especially in the North, that transformed the United States from an agricultural economy to an urban economy

Progressive

A term applied to people who tried to implement social programs and increase government spending to address social inequalities

Great Depression

A period of economic decline that severely affected U.S. society and politics

New Deal

A wide ranging government approach that addressed the Great Depression through combination of government funded infrastructure projects, social programs, and relief aid

Harlem Renaissance

An African American artistic movement in the 1920s that created art based on the lived experience of being African American in the United States

AP® U.S. History Period 7 covers a pivotal time period in U.S. history that stretches from the lead up to World War I to the end of World War II.

During this period, the **Second Industrial Revolution** continued to affect the fabric of U.S. society in deep and lasting ways. More people lived in the cities than in the countryside for the first time in U.S. history. Cities were overcrowded, dangerous, and politically corrupted. **Progressives** tried to reform urban conditions through a combination of social measures and government action. Most of these reformers were women, but the individual causes supported by Progressives were incredibly varied. Some supported specific social issues such as prohibition, while others advocated for immigration or women's suffrage.



The Progressive Era was helped by “muckraker” journalists who widely publicized the difficult conditions faced by immigrants, the urban poor, and the disenfranchised. Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* and Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives* are two of the strongest examples of this approach.

“I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American People.”

—President Franklin Roosevelt, 1932



While addressing these social issues, the United States was also struggling through the **Great Depression**. President Roosevelt addressed the rising unemployment and social upheavals by developing a limited welfare state under his **New Deal** program. The New Deal used government power to end the depression through a combination of direct aid, employment aid, and infrastructure spending.

Large portions of the program were eventually overturned, although some—like Social Security—remain to this day.

AP® U.S. History Period 7 also includes the incredible changes in technology and society that took place in the early twentieth century. During this time period, mass entertainment like movies helped create a sense of shared culture. **Harlem Renaissance** authors created a new, distinctly African American movement. Sports such as baseball became part of the national identity. Americans were becoming increasingly united through entertainment, literature, and media.

All of these changes in U.S. domestic policy and society took place against a backdrop of increasing U.S. involvement in international affairs. Some parts of the U.S. population, called imperialists, felt that the United States should lead the world through a combination of geographic spread, military strength, and ideological adherence to the principles of democracy. They were opposed by anti-imperialists, who felt that countries should have the right of self-determination. By the time Woodrow Wilson argued that the United States should enter World War II on humanitarian grounds the debate had been going on for decades. The United States retreated into relative isolation



after that experience. They were only drawn into World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. After the Allied victory in World War II, the United States rose to a position of international dominance.

Period 8: 1945–1980

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1945 to 1980 and counts for 15% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class.

KEY CONCEPT 8.1

The United States responded to an uncertain and unstable postwar world by asserting and working to maintain a position of global leadership, with far-reaching domestic and international consequences.

KEY CONCEPT 8.2

New movements for civil rights and liberal efforts to expand the role of government generated a range of political and cultural responses.

KEY CONCEPT 8.3

Postwar economic and demographic changes had far-reaching consequences for American society, politics, and culture.

TIMELINE

- **1947** The president announces the Truman Doctrine to help contain the spread of communism.
- **1952** The United States conducts its first hydrogen bomb test.
- **1954** The Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregates public schools.
- **1962** The Cold War almost turns “hot” in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- **1964** President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- **1965** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads a freedom march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama.
- **1978** The Camp David Accords brokered peace between Egypt, Israel, and the United States.

KEY TERMS

Cold War

A period of diplomatic tension between the United States and the Soviet Union that pitted capitalism against communism

Marshall Plan

An expansive plan to provide economic and social aid to Western Europe in order to prevent the spread of communism

Senator Joseph McCarthy

A senator from Wisconsin who led the campaign to uncover communists and suspected communists in the United States

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

An African American civil rights leader who advocated for greater racial equality using nonviolent methods

Civil Rights Act of 1964

A wide ranging piece of legislation that ended segregation and banned employment discrimination

Great Society

A program developed under President Lyndon Johnson that significantly expanded federally sponsored social programs



AP® U.S. History Period 8 covers a period called “post-war America” that spans from the end of World War II until the 1980s.

The period is overshadowed by the **Cold War**, which was a far-ranging conflict between the capitalist United States and the communist Soviet Union fought through proxy wars, ideological campaigns, and diplomatic crises. While the two nations engaged in hostilities through indirect means, they never engaged in a “hot” war with direct military battles.

The United States was deeply concerned that communism would spread out of the Soviet Union to other nations, including the United States itself. To prevent the spread of communism to Western Europe, the United States funneled money and services to war torn nations after World War II under the **Marshall Plan**. Domestically, **Senator Joseph McCarthy** led a broad investigation of communists and alleged communist sympathizers in the 1950s. Americans were divided over Senator McCarthy’s methods.

“It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace.”

—Secretary Of State George C. Marshall, 1947

Americans became increasingly concerned about the power of the president to commit the country to foreign military engagements, like the Vietnam War, as well as the power of the president to utilize the growing nuclear arsenal.

In the postwar period, civil rights leaders such as **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** challenged racial discrimination through a potent combination of legal challenges, non-violent protests, and awareness campaigns. As a result of these protests, Congress passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** in order to promote greater racial equality. The success of the African-American civil rights movement led other groups, such as feminists, LGBT communities, Latinos, American Indians, and Asian Americans, to also begin publicly agitating for more rights under the law.

Activists also narrowed in on economic inequality and urban poverty. Lyndon Johnson’s **Great Society** was a wide ranging attempt to end discrimination, eliminate poverty, and broadly right the injustices of U.S. society. Johnson’s Great Society, as well as Supreme Court decisions expanding civil liberties, was opposed by conservatives who felt that the country was in a period of moral and cultural decline.

Despite this backdrop of international conflict and domestic unease, the postwar period can generally be classified as a period of domestic growth. Mass culture, including television, helped to define cultural mores of the age. These tools were used by evangelical Christian churches and organizations as they began to play an increasingly powerful role in politics.

Period 9: 1980–the present

OVERVIEW

This time period extends from 1980 to the present and counts for 5% of recommended instructional content for an AP® class. It does not appear on the DBQ.

KEY CONCEPT 9.1

A newly ascendant conservative movement achieved several political and policy goals during the 1980s and continued to strongly influence public discourse in the following decades.

KEY CONCEPT 9.2

Moving into the 21st century, the nation experienced significant technological, economic, and demographic changes.

KEY CONCEPT 9.3

The end of the Cold War and new challenges to U.S. leadership forced the nation to redefine its foreign policy and role in the world.

TIMELINE

- **1981** IBM released the first personal computer.
- **1983** President Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative.
- **1989** The Berlin Wall was torn down, symbolizing the end of the Cold War.
- **1991** The world wide web goes public.
- **1991** The Soviet Union collapses after Mikhail Gorbachev resigns.
- **1998** President Bill Clinton impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives.
- **2001** Terrorists execute a series of attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania.
- **2002** The United States launches “Operation Enduring Freedom” to root out al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.
- **2003** The United States invades Iraq.
- **2011** The last U.S. troops leave Iraq.

KEY TERMS

Cold War

A period of diplomatic tension between the United States and the Soviet Union that pitted capitalism against communism

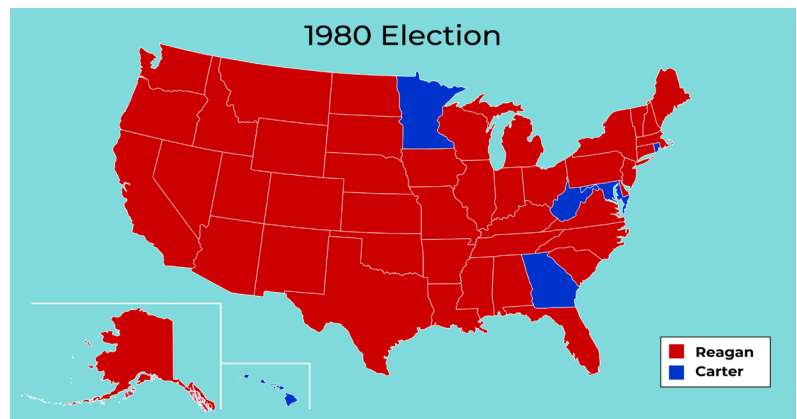
Ronald Reagan

The Reagan administration reduced government spending, extended tax cuts, and cut many welfare and social spending programs.

Terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001

A coordinated series of terrorist attacks that remain the deadliest terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. These attacks led to wide ranging changes in almost all aspects of American life.

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AP® U.S. History Period 9 covers from 1980 to the present. It focuses on the rise of the conservative movement beginning in the 1980s, technological and economic changes, and the end of the Cold War.

The conservative movement from the 1980s to the present traces its origins to the election of **Ronald Reagan** in 1980. The Reagan administration enacted significant tax cuts and deregulated many industries. Conservatism at the federal level inspired similar efforts at local and state governments. Governments at all levels began to reduce funding for social programs and limit the scope of government authority.

At the same time that the Reagan administration was reducing domestic spending, it was pursuing an interventionist foreign policy. U.S. military spending increased in the 1980s, and has continued to increase up the modern day, as the United States continues to assert a role in international affairs. Following the **terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001** most of U.S. foreign policy has focused on fighting terrorism around the world.

“There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

—President Ronald Reagan, 1987



Beams of light shine from the site of the former World Trade Center towers in lower Manhattan, New York City, memorializing the victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.