

American History Since 1865



Course Overview

American History Since 1865 is the second and concluding course in a two-year survey of American history, with integrated topics in geography, civics, and

economics. This course takes students from the post-Civil War era to recent times.

Course Outline

Rebuilding a Nation

When the Civil War ended in 1865, slavery had been abolished, the Constitution reigned supreme over individual states, and the nation had endured. But the costs of the war were terrible, and the problems to be solved were enormous. Reconstruction attempted to deal with those difficulties, but Abraham Lincoln's assassination, conflict between the executive and legislative branches of the government, and resistance in the South postponed real healing.

- Learning from History
- The Civil War
- Reconstruction: Andrew Johnson
- Bringing the Confederacy Back into the Union
- The Freedman's Bureau
- The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments
- Thaddeus Stevens and the Radical Republicans
- The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson
- Carpetbaggers and Scalawags
- Attempts to Deny Rights to African Americans

Changing and Growing

Homesteaders braved the hardships of the Great Plains, the Transcontinental Railroad united the nation physically and psychologically, and cowboys carved a lasting image in American lore, but the price was the devastation of the ways of life of many Native Americans. At the same time, immigrants swelled growing cities despite nativist prejudice, while corruption and inequality met opposition from writers and reformers.

- Westward Ho!
- Homesteading
- A Cowboy's Life
- The Transcontinental Railroad
- Effects of Settlement on Native Americans
- Chief Joseph: "I Will Fight No More Forever"
- The Growth of Cities
- Corruption and Crusaders
- Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain
- Immigration
- Resistance: Know-Nothings and the Chinese Exclusion Act
- Woman Suffrage: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Writing an Essay

Practice writing skills in an essay.

- Finding and Organizing Information, Parts 1 and 2
- Organizing Information
- Writing the Essay

Freedom Denied

Jim Crow laws undid the post-Civil War gains of African Americans in the South, but courageous individuals fought local governments, the Supreme Court, and the public to help restore the American ideal that "all men are created equal."

- Segregation: Jim Crow Laws, Lynching, and Poll Taxes
- Separate but *Unequal*: *Plessy v. Ferguson*
- Ida B. Wells
- Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois

Politics, Power, and the People

Entrepreneurs introduced a new kind of business and new power to the nation in the late 1800s. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants flooded into the United States to work in the factories and mills that the entrepreneurs built. Cities literally grew up as skyscrapers rose higher and higher. But many Americans were left out of the politics and prosperity.

- Andrew Carnegie: Steel and Philanthropy
- John D. Rockefeller: A Fortune in Oil
- J.P. Morgan: Banking and Finance
- Monopolies and the Sherman Antitrust Act
- Building Up
- "I Lift My Lamp"
- In Office
- A Third Party
- Money Matters
- Money Debates
- A Grand Campaign
- All Americans?

Making Things Better

Ever hopeful and confident, American individuals and organizations took on the challenges of a new society and endeavored to make life better for all. These people and organizations demanded better conditions and pay for workers, safer food, an end to child labor and corrupt business practices, and safeguards for the environment.



- Changes at Work
- Haymarket Square
- Unions and Collective Bargaining
- Samuel Gompers
- Mother Jones
- The Power of the Press
- Raking Muck and Tackling Trusts
- John Muir: Conservation and National Parks
- Jane Addams and Hull House
- Analyzing Population Density Maps

Taking a Position

Practice writing skills in a position paper.

- Choosing a Topic
- Choosing a Position
- Writing a Position Paper

Entering a New Century

As the United States faced and then entered a new century, a middle class gradually came to dominate society and make itself felt in politics. Acknowledging the problems facing the nation, this emerging middle class took on the challenge of solving these problems. Theodore Roosevelt embodied the national exuberance of the time and led the charge to look outward. The country briefly embraced imperialism and then took on the role of world power under Woodrow Wilson.

- Growth of Cities and the Middle Class
- The Progressive Movement
- The Spanish-American War
- Annexation of the Hawaiian Islands
- Our Youngest President
- Professor President
- World War I: From Neutrality to Engagement
- Wilson's Fourteen Points and the League of Nations

A Fascinating Era

The Roaring Twenties opened as women got the vote, and as radio, jazz, and the automobile transformed the nation. But there was tension between people who embraced change and people who feared it. The experiment of prohibition failed, the Red Scare ruined lives, African Americans fled the crushing poverty of the South, and the economy boomed—only to crash a few years later.

- Amending Behavior
- Doubling Voters
- Seeing Red
- Black Migration from the Rural South to the Urban North
- The Harlem Renaissance
- The Jazz Age
- Boom and Bust
- Basic Principles of the U.S. Market Economy

Hard Times

Led by the collapse of the farm economy in the Dust Bowl, depression gripped the nation. The unemployment rate soared to 25 percent, and civil unrest ensued. But Franklin Roosevelt's optimism and personal courage were contagious, and the New Deal changed the role of government forever.

- Suffering
- The Bonus March
- Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt
- The New Deal: Roosevelt's Plan for Ending the Great Depression
- Compare and Contrast: Coolidge, Hoover, and Roosevelt
- The Government Grows

Thesis and Support

Practice writing a thesis using supporting information.

- Gathering Information
- Forming a Thesis
- Preparing an Outline
- Writing and Revising

The Second World War

Totalitarian dictatorships arose in Europe and Asia, ushering in a period of devastating genocide and bringing on the biggest war in history. After clinging to an isolationist policy throughout the 1930s, the United States entered World War II when Pearl Harbor was attacked. American industrial power and enormous individual and national sacrifice brought victory to the Allies, but the country also had to deal with its own prejudices and the advent of the nuclear age.

- Background and Causes
- Totalitarianism: The Rise of Dictators in the 1930s (Japan, Spain, Italy, and the Soviet Union)
- Hitler and the "Final Solution"
- U. S. Isolationism in the 1930s
- The Axis and Allied Powers
- Alliance with the Soviet Union
- How Airpower Changed Warfare
- Pearl Harbor
- Codes: Navajo Code-Talkers
- Internment of Japanese Americans
- Eisenhower and Marshall
- The Battle of Midway
- Guadalcanal, Stalingrad, the D-Day Invasion
- The Home Front: How Civilians Helped the War Effort
- The Yalta Conference
- President Truman
- The Atomic Bomb



Recovery, Reaction, Reform

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Western democracies squared off against the Communist bloc. The United States countered this new threat through economic aid plans, bringing democracy to former enemies, and military action in Korea. But there was conflict at home as the fear of communism led to the abuse of civil liberties, a push for conformity, and a controversial war in Southeast Asia. At the same time, people who had fought to save democracy now demanded full participation in that form of government through the civil rights movement.

- Communist and Capitalist Systems
- Winston Churchill: The “Iron Curtain”
- The Truman Doctrine
- The Marshall Plan
- The U.S. Role in Japan’s Transition to Democracy
- The Korean War
- Joseph McCarthy and the Fear of Communism
- Eisenhower and the Culture of the Fifties
- The Beginnings of US Involvement in Vietnam
- Brown v. Board of Education
- Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

A Turbulent Time

A new generation took the political stage in 1960. The next decade saw challenges at home and abroad as the nation tried to balance the needs of minorities, women, and the poor with those associated with the Cold War and Vietnam.

- JFK
- Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring*
- The Cuban Missile Crisis
- Different Approaches to Civil Rights (NAACP, SNCC, CORE)
- JFK’s New Frontier
- The Great Society
- Malcolm X
- The United States and Vietnam: Foreign Policy and Civil Unrest
- Women Speak Out
- Cesar Chavez and the Rights of Migrant Workers
- Robert F. Kennedy as Activist
- The Native American Movement

Writing from Documents

Practice writing from documents.

- Analyzing Documents
- Answering a Document-Based Essay Question

Not So Long Ago

Conflict over Vietnam and civil rights brought national unrest to crisis levels during the 1960s. Corruption uncovered in the Watergate affair resulted in impeachment proceedings, the

first presidential resignation, and public cynicism. But the country moved forward and saw the end of the Cold War and a revolution in technology. The beginning of the twenty-first century held unfamiliar and sometimes frightening challenges, but the past offered much insight in helping people, organizations, and institutions meet those challenges.

- The 1960s Counter-Culture
- The Nixon Era
- The Watergate Affair
- President Jimmy Carter
- The Reagan Revolution
- The Bush Years
- The End of the Cold War
- New Immigrants
- Where Are We Headed?

Lesson Time and Scheduling

Total lessons: 180.

Lesson Time: 60 minutes.

Standard Curriculum Items

Wall map set

A History of US: Reconstruction and Reform, Vol. 7, by Joy Hakim (Oxford University Press, 2003)

A History of US: An Age of Extremes, Vol. 8, by Joy Hakim (Oxford University Press, 2003)

A History of US: War, Peace, and All That Jazz, Vol. 9, by Joy Hakim (Oxford University Press, 2003)

A History of US: All the People, Vol. 10, by Joy Hakim (Oxford University Press, 2003)