

Period 7: 1890–1945

In a Nutshell

An increasingly pluralistic United States faced profound domestic and global challenges, debated the proper degree of government activism, and sought to define its international role.

Key Concepts

Part 1

- A. Growth expanded opportunity, while economic instability led to new efforts to reform U.S. society and its economic system.
- B. The United States continued its transition from a rural, agricultural economy to an urban, industrial economy led by large companies.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

Part 2

- E. Innovations in communications and technology contributed to the growth of mass culture, while significant changes occurred in internal and international migration patterns.
- F. 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.
- G. Economic pressures, global events, and political developments caused sharp variations in the numbers, sources, and experiences of both international and internal migrants.

Part 3

- H. 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.
- I. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, new U.S. territorial ambitions and acquisitions in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific accompanied heightened public debates over America's role in the world.
- J. 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.
- K. 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.

Significant Topics

1. Economic Developments during the Early 1900s

New technologies and manufacturing techniques helped focus the U.S. economy on the production of consumer goods, contributing to improved standards of living, greater personal mobility, and better communications systems. By 1920, a majority of the U.S. population lived in urban centers, which offered new economic opportunities for women, international migrants, and internal migrants. Episodes of credit and market instability in the early 20th century, in particular the Great Depression, led to calls for a stronger financial regulatory system.

a. Wright Brothers, 1903

b. Model T Ford introduced, 1908

c. assembly line

d. Charles Lindbergh, 1927

2. The Progressive Era, 1901-1917

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. Preservationists and conservationists both supported the establishment of national parks while advocating different government responses to the overuse of natural resources. 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.

a. Progressive Era, 1901-1917

b. muckrakers

- c. Florence Kelly

- d. Square Deal

- e. Northern Securities Company, 1904

- f. Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906

- g. Meat Inspection Act, 1906

- h. Election of 1912

- i. New Nationalism

- j. New Freedom

- k. Underwood Tariff, 1913

- l. Federal Reserve Act, 1913

- m. Clayton Antitrust Act, 1914

n. Federal Trade Commission, 1914

o. Progressive Amendments

3. **U.S. Foreign Policy during the Late 1800s and Early 1900s**

Imperialists cited economic opportunities, racial theories, competition with European empires, and the perception in the 1890s that the Western frontier was “closed” to argue that Americans were destined to expand their culture and institutions to peoples around the globe. Anti-imperialists cited principles of self-determination and invoked both racial theories and the U.S. foreign policy tradition of isolationism to argue that the U.S. should not extend its territory overseas. The American victory in the Spanish–American War led to the U.S. acquisition of island territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific, an increase in involvement in Asia, and the suppression of a nationalist movement in the Philippines.

a. closing of the Frontier, 1890

b. Alfred Thayer Mahan

c. Queen Liliuokalani

d. yellow journalism

e. U.S.S. Maine

f. Filipino Rebellion, 1899-1902

- g. Insular Cases, 1901

- h. Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, 1903

- i. Roosevelt Corollary, 1904

- j. Dollar Diplomacy

- k. Pancho Villa's raid, 1916

4. **World War I, 1914-1918**

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. Although the American Expeditionary Forces played a relatively limited role in combat, the U.S.'s entry helped to tip the balance of the conflict in favor of the Allies. Despite Wilson's deep involvement in postwar negotiations, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles or join the League of Nations.

- a. US. enters World War War I, 1917

- b. American Expeditionary Force (AEF)

- c. Fourteen Points, 1918

- d. Treaty of Versailles, 1919

e. League of Nations

5. **Postwar Red Scare**

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.

a. Espionage Act of 1917 and Sedition Act of 1918

b. *Schenck v. United States*, 1919

c. Palmer Raids, 1919-1920

d. Sacco and Vanzetti, 1927

6. **Immigration and Domestic Migration during the Early 1900s**

Immigration from Europe reached its peak in the years before World War I. During and after World War I, nativist campaigns against some ethnic groups led to the passage of quotas that restricted immigration, particularly from southern and eastern Europe, and increased barriers to Asian immigration. The increased demand for war production and labor during World War I and World War II and the economic difficulties of the 1930s led many Americans to migrate to urban centers in search of economic opportunities. In a Great Migration during and after World War I, African Americans escaping segregation, racial violence, and limited economic opportunity in the South moved to the North and West, where they found new opportunities but still encountered discrimination.

a. Gentleman's Agreement, 1907

b. Great Migration of African Americans

c. National Origins Act, 1924

7. **Immigration from Mexico and Latin America**

Migration to the United States from Mexico and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere increased, in spite of contradictory government policies toward Mexican immigration.

a. Mexican Repatriation, 1929-1939

b. Bracero Program, 1942

c. Luisa Moreno

8. **American Culture during the Early 1900s**

New forms of mass media, such as radio and cinema, contributed to the spread of national culture as well as greater awareness of regional cultures. Migration gave rise to new forms of art and literature that expressed ethnic and regional identities, such as the Harlem Renaissance movement.

a. Harlem Renaissance

b. jazz

c. Jelly Roll Morton

d. Louis Armstrong

e. Ashcan School

f. Edward Hopper

g. Yiddish Theater

h. KDKA in Pittsburgh, 1920

i. *The Jazz Singer*, 1927

9. Political and Cultural Conflict during the 1920s

In the 1920s, cultural and political controversies emerged as Americans debated gender roles, modernism, science, religion, and issues related to race and immigration.

a. Ku Klan Klan March on Washington, 1925

b. Fundamentalism vs Modernism

c. Prohibition

10. The Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929-1945

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.

a. Great Depression, 1929-1941

b. Stock Market Crash, 1929

- c. Smoot-Hawley Tariff, 1930

- d. Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 1932

- e. Bonus March, 1932

- f. Roosevelt's New Deal, 1933-1945

- g. New Deal Programs to Stimulate Economic Activity

- h. Glass-Steagall Act, 1933

- i. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), 1933

- j. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), 1934

- k. Wagner Act, 1935

- l. Social Security Act, 1935

- m. Court-Packing Plan, 1937

- n. Roosevelt Recession, 1938

- o. Congress of Industrial Organizations, 1938

- p. New Deal Democratic Coalition

- q. Huey Long

- r. Charles Coughlin

11. U.S. Foreign Policy during the 1920s and 1930s

In the years following World War I, the United States pursued a unilateral foreign policy that used international investment, peace treaties, and select military intervention to promote a vision of international order, even while maintaining U.S. isolationism. In the 1930s, while many Americans were concerned about the rise of fascism and totalitarianism, most opposed taking military action against the aggression of Nazi Germany and Japan until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor drew the United States into World War II.

- a. Washington Naval Conference, 1921-1922

- b. Stimson Doctrine, 1932

- c. Good Neighbor Policy

- d. Neutrality Acts, 1935-1939

e. Lend-Lease Act, 1940

f. Atlantic Charter, 1941

g. Pearl Harbor, 1941

12. World War II, 1929-1945

Americans viewed World War II as a fight for the survival of freedom and democracy against fascist and militarist ideologies. This perspective was later reinforced by revelations about Japanese wartime atrocities, Nazi concentration camps, and the Holocaust. The mass mobilization of American society helped end the Great Depression, and the country's strong industrial base played a pivotal role in winning the war. The United States and its allies achieved military victory through Allied cooperation, technological and scientific advances, the contributions of servicemen and women, and campaigns such as Pacific "island-hopping" and the D-Day invasion. The use of atomic bombs hastened the end of the war and sparked debates about the morality of using atomic weapons.

a. Manhattan Project, 1942

b. Invasion of Normandy (D-Day), 1944

c. Yalta Conference, 1945

d. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 1945

13. Women and Minorities during World War II

Mobilization and military service provided opportunities for women and minorities to improve their socioeconomic positions for the war's duration, while also leading to debates over racial segregation. Wartime experiences also generated challenges to civil liberties, such as the internment of Japanese Americans.

- a. Rosie the Riveter

- b. A. Philip Randolph

- c. Congress of Racial Equality, 1942

- d. Japanese-American Internment, 1942

- e. Zoot Suit Riots, 1943

14. **World War II and American Power**

The war-ravaged condition of Asia and Europe, and the dominant U.S. role in the Allied victory and postwar peace settlements, allowed the United States to emerge from the war as the most powerful nation on earth.