

Political History of the United States

Theme: American and National Identity

- Explain how ideas about democracy, freedom, and individualism found expression in the development of cultural values, political institutions, and American identity.
- z Explain how interpretations of the Constitution and debates over rights, liberties, and definitions of citizenship have affected American values, politics, and society.

Theme: Politics and Power

- Explain how and why political ideas, beliefs, institutions, party systems, and alignments have developed and changed.
- Explain how popular movements, reform efforts, and activist groups have sought to change American society and institutions.
- Explain how different beliefs about the federal government's role in U.S. social and economic life have affected political debates and policies.

Theme: Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture

- In what ways and to what extent did moral, philosophical, and cultural values affect the creation of the United States?
- In what ways and to what extent have changes in moral, philosophical, and cultural values affected U.S. history?

Theme: Culture and Society

- Explain how religious groups and ideas have affected American society and political life.
- Explain how ideas about women's rights and gender roles have affected society and politics.

Party Systems in U.S. History

- First Party System: 1796-1824**
 - Federalist vs. Democratic Republicans
- Second Party System: 1828-1854**
 - Democrats vs. National Republicans (Whigs)
 - Significant third parties during this era included the Anti-Masonic Party, Free Soil Party, Liberty Party.
- Third Party System: 1854-1896**
 - Democrats vs. Republicans
 - Significant Third Parties: American Party (Know Nothings), Prohibition Party, Greenback Party, Populist Party.
- Fourth Party System: 1896-1932**
 - Democrats vs. Republicans
 - Significant Third Parties: Socialist Party, Progressive Party.
- Fifth Party System: 1932-1968**
 - Democrats vs. Republicans
 - Significant Third Parties: the short-lived Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (1964), American Independent Party (1968).
- Sixth Party System: 1968 to the Present**
 - Democrats vs. Republicans
 - Significant Third Parties: Black Panther Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party.

Period 1: 1491-1607

Required Information

1. 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.
 - European expansion into the Western Hemisphere generated intense social, religious, political, and economic competition and changes within European societies.
2. In their interactions, Europeans and Native Americans asserted divergent worldviews regarding issues such as religion, gender roles, family, land use, and power.
 - As European encroachments on Native Americans' lands and demands on their labor increased, native peoples sought to defend and maintain their political sovereignty, economic prosperity, religious beliefs, and concepts of gender relations through diplomatic negotiations and military resistance.
 - Extended contact with Native Americans and Africans fostered a debate among European religious and political leaders about how non-Europeans should be treated, as well as evolving religious, cultural, and racial justifications for the subjugation of Africans and Native Americans.

Period 2: 1607-1754

Required Information

3. In the 17th century, early British colonies developed along the Atlantic coast, with regional differences that reflected various environmental, economic, cultural, and demographic factors.
 - Distance and Britain's initially lax attention led to the colonies creating self-governing institutions that were unusually democratic for the era. The New England colonies based power in participatory town meetings, which in turn elected members to their colonial legislatures; in the Southern colonies, elite planters exercised local authority and also dominated the elected assemblies.
4. Competition over resources between European rivals and American Indians encouraged industry and trade and led to conflict in the Americas.
 - British conflicts with American Indians over land, resources, and political boundaries led to military confrontations, such as Metacom's War (King Philip's War) in New England.
5. 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

- 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.

Optional Information

6. House of Burgesses, 1619
7. Mayflower Compact, 1620
8. Bacon's Rebellion, 1676
9. Establishment of the Dominion of New England, 1686
10. Leisler's Rebellion, 1689
11. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, 1689

Period 3: 1754-1800

Required Information

12. 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
13. The ideals that inspired the revolutionary cause reflected new beliefs about politics, religion, and society that had been developing over the course of the 18th century.
 - Enlightenment ideas and philosophy inspired many American political thinkers to emphasize individual talent over hereditary privilege, while religion strengthened Americans' view of themselves as a people blessed with liberty.
 - The colonists' belief in the superiority of republican forms of government based on the natural rights of the people found expression in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and the Declaration of Independence. The ideas in these documents resonated throughout American history, shaping Americans' understanding of the ideals on which the nation was based.
 - During and after the American Revolution, an increased awareness of inequalities in society motivated some individuals and groups to call for the abolition of slavery and greater political democracy in the new state and national governments.

- In response to women’s participation in the American Revolution, Enlightenment ideas, and women’s appeals for expanded roles, an ideal of “republican motherhood” gained popularity. It called on women to teach republican values within the family and granted women a new importance in American political culture.
 - The American Revolution and the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence reverberated in France, Haiti, and Latin America, inspiring future independence movements.
14. 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.
- Many new state constitutions placed power in the hands of the legislative branch and maintained property qualifications for voting and citizenship.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
15. 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.
- 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.
 - 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.
16. In the decades after American independence, interactions among different groups resulted in competition for resources, shifting alliances, and cultural blending.
- As increasing numbers of migrants from North America and other parts of the world continued to move westward, frontier cultures that had emerged in the colonial period continued to grow, fueling social, political, and ethnic tensions.

- As settlers moved westward during the 1780s, Congress enacted the Northwest Ordinance for admitting new states; the ordinance promoted public education, the protection of private property, and a ban on slavery in the Northwest Territory.
17. 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.
 - 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.
 - George Washington's Farewell Address encouraged national unity, as he cautioned against political factions and warned about the danger of permanent foreign alliances.

Optional Information

18. The Enlightenment (Age of Reason)
19. republican government
20. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776
21. Declaration of Independence, 1776
22. Articles of Confederation, 1781-1789
23. Shays' Rebellion, 1786-1787
24. Constitutional Convention, 1787
25. Great Compromise, 1787
26. *Federalist Papers*, 1787-1788
27. creation of a new government, 1789
28. Judiciary Act of 1789
29. Bill of Rights, 1791
30. formation of political parties in the 1790s (Federalists vs. Democratic-Republicans)
31. Whiskey Rebellion, 1794
32. Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798
33. Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, 1798

Period 4: 1800-1848

Required Information

34. 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.
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Regional interests often trumped national concerns as the basis for many political leaders' positions on slavery and economic policy.
35. While Americans embraced a new national culture, various groups developed distinctive cultures of their own.
- The rise of democratic and individualistic beliefs, a response to rationalism, and changes to society caused by the market revolution, along with greater social and geographical mobility, contributed to a Second Great Awakening among Protestants that influenced moral and social reforms and inspired utopian and other religious movements.
 - Enslaved blacks and free African Americans created communities and strategies to protect their dignity and family structures, and they joined political efforts aimed at changing their status.
36. Increasing numbers of Americans, many inspired by new religious and intellectual movements, worked primarily outside of government institutions to advance their ideals.
- 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.
37. The United States's acquisition of lands in the West gave rise to contests over the extension of slavery into new territories.
- Congressional attempts at political compromise, such as the Missouri Compromise, only temporarily stemmed growing tensions between opponents and defenders of slavery.

Optional Information

38. Election of 1800 (Revolution of 1800)

39. midnight judges

40. John Marshall Court, 1801-1835

- *Marbury v. Madison*, 1803
- *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 1819

- *Gibbons v. Ogden*, 1824
- *Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832

41. Hartford Convention, 1814
42. Era of Good Feelings, 1817-1824
43. Democrats vs. Whigs, 1820s-1850s
44. Jacksonian Democracy
45. Webster-Hayne Debate, 1830
46. Election of 1840

Period 5: 1844-1877

Required Information

47. In the 1840s and 1850s, Americans continued to debate questions about rights and citizenship for various groups of U.S. inhabitants.
 - A strongly anti-Catholic nativist movement arose that was aimed at limiting new immigrants' political power and cultural influence.
48. Debates over slavery came to dominate political discussion in the 1850s, culminating in the bitter election of 1860 and the secession of Southern states.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
49. The North's greater manpower and industrial resources, the leadership of Abraham Lincoln and others, and the decision to emancipate slaves eventually led to the Union military victory over the Confederacy in the devastating Civil War.
 - Lincoln sought to reunify the country and used speeches such as the Gettysburg Address to portray the struggle against slavery as the fulfillment of America's founding democratic ideals.
50. 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.
 - The women's rights movement was both emboldened and divided over the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

- 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.
- 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.

Optional Information

51. Republican Party, 1854
52. Election of 1860
53. Radical Republicans
54. Impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, 1868
55. Southern Redeemers
56. Compromise of 1877

Period 6: 1865-1898

Required Information

57. A variety of perspectives on the economy and labor developed during a time of financial panics and downturns.
 - Some argued that laissez-faire policies and competition promoted economic growth in the long run, and they opposed government intervention during economic downturns.
58. New systems of production and transportation enabled consolidation within agriculture, which, along with periods of instability, spurred a variety of responses from farmers.
 - 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.
59. International and internal migration increased urban populations and fostered the growth of a new urban culture.
 - In an urban atmosphere where the access to power was unequally distributed, political machines thrived, in part by providing immigrants and the poor with social services.
60. Larger numbers of migrants moved to the West in search of land and economic opportunity, frequently provoking competition and violent conflict.
 - 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.

- Many American Indians preserved their cultures and tribal identities despite government policies promoting assimilation, and they attempted to develop self-sustaining economic practices.

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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Optional Information

62. patronage (spoils system)

63. Tweed Ring (Tammany Hall)

64. Whiskey Ring

65. Mugwumps

66. Pendleton Act, 1883

67. Australian (secret) ballot

68. initiative and referendum

69. People's (Populist) Party, 1891

70. Election of 1896

Period 7: 1890-1945

Required Information

71. 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.

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

72. 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

73. Popular culture grew in influence in U.S. society, even as debates increased over the effects of culture on public values, morals, and American national identity.

- Official restrictions on freedom of speech grew during World War I, as increased anxiety about radicalism led to a Red Scare and attacks on labor activism and immigrant culture.
- In the 1920s, cultural and political controversies emerged as Americans debated gender roles, modernism, science, religion, and issues related to race and immigration.

74. World War I and its aftermath intensified ongoing debates about the nation's role in the world and how best to achieve national security and pursue American interests.

- After initial neutrality in World War I, the nation entered the conflict, departing from the U.S. foreign policy tradition of noninvolvement in European affairs, in response to Woodrow Wilson's call for the defense of humanitarian and democratic principles.

75. U.S. participation in World War II transformed American society, while the victory of the United States and its allies over the Axis powers vaulted the U.S. into a position of global, political, and military leadership.

Optional Information

76. Progressive Era, 1901-1917

77. Election of 1912

78. New Nationalism (T. Roosevelt) vs. New Freedom (Wilson)

79. 17th Amendment, 1913

80. New Deal Democratic Coalition

81. Election of 1932

Period 8: 1945-1980

Required Information

82. Cold War policies led to public debates over the power of the federal government and acceptable means for pursuing international and domestic goals while protecting civil liberties.
- Americans debated policies and methods designed to expose suspected communists within the United States even as both parties supported the broader strategy of containing communism.
 - Americans debated the merits of a large nuclear arsenal, the military-industrial complex, and the appropriate power of the executive branch in conducting foreign and military policy.
83. 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.
- 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.
84. Liberalism influenced postwar politics and court decisions, but it came under increasing attack from the left as well as from a resurgent conservative movement.
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
85. Rapid economic and social changes in American society fostered a sense of optimism in the postwar years.

- As higher education opportunities and new technologies rapidly expanded, increasing social mobility encouraged the migration of the middle class to the suburbs and of many Americans to the South and West. The Sun Belt region emerged as a significant political and economic force.
- Immigrants from around the world sought access to the political, social, and economic opportunities in the United States, especially after the passage of new immigration laws in 1965.

86. 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.

- 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.
- 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.

Optional Information

87. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), established 1938

88. McCarran Internal Security Act, 1950

89. McCarthyism

90. Earl Warren Court, 1954-1969

- *Baker v. Carr*, 1962
- *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962
- *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 1963
- *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965
- *Miranda v. Arizona*, 1966

91. Students for a Democratic Society

92. Berkeley Free Speech Movement, 1964-1965

93. Nixon's Southern Strategy

94. Watergate, 1972

95. New Right

- Right-to-Life Movement
- Phyllis Schlafly

Period 9: 1980 to the Present

96. Conservative beliefs regarding the need for traditional social values and a reduced role for government advanced in U.S. politics after 1980.

- 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.
- Conservatives argued that liberal programs were counterproductive infighting 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.
- Policy debates continued over free-trade agreements, the scope of the government social safety net, and calls to reform the U.S. financial system.

97. The U.S. population continued to undergo demographic shifts that had significant cultural and political consequences.

- After 1980, the political, economic, and cultural influence of the American South and West continued to increase as population shifted to those areas.
- Intense political and cultural debates continued over issues such as immigration policy, diversity, gender roles, and family structures.

98. The Reagan administration promoted an interventionist foreign policy that continued in later administrations, even after the end of the Cold War.

- Increased U.S. military spending, Reagan’s diplomatic initiatives, and political changes and economic problems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were all important in ending the Cold War.

99. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. foreign policy efforts focused on fighting terrorism around the world.

- The war on terrorism sought to improve security within the United States but also raised questions about the protection of civil liberties and human rights.

100. Jimmy Carter’s “Malaise” speech, 1979

101. Election of 1980

102. Moral Majority

103. Focus on the Family sagebrush rebellion

104. Contract with America, 1994

105. Impeachment of Bill Clinton, 1998

106. Election of 2008