

American History: Pre-Civil War to Reconstruction

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In this course, you will read selected texts from World Book Online and a United States History Outline, complete vocabulary exercises, label maps, answer questions regarding the geography of the United States, write journal entries using provided prompts, and complete a number of projects for each unit from several possibilities suggested. For your journal entries, you can include drawings, illustrations, and clipart along with your writings to express your answers.

For each unit, you should complete the reading selections and at least five of the activities including review questions.

Another good way to learn information is to teach it. So, as you master the information, try your hand at creating your own worksheets, crossword puzzles, or games to teach the information to your family and friends. (Or even line up your stuffed animals, action figures, or dolls to teach the history of America to them!)

Objectives

By the end of the 18-week unit, you will have completed the following objectives:

1. Review the events of the War of 1812 as they pertain to the life of Andrew Jackson
2. Explain the purpose of the Santa Fe Trail, the Erie Canal, the Oregon Trail, and the California Gold Rush
3. Explore the cause and effect of the Mexican-American War
4. Identify the historical significance of the Battle of the Alamo
5. Research the events leading up to the Civil War including slave life, the Compromises of 1820 and 1850, Lincoln's election, and other pertinent events
6. Research and examine the causes and effects of the Civil War
7. Identify the contributions of John C. Calhoun, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Brown, Clara Barton, General William T. Sherman, General Robert E. Lee, and other key individuals
8. Locate and learn about the following significant sites of the Civil War: Fort Sumter, Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Appomattox Courthouse
9. Explain the historical contribution and impact of Abraham Lincoln
10. Explore the Reconstruction period and learn about key events of the time period
11. Describe the impact of continued westward expansion related to animals, Native Americans, inventions, and how ways of life developed and changed

The key texts to read for this course include the following from World Book Online. Please bookmark them for easy reference.

United States History – This course will refer to specific sections within this article.

(<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar576000&st=united+states+history#tab=homepage>)

Mexican War (<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar358780&st=mexican-american+war#tab=homepage>)

American Civil War

(<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar117060&st=american+civil+war#tab=homepage>)

Reconstruction

(<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar461540&st=reconstruction#tab=homepage>)

There will also be a number of primary and secondary sources referenced. If you have time, please read the originals.

There are journal pages available at SchoolhouseTeachers.com (<https://schoolhouseteachers.com/blog/wide-ruled-college-journal-page-printouts-free/>) if you wish to print them out rather than use a notebook.

Vocabulary and Introduction

Please preview the vocabulary list prior to beginning your study of this unit. You will be learning about the words, people, places, events, and topics included. There are a number of different methods you can use to help you study vocabulary. Please choose the one(s) that best fits your learning style. Use the graphic organizer ideas to keep your vocabulary and definitions organized. There is also a vocabulary quiz you may complete if you wish.

Read the following excerpt from Outline of US History: Chapter 1. This will provide a background to understanding the problems of slavery in the history of the United States. To further your study of this excerpt, you can write an outline of it if you wish.

EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

Slavery, which up until now had received little public attention, began to assume much greater importance as a national issue. In the early years of the republic, when the Northern states were providing for immediate or gradual emancipation of the slaves, many leaders had supposed that slavery would die out. In 1786 George Washington wrote that he devoutly wished some plan might be adopted “by which slavery may be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees.” Virginians Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe and other leading Southern statesmen made similar statements.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had banned slavery in the Northwest Territory. As late as 1808, when the international slave trade was abolished, there were many Southerners who thought slavery would soon end. The expectation proved false, for during the next generation, the South became solidly united behind the institution of slavery as new economic factors made slavery far more profitable than it had been before 1790.

Chief among these was the rise of a great cotton-growing industry in the South, stimulated by the introduction of new types of cotton and by Eli Whitney's invention in 1793 of the cotton gin, which separated the seeds from cotton. At the same time, the Industrial Revolution, which made textile manufacturing a large-scale operation, vastly increased the demand for raw cotton. And the opening of new lands in the West after 1812 greatly extended the area available for cotton cultivation. Cotton culture moved rapidly from the Tidewater states on the east coast through much of the lower south to the delta region of the Mississippi and eventually to Texas.

Sugar cane, another labor-intensive crop, also contributed to slavery's extension in the South. The rich, hot lands of southeastern Louisiana proved ideal for growing sugar cane profitably. By 1830, the state was supplying the nation with about half its sugar supply. Finally, tobacco growers moved westward, taking slavery with them.

As the free society of the North and the slave society of the South spread westward, it seemed politically expedient to maintain a rough equality among the new states carved out of western territories. In 1818, when Illinois was admitted to the Union, 10 states permitted slavery and 11 states prohibited it; but balance was restored after Alabama was admitted as a slave state. Population was growing faster in the North, which permitted Northern states to have a clear majority in the House of Representatives. However, equality between the North and the South was maintained in the Senate.

In 1819, Missouri, which had 10,000 slaves, applied to enter the Union. Northerners rallied to oppose Missouri's entry except as a free state, and a storm of protest swept the country. For a time, Congress was deadlocked, but Henry Clay arranged the so-called Missouri Compromise: Missouri was admitted as a slave state at the same time Maine came in as a free state. In addition, Congress banned slavery from the territory acquired by the Louisiana Purchase north of Missouri's southern boundary. At the time, this provision appeared to be a victory for the Southern states because it was thought unlikely that this "Great American Desert" would ever be settled. The controversy was temporarily resolved, but Thomas Jefferson wrote to a friend that "this momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union."

Activities

Writing: Create a timeline to illustrate the events discussed in excerpt: Extension of Slavery. Make sure to include the following:

- invention of the cotton gin
- Alabama becomes a state
- Northwest Ordinance
- Compromise of 1820
- Louisiana Purchase
- Illinois statehood
- Missouri applies for statehood
- Washington's *plan*

Expansion – Wild West – Manifest Destiny

Read the following excerpt from the Outline of US History: Chapter 1: The Frontier, “The West,” and the American Experience. To further your study of this excerpt, you can write an outline of it if you wish.

THE FRONTIER, “THE WEST,” AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The frontier—the point at which settled territory met unoccupied land—began at Jamestown and Plymouth Rock. It moved in a westward direction for nearly 300 years through densely forested wilderness and barren plains until the decennial census of 1890 revealed that at last the United States no longer possessed a discernible line of settlement.

At the time, it seemed to many that a long period had come to an end—one in which the country had grown from a few struggling outposts of English civilization to a huge independent nation with an identity of its own. It was easy to believe that the experience of settlement and post-settlement development, constantly repeated as a people conquered a continent, had been the defining factor in the nation’s development.

In 1893, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner, expressing a widely held sentiment, declared that the frontier had made the United States more than an extension of Europe. It had created a nation with a culture that was perhaps coarser than Europe’s, but also more pragmatic, energetic, individualistic, and democratic. The existence of large areas of “free land” had created a nation of property holders and had provided a “safety valve” for discontent in cities and more settled areas. His analysis implied that an America without a frontier would trend ominously toward what were seen as the European ills of stratified social systems, class conflict, and diminished opportunity.

After more than a hundred years, scholars still debate the significance of the frontier in American history. Few believe it was quite as all-important as Turner suggested; its absence does not appear to have led to dire consequences. Some have gone further, rejecting the Turner argument as a romantic glorification of a bloody, brutal process—marked by a war of conquest against Mexico, near-genocidal treatment of Native American tribes, and environmental despoliation. The common experience of the frontier, they argue, was one of hardship and failure.

Yet it remains hard to believe that three centuries of westward movement had no impact on the national character and suggestive that intelligent foreign observers, such as the French intellectual Alexis de Tocqueville, were fascinated by the American West. Indeed, the last area of frontier settlement, the vast area stretching north from Texas to the Canadian border, which Americans today commonly call “the West,” still seems characterized by ideals of individualism, democracy, and opportunity that are more palpable than in the rest of the nation. It is perhaps also revealing that many people in other lands, when hearing the word “American,” so often identify it with a symbol of that final frontier—the “cowboy.”

Activities

Geography: On a map of the United States, label the water routes and major land routes used during this time period of history for movement west by the pioneers. You can find blank maps at the following two sites: Education Place (<https://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/usa.html>) and Super Teacher Worksheets (<https://www.superteacherworksheets.com/maps.html>). You can also use your own blank map.

Timeline: Create a timeline of events during the expansion of the United States. A blank timeline is available.

Biography: Write a short biography of Annie Oakley or Calamity Jane. Write about their important accomplishments. Why are they still remembered today? If time allows, view one of the two musicals *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950) or *Calamity Jane* (1953).

Journal: Imagine your family is living during this time period of US history. What do you think about Manifest Destiny? Do you think the young US has the right to spread across the whole land?



Image from https://wpclipart.com/American_History/expansion/manifest_destiny.png.html

Journal: Write one entry in the journal of a young person traveling from Independence, Missouri, along the Oregon Trail. Include details like what you are eating, the weather, and any hardships you are facing.

Cartoon: Illustrate “Seward’s Folly.” Why do you think Alaska was given that nickname?

Journal: Would You Rather . . .

- Be a farmer or a miner? Why?

- Cross the desert or the mountains to head west? Why?
- Start a cattle ranch or build a farm? Why?
- Have a doctor or a soldier on your wagon train? Why?
- Settle near a river or the Pacific Ocean? Why?

Journal: Draw a picture of the Wild West. Be sure to include details such as buffalo, plant life, Native Americans and their homes, or the homes of the new settlers.

Journal: Westward expansion had many effects on the Native Americans. Most are considered negative such as being moved onto reservations, decline of the buffalo population, and military conflicts. Can you think of any changes that might have led to more positive interactions with the settlers moving westward?

Geography: If you have time, you can check out the interactive map of the Santa Fe Trail (<https://www.santafetrail.org/interactive-trail-map/>) to learn more information. There is also an interactive map of the Oregon Trail (<http://www.historyglobe.com/ot/otmap1.htm>). Both of these provide you with small tidbits of information about stops along the trail.

Journal: One of the rumored games that kids played while on the trail was buffalo toss. They tossed the dried buffalo dung much like a Frisbee. Do you think the children actually played this game? If you have time, research whether or not this is factual. Pioneers moving west did use buffalo dung for their campfires as there was not a lot of wood on the prairie.

Review Questions

After reading about Manifest Destiny in the history of the United States World Book Online article, answer the following review questions.

1. What areas attracted new settlers?
2. What was the belief of Manifest Destiny?
3. What other nation would the US come in conflict with during this period?
4. In _____, the United Kingdom turned over the parts of Oregon south of the 49th parallel.
5. In _____, the settlers in Texas claimed Texas was an independent republic.