

Politics and Power (POL)

This theme focuses on how different social and political groups have influenced society and government in the United States, as well as how political beliefs and institutions have changed over time.

POL–1.0: Explain how and why political ideas, beliefs, institutions, party systems, and alignments have developed and changed.

Period 2 (1607-1754)

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.

- I. Transatlantic commercial, religious, philosophical, and political exchanges led residents of the British colonies to evolve in their political and cultural attitudes as they became increasingly tied to Britain and one another.
 - A) The presence of different European religious and ethnic groups contributed to a significant degree of pluralism and intellectual exchange, which were later enhanced by the first Great Awakening and the spread of European Enlightenment ideas.
 - B) The British colonies experienced a gradual Anglicization over time, developing autonomous political communities based on English models with influence from intercolonial commercial ties, the emergence of a trans-Atlantic print culture, and the spread of Protestant evangelicalism.
 - C) The British government increasingly attempted to incorporate its North American colonies into a coherent, hierarchical, and imperial structure in order to pursue mercantilist economic aims, but conflicts with colonists and American Indians led to erratic enforcement of imperial policies.
 - D) Colonists’ resistance to imperial control drew on local experiences of self-government, evolving ideas of liberty, the political thought of the Enlightenment, greater religious independence and diversity, and an ideology critical of perceived corruption in the imperial system.

Period 3 (1754-1800)

Key Concept 3.2: The American Revolution’s democratic and republican ideals inspired new experiments with different forms of government.

- II. After declaring independence, American political leaders created new constitutions and declarations of rights that articulated the role of the state and federal governments while protecting individual liberties and limiting both centralized power and excessive popular influence.
 - A) Many new state constitutions placed power in the hands of the legislative branch and maintained property qualifications for voting and citizenship.

- B) The Articles of Confederation unified the newly independent states, creating a central government with limited power. After the Revolution, difficulties over international trade, finances, interstate commerce, foreign relations, and internal unrest led to calls for a stronger central government.
 - C) Delegates from the states participated in a Constitutional Convention and through negotiation, collaboration, and compromise proposed a constitution that created a limited but dynamic central government embodying federalism and providing for a separation of powers between its three branches.
 - D) The Constitutional Convention compromised over the representation of slave states in Congress and the role of the federal government in regulating both slavery and the slave trade, allowing the prohibition of the international slave trade after 1808.
 - E) In the debate over ratifying the Constitution, Anti-Federalists opposing ratification battled with Federalists, whose principles were articulated in the Federalist Papers (primarily written by Alexander Hamilton and James Madison). Federalists ensured the ratification of the Constitution by promising the addition of a Bill of Rights that enumerated individual rights and explicitly restricted the powers of the federal government.
- III. New forms of national culture and political institutions developed in the United States alongside continued regional variations and differences over economic, political, social, and foreign policy issues.
- A) During the presidential administrations of George Washington and John Adams, political leaders created institutions and precedents that put the principles of the Constitution into practice.
 - B) Political leaders in the 1790s took a variety of positions on issues such as the relationship between the national government and the states, economic policy, foreign policy, and the balance between liberty and order. This led to the formation of political parties — most significantly the Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, and the Democratic-Republican Party, led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.
 - C) The expansion of slavery in the deep South and adjacent western lands and rising antislavery sentiment began to create distinctive regional attitudes toward the institution.
 - D) Ideas about national identity increasingly found expression in works of art, literature, and architecture.

Key Concept 3.3: Migration within North America and competition over resources, boundaries, and trade intensified conflicts among peoples and nations.

- II. The continued presence of European powers in North America challenged the United States to find ways to safeguard its borders, maintain neutral trading rights, and promote its economic interests.
 - A) The United States government forged diplomatic initiatives aimed at dealing with the continued British and Spanish presence in North America, as U.S. settlers migrated beyond the Appalachians and sought free navigation of the Mississippi River.

- B) War between France and Britain resulting from the French Revolution presented challenges to the United States over issues of free trade and foreign policy and fostered political disagreement.
- C) George Washington's Farewell Address encouraged national unity, as he cautioned against political factions and warned about the danger of permanent foreign alliances.

Period 4 (1800-1848)

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.

- I. The nation's transition to a more participatory democracy was achieved by expanding suffrage from a system based on property ownership to one based on voting by all adult white men, and it was accompanied by the growth of political parties.
 - A) In the early 1800s, national political parties continued to debate issues such as the tariff, powers of the federal government, and relations with European powers.
 - B) Supreme Court decisions established the primacy of the judiciary in determining the meaning of the Constitution and asserted that federal laws took precedence over state laws.
 - C) By the 1820s and 1830s, new political parties arose — the Democrats, led, by Andrew Jackson, and the Whigs, led by Henry Clay — that disagreed about the role and powers of the federal government and issues such as the national bank, tariffs, and federally funded internal improvements.
 - D) Regional interests often trumped national concerns as the basis for many political leaders' positions on slavery and economic policy.

Period 5 (1844-1877)

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.

- II. Debates over slavery came to dominate political discussion in the 1850s, culminating in the bitter election of 1860 and the secession of Southern states.
 - A) The Mexican Cession led to heated controversies over whether to allow slavery in the newly acquired territories.
 - B) The courts and national leaders made a variety of attempts to resolve the issue of slavery in the territories, including the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the Dred Scott decision, but these ultimately failed to reduce conflict.
 - C) The Second Party System ended when the issues of slavery and anti-immigrant nativism weakened loyalties to the two major parties and fostered the emergence of sectional parties, most notably the Republican Party in the North.
 - D) Abraham Lincoln's victory on the Republicans' free-soil platform in the presidential election of 1860 was accomplished without any Southern electoral votes. After a series of contested debates about secession, most slave states voted to secede from the Union, precipitating the Civil War.

Period 6 (1865-1898)

Key Concept 6.3: The Gilded Age produced new cultural and intellectual movements, public reform efforts, and political debates over economic and social policies.

- II. Dramatic social changes in the period inspired political debates over citizenship, corruption, and the proper relationship between business and government.
 - A) The major political parties appealed to lingering divisions from the Civil War and contended over tariffs and currency issues, even as reformers argued that economic greed and self-interest had corrupted all levels of government.
 - B) Many women sought greater equality with men, often joining voluntary organizations, going to college, promoting social and political reform, and, like Jane Addams, working in settlement houses to help immigrants adapt to U.S. language and customs.
 - C) The Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that upheld racial segregation helped to mark the end of most of the political gains African Americans made during Reconstruction. Facing increased violence, discrimination, and scientific theories of race, African American reformers continued to fight for political and social equality.

Period 7 (1890-1945)

Key Concept 7.1: Growth expanded opportunity, while economic instability led to new efforts to reform U.S. society and its economic system.

- III. During the 1930s, policymakers responded to the mass unemployment and social upheavals of the Great Depression by transforming the U.S. into a limited welfare state, redefining the goals and ideas of modern American liberalism.
 - A) Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal attempted to end the Great Depression by using government power to provide relief to the poor, stimulate recovery, and reform the American economy.
 - B) Radical, union, and populist movements pushed Roosevelt toward more extensive efforts to change the American economic system, while conservatives in Congress and the Supreme Court sought to limit the New Deal's scope.
 - C) Although the New Deal did not end the Depression, it left a legacy of reforms and regulatory agencies and fostered a long-term political realignment in which many ethnic groups, African Americans, and working-class communities identified with the Democratic Party.

Period 8 (1945-1980)

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.

- III. Liberalism influenced postwar politics and court decisions, but it came under increasing attack from the left as well as from a resurgent conservative movement.
 - A) Liberalism, based on anticommunism abroad and a firm belief in the efficacy of government power to achieve social goals at home, reached a high point of political influence by the mid-1960s.

- B) Liberal ideas found expression in Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, which attempted to use federal legislation and programs to end racial discrimination, eliminate poverty, and address other social issues. A series of Supreme Court decisions expanded civil rights and individual liberties.
- C) In the 1960s, conservatives challenged liberal laws and court decisions and perceived moral and cultural decline, seeking to limit the role of the federal government and enact more assertive foreign policies.
- D) Some groups on the left also rejected liberal policies, arguing that political leaders did too little to transform the racial and economic status quo at home and pursued immoral policies abroad.
- E) Public confidence and trust in government’s ability to solve social and economic problems declined in the 1970s in the wake of economic challenges, political scandals, and foreign policy crises.
- F) The 1970s saw growing clashes between conservatives and liberals over social and cultural issues, the power of the federal government, race, and movements for greater individual rights.

Period 9 (1980 to the Present)

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.

- I. Conservative beliefs regarding the need for traditional social values and a reduced role for government advanced in U.S. politics after 1980.
 - A) Ronald Reagan’s victory in the presidential election of 1980 represented an important milestone, allowing conservatives to enact significant tax cuts and continue the deregulation of many industries.
 - B) Conservatives argued that liberal programs were counterproductive in fighting poverty and stimulating economic growth. Some of their efforts to reduce the size and scope of government met with inertia and liberal opposition, as many programs remained popular with voters.
 - C) Policy debates continued over free-trade agreements, the scope of the government social safety net, and calls to reform the U.S. financial system.

POL–2.0: Explain how popular movements, reform efforts, and activist groups have sought to change American society and institutions.

Period 3 (1754-1800)

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.

- II. The desire of many colonists to assert ideals of self-government in the face of renewed British imperial efforts led to a colonial independence movement and war with Britain.
 - A) The imperial struggles of the mid-18th century, as well as new British efforts to collect taxes without direct colonial representation or consent and to assert imperial authority in the colonies, began to unite the colonists against perceived and real constraints on their economic activities and political rights.
 - B) Colonial leaders based their calls for resistance to Britain on arguments about the rights of British subjects, the rights of the individual, local traditions of self-rule, and the ideas of the Enlightenment.
 - C) The effort for American independence was energized by colonial leaders such as Benjamin Franklin, as well as by popular movements that included the political activism of laborers, artisans, and women.
 - D) In the face of economic shortages and the British military occupation of some regions, men and women mobilized in large numbers to provide financial and material support to the Patriot movement.
 - E) Despite considerable loyalist opposition, as well as Great Britain's apparently overwhelming military and financial advantages, the Patriot cause succeeded because of the actions of colonial militias and the Continental Army, George Washington's military leadership, the colonists' ideological commitment and resilience, and assistance sent by European allies.

Period 4 (1800-1848)

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.

- III. Increasing numbers of Americans, many inspired by new religious and intellectual movements, worked primarily outside of government institutions to advance their ideals.
 - A) Americans formed new voluntary organizations that aimed to change individual behaviors and improve society through temperance and other reform efforts.
 - B) Abolitionist and antislavery movements gradually achieved emancipation in the North, contributing to the growth of the free African American population, even as many state governments restricted African Americans' rights. Antislavery efforts in the South were largely limited to unsuccessful slave rebellions.
 - C) A women's rights movement sought to create greater equality and opportunities for women, expressing its ideals at the Seneca Falls Convention.

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.

- II. The United States's acquisition of lands in the West gave rise to contests over the extension of slavery into new territories.
 - A) As overcultivation depleted arable land in the Southeast, slaveholders began relocating their plantations to more fertile lands west of the Appalachians, where the institution of slavery continued to grow.

- B) Antislavery efforts increased in the North, while in the South, although the majority of Southerners owned no slaves, most leaders argued that slavery was part of the Southern way of life.
- C) Congressional attempts at political compromise, such as the Missouri Compromise, only temporarily stemmed growing tensions between opponents and defenders of slavery.

Period 5 (1844-1877)

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.

- I. Ideological and economic differences over slavery produced an array of diverging responses from Americans in the North and the South.
 - A) The North's expanding manufacturing economy relied on free labor in contrast to the Southern economy's dependence on slave labor. Some Northerners did not object to slavery on principle but claimed that slavery would undermine the free labor market. As a result, a free-soil movement arose that portrayed the expansion of slavery as incompatible with free labor.
 - B) African American and white abolitionists, although a minority in the North, mounted a highly visible campaign against slavery, presenting moral arguments against the institution, assisting slaves' escapes, and sometimes expressing a willingness to use violence to achieve their goals.
 - C) Defenders of slavery based their arguments on racial doctrines, the view that slavery was a positive social good, and the belief that slavery and states' rights were protected by the Constitution.

Period 6 (1865-1898)

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.

- III. New systems of production and transportation enabled consolidation within agriculture, which, along with periods of instability, spurred a variety of responses from farmers.
 - A) Improvements in mechanization helped agricultural production increase substantially and contributed to declines in food prices.
 - B) Many farmers responded to the increasing consolidation in agricultural markets and their dependence on the evolving railroad system by creating local and regional cooperative organizations.
 - C) Economic instability inspired agrarian activists to create the People's (Populist) Party, which called for a stronger governmental role in regulating the American economic system.

Key Concept 6.3: The Gilded Age produced new cultural and intellectual movements, public reform efforts, and political debates over economic and social policies.

- II. Dramatic social changes in the period inspired political debates over citizenship, corruption, and the proper relationship between business and government.

- A) The major political parties appealed to lingering divisions from the Civil War and contended over tariffs and currency issues, even as reformers argued that economic greed and self-interest had corrupted all levels of government.
- B) Many women sought greater equality with men, often joining voluntary organizations, going to college, promoting social and political reform, and, like Jane Addams, working in settlement houses to help immigrants adapt to U.S. language and customs.
- C) The Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that upheld racial segregation helped to mark the end of most of the political gains African Americans made during Reconstruction. Facing increased violence, discrimination, and scientific theories of race, African American reformers continued to fight for political and social equality.

Period 7 (1890-1945)

Key Concept 7.1: Growth expanded opportunity, while economic instability led to new efforts to reform U.S. society and its economic system.

- II. In the Progressive Era of the early 20th century, Progressives responded to political corruption, economic instability, and social concerns by calling for greater government action and other political and social measures.
 - A) Some Progressive Era journalists attacked what they saw as political corruption, social injustice, and economic inequality, while reformers, often from the middle and upper classes and including many women, worked to effect social changes in cities and among immigrant populations.
 - B) On the national level, Progressives sought federal legislation that they believed would effectively regulate the economy, expand democracy, and generate moral reform. Progressive amendments to the Constitution dealt with issues such as prohibition and woman suffrage.
 - C) Preservationists and conservationists both supported the establishment of national parks while advocating different government responses to the overuse of natural resources.
 - D) The Progressives were divided over many issues. Some Progressives supported Southern segregation, while others ignored its presence. Some Progressives advocated expanding popular participation in government, while others called for greater reliance on professional and technical experts to make government more efficient. Progressives also disagreed about immigration restriction.

Period 8 (1945-1980)

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.

- I. Seeking to fulfill Reconstruction-era promises, civil rights activists and political leaders achieved some legal and political successes in ending segregation, although progress toward racial equality was slow.
 - A) During and after World War II, civil rights activists and leaders, most notably Martin Luther King Jr., combatted racial discrimination utilizing a variety of

- strategies, including legal challenges, direct action, and nonviolent protest tactics.
- B) The three branches of the federal government used measures including desegregation of the armed services, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to promote greater racial equality.
 - C) Continuing resistance slowed efforts at desegregation, sparking social and political unrest across the nation. Debates among civil rights activists over the efficacy of nonviolence increased after 1965.
- II. Responding to social conditions and the African American civil rights movement, a variety of movements emerged that focused on issues of identity, social justice, and the environment.
- A) Feminist and gay and lesbian activists mobilized behind claims for legal, economic, and social equality.
 - B) Latino, American Indian, and Asian American movements continued to demand social and economic equality and a redress of past injustices.
 - C) Despite an overall affluence in postwar America, advocates raised concerns about the prevalence and persistence of poverty as a national problem.
 - D) Environmental problems and accidents led to a growing environmental movement that aimed to use legislative and public efforts to combat pollution and protect natural resources. The federal government established new environmental programs and regulations
- III. Liberalism influenced postwar politics and court decisions, but it came under increasing attack from the left as well as from a resurgent conservative movement.
- A) Liberalism, based on anticommunism abroad and a firm belief in the efficacy of government power to achieve social goals at home, reached a high point of political influence by the mid-1960s.
 - B) Liberal ideas found expression in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, which attempted to use federal legislation and programs to end racial discrimination, eliminate poverty, and address other social issues. A series of Supreme Court decisions expanded civil rights and individual liberties.
 - C) In the 1960s, conservatives challenged liberal laws and court decisions and perceived moral and cultural decline, seeking to limit the role of the federal government and enact more assertive foreign policies.
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Key Concept 8.3: Postwar economic and demographic changes had far-reaching consequences for American society, politics, and culture.

- II. New demographic and social developments, along with anxieties over the Cold War, changed U.S. culture and led to significant political and moral debates that sharply divided the nation.
 - A) Mass culture became increasingly homogeneous in the postwar years, inspiring challenges to conformity by artists, intellectuals, and rebellious youth.
 - B) Feminists and young people who participated in the counterculture of the 1960s rejected many of the social, economic, and political values of their parents' generation, introduced greater informality into U.S. culture, and advocated changes in sexual norms.
 - C) The rapid and substantial growth of evangelical Christian churches and organizations was accompanied by greater political and social activism on the part of religious conservatives.

Period 9 (1980 to the Present)

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.

- I. Conservative beliefs regarding the need for traditional social values and a reduced role for government advanced in U.S. politics after 1980.
 - A) Ronald Reagan's victory in the presidential election of 1980 represented an important milestone, allowing conservatives to enact significant tax cuts and continue the deregulation of many industries.
 - B) Conservatives argued that liberal programs were counterproductive in fighting poverty and stimulating economic growth. Some of their efforts to reduce the size and scope of government met with inertia and liberal opposition, as many programs remained popular with voters.
 - C) Policy debates continued over free-trade agreements, the scope of the government social safety net, and calls to reform the U.S. financial system.

POL–3.0: Explain how different beliefs about the federal government's role in U.S. social and economic life have affected political debates and policies.

Period 3 (1754-1800)

Key Concept 3.2: The American Revolution's democratic and republican ideals inspired new experiments with different forms of government.

- II. After declaring independence, American political leaders created new constitutions and declarations of rights that articulated the role of the state and federal governments while protecting individual liberties and limiting both centralized power and excessive popular influence.
 - A) Many new state constitutions placed power in the hands of the legislative branch and maintained property qualifications for voting and citizenship.

- D) The Articles of Confederation united the newly independent states, creating a central government with limited power. After the Revolution, difficulties over international trade, finances, interstate commerce, foreign relations, and internal unrest led to calls for a stronger central government.
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- A) During the presidential administrations of George Washington and John Adams, political leaders created institutions and precedents that put the principles of the Constitution into practice.
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 - C) The expansion of slavery in the deep South and adjacent western lands and rising antislavery sentiment began to create distinctive regional attitudes toward the institution.
 - D) Ideas about national identity increasingly found expression in works of art, literature, and architecture.

Period 4 (1800-1848)

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.

- I. New transportation systems and technologies dramatically expanded manufacturing and agricultural production.
 - A) Entrepreneurs helped to create a market revolution in production and commerce, in which market relationships between producers and consumers came to prevail as the manufacture of goods became more organized.

- B) Innovations including textile machinery, steam engines, interchangeable parts, the telegraph, and agricultural inventions increased the efficiency of production methods.
 - C) Legislation and judicial systems supported the development of roads, canals, and railroads, which extended and enlarged markets and helped foster regional interdependence. Transportation networks linked the North and Midwest more closely than either was linked to the South.
- III. Economic development shaped settlement and trade patterns, helping to unify the nation while also encouraging the growth of different regions.
- A) Large numbers of international migrants moved to industrializing northern cities, while many Americans moved west of the Appalachians, developing thriving new communities along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.
 - B) Increasing Southern cotton production and the related growth of Northern manufacturing, banking, and shipping industries promoted the development of national and international commercial ties.
 - C) Southern business leaders continued to rely on the production and export of traditional agricultural staples, contributing to the growth of a distinctive Southern regional identity.
 - D) Plans to further unify the U.S. economy, such as the American System, generated debates over whether such policies would benefit agriculture or industry, potentially favoring different sections of the country.

Period 5 (1844-1877)

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.

- II. Reconstruction and the Civil War ended slavery, altered relationships between the states and the federal government, and led to debates over new definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.
 - A) The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, while the 14th and 15th amendments granted African Americans citizenship, equal protection under the laws, and voting rights.
 - B) The women's rights movement was both emboldened and divided over the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.
 - C) Efforts by radical and moderate Republicans to change the balance of power between Congress and the presidency and to reorder race relations in the defeated South yielded some short-term successes. Reconstruction opened up political opportunities and other leadership roles to former slaves, but it ultimately failed, due both to determined Southern resistance and the North's waning resolve.
 - D) Southern plantation owners continued to own the majority of the region's land even after Reconstruction. Former slaves sought land ownership but generally fell short of self-sufficiency, as an exploitative and soil-intensive sharecropping system limited blacks' and poor whites' access to land in the South.

- E) Segregation, violence, Supreme Court decisions, and local political tactics progressively stripped away African American rights, but the 14th and 15th amendments eventually became the basis for court decisions upholding civil rights in the 20th century.

Period 6 (1865-1898)

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- III. New systems of production and transportation enabled consolidation within agriculture, which, along with periods of instability, spurred a variety of responses from farmers.
 - A) Improvements in mechanization helped agricultural production increase substantially and contributed to declines in food prices.
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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.

- II. Larger numbers of migrants moved to the West in search of land and economic opportunity, frequently provoking competition and violent conflict.
 - A) The building of transcontinental railroads, the discovery of mineral resources, and government policies promoted economic growth and created new communities and centers of commercial activity.
 - B) In hopes of achieving ideals of self-sufficiency and independence, migrants moved to both rural and boomtown areas of the West for opportunities, such as building the railroads, mining, farming, and ranching.
 - C) As migrant populations increased in number and the American bison population was decimated, competition for land and resources in the West among white settlers, American Indians, and Mexican Americans led to an increase in violent conflict.
 - D) The U.S. government violated treaties with American Indians and responded to resistance with military force, eventually confining American Indians to reservations and denying tribal sovereignty.
 - E) Many American Indians preserved their cultures and tribal identities despite government policies promoting assimilation, and they attempted to develop self-sustaining economic practices.

Period 7 (1890-1945)

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