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AP US HISTORY

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# The Ultimate Teacher's Starter Kit to AP US History

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# Introduction

This eBook was created to assist educators in preparing their students for the AP US History exam. It provides key insights into the most recent form of the test, which you can use to inform your teaching and review sessions.

Few AP exams rival APUSH in terms of complexity and breadth of content, so this guide was designed to give your class a boost toward improved student outcomes. Alongside section specific tips tailored to AP scoring, we have provided key resources on vital topics that you can distribute to your students.

The starter kit contains information from the [Albert Blog](#). If you're looking for additional resources and crash courses for your students, be sure to regularly check the blog and subscribe to hear about our new posts. The AP US History section of the blog is particularly extensive.

E-mail us at [hello@albert.io](mailto:hello@albert.io) if you have any questions, suggestions, or comments!

*Last Updated: August 2016*

# About Us

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# Why Educators Love Us

We asked teachers how their students did after using Albert.

**Here is what they had to say:**



*My students had an 81.2% passing rate - the previous year was 76% (the highest rate in our county)! I am thrilled. I had 64 students total, with 6 receiving 5s, 19 scoring 4s, 27 receiving 3s, 10 scored 2s and 2 received 1s.*

Susan M., JP Taravella High

*70% of my students scored 3 or higher. This is up from last year, and is also well above the national average. Needless to say, I am very happy with my students' success. I used Albert more intentionally this year. In the beginning of the year, I wanted students simply to answer questions and practice. Once they had 150-200 questions answered, we looked for trends, strengths, and weaknesses and worked on addressing them. Students were tasked with increasing their answer accuracy no matter how many questions it took, then they set their own goals (some wanted to focus around tone; others needed practice with meaning as a whole).*



Bill S., Lapeer High School



*Last year 40% passed with 3s and 4s. This year 87% passed, most had 4s and 5s. We used the stimulus-based multiple choice questions throughout the year and as review for the exam. I think it helped tremendously.*

Alice P., First Baptist Christian Academy

# Why Students Love Us

We asked students how they did after using Albert.

**Here is what they had to say:**



*This year, I scored a 4 on the AP US History Exam and another 4 on the AP Psychology Exam. Last year I scored a 3 on the AP Human Geography Exam. I believe I improved a ton this year! What I did this year was, I took practice more seriously. This helped my scores a lot more than simply reading through the textbook.*

Chelsea A., Gateway High School

*I scored very well this year – four 5s and one 4. Albert helped me get used to the types of questions asked on the exam and overall my scores were better this year.*

Robyn G., Chambersburg Area Senior High School



*The breadth of knowledge covered by Albert really helped my understanding of concepts we either didn't have time for in class or that I was confused about.*

Alexa D., Denver School of Arts

# How the Redesigned AP United States History Exam Impacts APUSH Instruction

The 2014 AP United States History Exam was the first of the redesigned format. The changes included a reduction in the number of multiple choice questions, an increase in the number of multiple choice questions linked to a stimulus, and the addition of short answer questions. Students were also still required to write a DBQ (document-based question) essay and one free response essay. With students now responsible for proving their historical knowledge and ability to think historically in new ways, AP United States History teachers across the country have been modifying what goes on in the classroom.

Previously, students were required to memorize an amazing amount of historical information – names, dates, events, etc. – in order to have the best chance at answering the nearly 100 multiple choice questions correctly. This dictated that the AP US History classroom was commonly a place where all day, every day, the teacher lectured and the students took notes. Tremendous amounts of outside reading were also necessitated by the nature of the exam questions. Lecturing and reading are still completely necessary in an AP US History classroom – students must be provided direction in their studies through teacher presentation. AP courses in general are designed to prepare students for college coursework, which often includes extensive lecture and note taking. To not expose the students to this style of learning would be a disservice. However, because the exam now focuses more on the ability think historically, not memorize history, students must practice this in the classroom. Teachers are having to adjust the amount of time spent on lecturing and presentation of material to allow more time for students to dissect primary sources and express their findings coherently.

## How the Redesigned AP United States History Exam Impacts APUSH Instruction Cont.

The new test format provides students with context for answering each multiple choice question. The more factual information a student knows, the easier answering questions will be, however, if they cannot comprehend what is presented in the stimulus or how to use all parts of the stimulus to help them answer the questions, the multiple choice section will be difficult and stressful for them.

In light of this change to the exam (stimulus-based multiple choice questions), teachers should be paying close attention to the time periods described in the curriculum framework and the concepts deemed indicative of these time periods. As long as some specific factual evidence is presented to and retained by the students that proves the validity of the concepts, students should be able to answer the multiple choice questions correctly. The framework is part of the course description and can be found [here](#).

An example of a specific change that I have made in my APUSH classroom is the addition of the “Framework” assignment that students work on throughout the unit and turn in on the day of the unit assessment. I print out the CollegeBoard’s framework for the time period(s) we are working on and I require that students provide at least three pieces of “SFE” (specific factual evidence) for each claim listed (there is room on the print out for them to do this).

Some students keep the framework out on their desk when they are taking notes and doing various other activities with primary and secondary sources so they can add the SFE as it comes up. Other students choose to work on it solely at home as they complete reading/research assignments. What they end up with is an excellent study tool for the AP Exam in May. They have at their fingertips every historical concept they are responsible for understanding as well as evidence that supports those claims.

## How the Redesigned AP United States History Exam Impacts APUSH Instruction Cont.

They can review these packets and be prepared to answer the multiple choice, short answer and essay questions on the exam. Students that took the time to complete the frameworks correctly and study them in the weeks prior to the exam reported to me that information applicable to the questions was easy to come up with and use to answer the multiple choice as well as the short answer. They also told me that they were able to produce at least two, three and sometimes four pieces of specific factual evidence to support their assertions on the two essays.

**Here is an example of the framework assignment:**

From Key Concept 6.3	SFE:
<p>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.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jane Addams founded the Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago, in 1889.</li> <li>2. The National Consumers League and the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), both dominated by women, fought for state governments to pass protective labor laws for women and children.</li> <li>3. In 1922, Lorna Hodgkinson became the first woman to earn a PhD from Harvard.</li> </ol>

Another change I have implemented in my classroom that students report as beneficial is “partner-short answer” assignments. This change to my instruction was warranted by the new short answer questions on the AP exam.

## How the Redesigned AP United States History Exam Impacts APUSH Instruction Cont.

After we have gone over a time period, I have the students divide into partnerships and give each student two large index cards. On the front of each card, they write a question that pertains to the time period we have been studying and that is modeled after examples of short answer questions on the AP exam (which I have previously provided for them via the syllabus). The partners then exchange their index cards and answer one another's questions on the back of the card. I allow them to use their notes from class to answer the questions because I use this as a review activity before the classroom assessment as well as practice for the AP exam. Before short answer questions were added to the exam, this is not a skill we spent time on in class. In order to make time for these activities, I cut down on the amount of time spent on DBQ/FRE practice in light of students only having to write one of each of those essays.

Some teachers may not appreciate the changes to the exam, but whether or not the teacher likes the changes is irrelevant – a good teacher will tailor classroom instruction to best prepare students to pass the exam and earn the coveted college credit. Students must be prepared for and exposed to stimulus based multiple choice questions, including both primary and secondary source stimuli in the classroom setting before having to sit down and pass a test requiring this skill. The same goes for the new short answer questions. I happen to like the new exam format and have enjoyed changing my instructional practices, but regardless of how you feel about the new exam format, I hope these examples of classroom activities tailored to preparing students for the test are helpful.



Ivy Cann received her Bachelor's degree in Social Science Education from The University of Georgia and her Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Supervision from The University of Phoenix. She has been teaching social studies for 11 years and has served as the department chairperson for five years. AP United States History has been on her schedule for six years, along with AP Psychology. She and her family reside in metro-Atlanta, Georgia, where her husband of 10 years is also a social studies teacher.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

The dreaded Document Based Question. Here lies the bane of almost every AP US History student. If you've been doing this right, these three letters—DBQ—should send shudders down your spine. You've read countless primary source documents, written dozens of outlines and thesis statements, and timed your essay writing more times than you'd like to count.

Don't worry, though; it's not as bad as you'd think. We've created this AP US history review on the unavoidable DBQ section because there's hope yet.

You will come to terms with the DBQ, and we will help you get there. In this review, we will break down all of the components of the DBQ section of the APUSH exam, highlighting what the College Board graders are looking for, give you a number of test-taking tips that will help you organize your time and thoughts, and provide you with examples of how best to approach some example DBQs from previous exams.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

## The DBQ Basics: What is it?

Hopefully you've run across the letters DBQ already, or at least have heard whispers about the Document Based Questions of the AP US history exam. If not, there's no need to worry—we've created this AP US history review for you too.

Okay, so here's how it works. Basically, you will be given an essay prompt, a set of primary source documents (never more than 7), and only 60 minutes to come up with a well written, clear and coherent essay response. The general rule of thumb, recommended by the good people at College Board, is to dedicate about 15 of those precious minutes to planning and the last 45 to writing. That may seem a little overwhelming, but it is totally doable! According to the College Board, these are the things you want to make sure you accomplish when writing your responses:

1. State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
2. Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
3. Supports the thesis or a relevant argument by accounting for historical complexity, relating diverse historical evidence in a cohesive way.
4. Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: author's point of view, author's purpose, audience, and/or historical context.
5. Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
6. Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
7. Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

## What is the APUSH DBQ Rubric?

This list of nine things you need to accomplish with your essay may be great and all, but you may also be asking yourself, “What are the people grading my exam looking for?” This is actually an excellent question. Any successful test-taker will tell you that the key to success is fully understanding what the person who is writing the test, or more importantly grading it, looking for from you.

So, without beating around the bush too much, [here](#) is an example rubric that AP US history teachers have been using to understand the expectations for their students.

But if you want the official account, you can read through the [Rubrics for AP History and Historical Thinking Skills](#) put out by the College Board itself. But what does it all mean? You’re not a history teacher; you’re just trying to pass the test, right?

Here are the details. APUSH DBQs have a maximum value of 7 points. If you want a 5 on your AP US History exam, you are shooting for a 7 on your DBQ. From these 7 points, there are 4 main components that APUSH graders are looking for: Thesis and Argument Development, Document Analysis, Using Evidence beyond the Documents, and Synthesis. This AP US history review will break down these four parts of the APUSH rubric, letting you in on the point value of each and how best to approach them when writing.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

## Thesis and Argument Development

The thesis and quality of your argument will make up 2 out of the total 7 points for this part of the APUSH DBQ grading rubric. Here's how the College Board breaks it down:

1 Point	Presents a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.
1 Point	Develops and supports a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.

OK, so this is how the people grading your exam are thinking. Now what you should be thinking is that you need to keep two things in mind for in order to get these 2 points: Argument and Organization. These are the two most important these to any history essay. Sure, the documents may be solid, but it's your argument and the way you organize your argument that will prove your historical awesomeness.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

So, whenever you approach an APUSH DBQ, you should always spend a few minutes outlining your thoughts first. Don't get bogged down in too many details, but you are going to want to think about your essay structure in a way that best supports your central thesis.

You want to think about your paper as always interconnected. Each paragraph needs a topic sentence that connects to your central thesis, making your thoughts and arguments smooth, transitioning between paragraphs. Everything should connect to your thesis. After that, organize your evidence in paragraph groupings. Ask yourself, what connects these documents? And place connected documents with one another.

Finally, make sure your thesis covers all aspects of the question. Don't make any vague statements about the past that cannot be backed up with the evidence you've been given. And always remember, history is complicated—your thesis should reflect that.

## **Document Analysis**

Once you've figured out what your central argument and general essay structure is going to be like, you are going to want to get into the nitty-gritty of the documents. Here is what the College Board says you should be thinking about (and how much this part of the essay is worth):

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

Here is what the College Board says you should be thinking about (and how much this part of the essay is worth):

1 Point	Utilizes the content of at least six of the documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.
1 Point	Explains the significance of the author's point of view, author's purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least four of the documents.

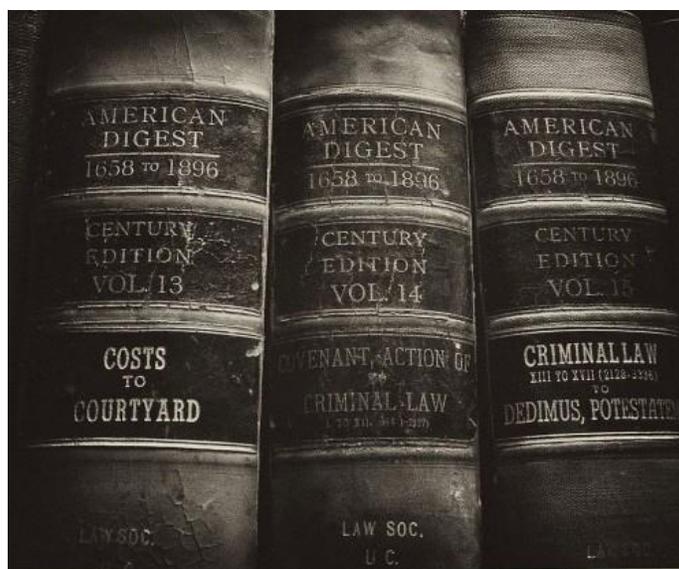
Documents are central to the Document Based Questions. Sounds obvious, right? Well, using the documents successfully is more difficult than it sounds. First off, you need to show that you understand the background and historical context of the documents presented to you.

Never rely on the documents alone. You do want to make sure that you cover and discuss either every single document, or all but one. But this does not mean that the documents create the essay. In fact, if you find yourself using large quotes that are increasingly wasting space, stop yourself. This is a waste of precious time as well.

You want to show the grader that you can read between the lines. It's less about what the document says, and more of what it represents. What do the documents say about the era that is being covered in the question? You also need to be sure that you use of the documents are not detracting from your argument. Use as many documents as possible, but also make them relevant to the point you are trying to make.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

## Using Evidence Beyond the Documents



*Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)*

This section has everything to do with the documents that are given to you. Or should I say the documents that are not given to you. This is almost a repeat of the last section, but read what the College Board has to say and this AP US history review will break it down:

1 Point	(Contextualization) Situates the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the questions.
1 Point	(Evidence Beyond the Documents) Provides an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

Think of it this way, anybody can read the document, so what makes you a good historian? This is where all of your textbook reading, studying, and memorization will come into play. You are going to need to show that you understand the background of these documents.

You do this by putting them into context. What do you know about the author? What kinds of movements did they represent? Who were they connected to? These are the types of questions that you are going to want to ask yourself. Answering them will show your reader, and grader, that you know more about US history than what is just on the page in front of you.

Finally, to connect back to the Thesis and Argument Development part of the rubric, showing that you know more than what meets the eye means that you are going to organize your thoughts around a solid and interesting argument that is sure to catch your graders' attention. It is always important to view these things as interconnected expectations, rather than separate points.

## Synthesis

Speaking of interconnected, this is where you show how your arguments wrap up nicely into a neat package that makes historical sense. Specifically, what you want to think about is the way that your argument applies to other eras/concepts in US history. Here's what the College Board says about "Synthesis":

1 Point	Extends the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and ONE of the following A) A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area. B) A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual history)
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# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

This is the point in your essay, where you get to say how or why your argument is important. What you want to do here is show that the documents apply to the era covered in the essay and to other events/ideas/etc. in history. This part is tricky, but be bold, be yourself, and show that you know AP US History like the back of your hand.

Also, remember this scoring note from the College Board as well: The synthesis point requires an explanation of the connections to different historical period, era, or geographical area, and is not awarded by merely a phrase or reference. In other words, you cannot throw in a last second effort to connect to another topic in your conclusion. You need to show that you understood, from the beginning of your essay, that your thesis is important to a larger theme in US history.

## Example DBQs from Prior APUSH Exams

So, now that we have covered what the graders of the APUSH exam are looking for, this AP US History review is going to throw out a couple of examples of DBQs from previous exams and explain the College Board's expectations and grading guidelines.

Let's take a look at the DBQ from the [2015 AP US History](#) exam. We don't have enough room here to lay out every document that was assigned in this question, but let's go through a step-by-step of what the graders will be looking for.

**First, here's the DBQ:**

Explain the reasons why a new conservatism rose to prominence in the United States between 1960 and 1989

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

Vague and a little complicated, right? But that's part of history. There are a number of ways to answer this question. But generally, and you can see these in the documents, you should be looking for big ideas like anticommunism, reactions against big government, emphasis on personal freedom, perceived military weakness (Vietnam, for example), etc. What's important here is that your thesis sticks with these bigger themes that can cover all of the documents. It's sometimes useful to think about the big words of historical thought: INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, and CULTURAL. Start by grouping the documents into these categories and move on from there.

So, let's look at the first document, the Barry Goldwater source. You can see that the College Board has broken down the rubric into categories like Intended Audience, Purpose, Historical Context, and the Author's Point of View. These things will allow you to lump the source into a category. For example, he is concerned with POLITICS and SOCIETY. In particular, he is concerned with the growth of governmental power. These are a couple of key words that will allow you to group this source along with the others.

OK, now the document from Milton Friedman. Reading the document, you can see that he is an economist arguing that federal programs (dating back to the New Deal) were failing. This is an argument for the "free market" and Keynesian economics. The big category here is obviously ECONOMY, but there is a connection between this article and Goldwater's. They are both critiquing the growth of the federal government. Sure, for different, reasons, but the conclusion is the same.

These are the connections you are looking for. There is complexity in their connections, it shows that you understand their point of view and argument, and it shows that you know a little more about the history that extends beyond the documents. Do this with the remainder of the documents, finding the big themes and connections so you can create a solid argument, and you're close to getting all 7 points on this DBQ.

# Everything You Need to Understand about the APUSH DBQ Rubric Cont.

Let's take a quick look at one more DBQ. We are going to read through the explanation given to this example DBQ from the [AP US History Course and Exam Description](#) (page 136). Here is the question:

Analyze major changes and continuities in the social and economic experiences of African Americans who migrated from the rural South to urban area in the North in the period 1910-1930

Already this should be conjuring images of the Great Migration (of African-Americans from the South to the North), the Harlem Renaissance, etc. This is the kind of outside information that you are going to want to keep in mind while working on the answer for this kind of question. Plus documents like numbers 2 and 7 support this kind of background info.

The big categories are here as well. Documents 5 and 7 show evidence of SOCIAL problems. ECONOMIC struggles are seen in documents 6 and 1. After you've figured out these bigger categories, you can work smaller. Race is an obvious issue in many of these articles, violence (lynching), etc.

Weaving this big picture info with outside information into your essay will get you that much closer to those coveted 7 points. Make sure that you are also thinking about perspective, as well. Document 3, for example, is written by a white author. How does this matter to your argument?

Finally, since every thesis and essay will be answered differently, this is your chance to shine on the exam. Show off your knowledge and all of the hard work you've been doing for the DBQs and the APUSH exam, in general. Remember to come back to this AP US History review on Documents Based Questions for tips on how to understand the exam rubric. Also, let us know how you've approached the DBQ section of the exam. What's helped you the most?



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# Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ

The redesign has brought a great deal of uncertainty and confusion amongst APUSH teachers. In many ways, we are all “rookie” teachers, as all of us have the challenge of implementing fundamental curricular and skills-based changes into our classrooms.

One of the more significant changes is to the structure of one essay on the AP exam, the Document Based question (DBQ). The rubric for the DBQ was previously a more holistic essay that combined a strong thesis, and use of documents and outside information to support the argument. This has been transformed into a much more structured and formulaic skills-based rubric. The change has led to a healthy debate about the pros and cons of both types of essays, but in general the core of the essay has remained the same: write a thesis and support it with evidence in the form of documents and outside information. If students continue to apply these basic writing skills, they are likely to earn 3 or 4 out of the seven total points for the Document Based Question.

In this post, we will explore one of these points students will be looking to earn to help their chances at passing the APUSH exam this May: the Contextualization point.

# Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

## What is Contextualization?

According to the College Board, contextualization refers to a:

*Historical thinking skill that involves the ability to connect historical events and processes to specific circumstances of time and place as well as broader regional, national, or global processes.*

*(College Board AP Course and Exam Description, AP US History, Fall 2015)*

Contextualization is a critical historical thinking skill that is featured in the newly redesigned course. In my opinion, this is a skill of fundamental importance for students to utilize in the classroom. Often times, students find history difficult or boring because they don't see connections between different historical time periods and the world they live in today. They assume that events occur in a vacuum, and don't realize that the historical context is critical in helping explain people's beliefs and points of view in that period of time. Putting events into context is something I always thought was important, but now that the College Board explicitly has established the skill, it has forced me to be more proactive in creating lessons and assignments that allow students to utilize this way of thinking.

The place that contextualization is most directly relevant on the actual AP exam itself is the Document Based Question. In order to earn the point for contextualization, students must:

*Situate historical events, developments, or processes within the broader regional, national, or global context in which they occurred in order to draw conclusions about their relative significance.*

*(College Board AP Course and Exam Description, AP US History, Fall 2015)*

# Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

In other words, students are asked to provide background before jumping right into their thesis and essay and paint a picture of what is going on at the time of the prompt. Although there is no specific requirement as to where contextualization should occur, it makes natural sense to place it in the introduction right before a thesis point. Placing this historical background right at the beginning sets the stage for the argument that will occur in the body of the essay, and is consistent with expectations many English teachers have in how to write an introduction paragraph.

I explain contextualization to students by using the example of Star Wars. Before the movie starts, the film begins with “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...” and continues with background information on the characters, events, and other information that is crucial to understanding the film. Without this context, the viewer would not know what is going on, and might miss key events or be lost throughout the film. This is what contextualization aims to do in student essays. It sets the stage for their thesis, evidence, and argument that is to follow.

## Contextualization vs. Historical Context

One aspect of the DBQ rubric that can be a bit confusing initially is that students are asked to do this contextualization, but there is also another area which gives them the option to use historical context. So what is the difference?

Contextualization refers to putting the entire essay into a broader context (preferably in the introduction). However, when writing their essays, students are also required to analyze four of the documents that they utilize by either examining the author’s point of view, describing the intended audience of the source, identifying the author’s purpose or putting the source into historical context. The latter sounds similar to contextualization (and it is essentially the same skill), but historical context is only focused on the specific document being analyzed, not the entire essay, like the contextualization point.

## Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

For example, if a document is a map that shows slavery growing dramatically from 1820 to 1860, a student might point out that this growth can be explained in the context of the development of the cotton gin, which made the production of cotton much more profitable and led to the spread of slavery in the Deep South. While essentially the same skill, historical context focuses on one specific document's background.

### Examples of Successful Student Contextualization Points

One of the biggest pitfalls that prevent students from earning the contextualization point is that they are too brief or vague. In general, it would be difficult for students to earn the point if they are writing only a sentence or two. Early in the year, I assigned students a DBQ based on the following prompt:

*Evaluate the extent in which the Civil War was a turning point in the lives of African Americans in the United States. Use the documents and your knowledge of the years 1860-1877 to construct your response.*



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

## Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

This was the third DBQ we had written, and students were now getting brave enough to move beyond a thesis and document analysis and started attempting to tackle the contextualization point. However, the attempts were all over the map. One student wrote:

*The Civil War was a bloody event that led to the death of thousands of Americans.*

Of course this is a true statement, but is extremely vague. What led to the Civil War? Why was it so deadly? Without any specific detail, this student could not earn the contextualization point.

Another student wrote:

*Slavery had existed for hundreds of years in the United States. It was a terrible thing that had to be abolished.*

Again, this is a drive-by attempt at earning contextualization. It mentions things that are true, but lacks any meaningful details or explanation that would demonstrate understanding of the time period in discussion. What led to the beginning of slavery in the colonies? How did it develop? What made it so horrible? How did individuals resist and protest slavery? These are the types of details that would add meaning to contextualization.

One student nailed it. She wrote:

*The peculiar institution of slavery had been a part of America's identity since the founding of the original English colony at Jamestown. In the early years, compromise was key to avoiding the moral question, but as America entered the mid 19th century sectional tensions and crises with popular sovereignty, Kansas, and fugitive slaves made the issue increasingly unavoidable. When the Civil War began, the war was transformed from one to simply save the Union to a battle for the future of slavery and freedom in the United States.*

# Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

**Now THAT is contextualization!** It gives specific details about the beginning of slavery and its development. It discusses attempts at compromise, but increasing sectional tensions that led to the Civil War. The writer paints a vivid and clear picture of the situation, events, and people that set the stage for the Civil War. Students don't want to write a 6-8 sentence paragraph (they will want to save time for their argument in the body), but they need to do more than write a vague sentence that superficially addresses the era.

## Strategies for Teaching Contextualization to Students

### Analyze Lots of Primary Sources

One of the best ways to prepare for the DBQ is for students to practice reading and comprehending primary source texts, particularly texts that are written by people who use very different language and sentence structure from today. This helps them understand and analyze documents, but it also can be helpful in practicing contextualization. Looking at different perspectives and points of view in the actual historical time periods they are learning is key in allowing students to understand how the era can impact beliefs, values and events that occur.

### Assign Many DBQ Assessments and Share Specific Examples

The more often students write DBQs, the more comfortable students will get with the entire process and skill set involved, including contextualization. One thing that has been especially successful in my classroom is to collect a handful of student attempts at the contextualization point and share them with students. Students then get to examine them and look at effective and less effective attempts at earning contextualization. Often the best way for students to learn what to do or how to improve is to see what their classmates have done.

# Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

## Incorporating In-Class Activities

The course is broken into nine distinct time periods from 1491 to present. In each period or unit students are assigned activities that force them to put a specific policy, event, or movement into context. For example, we did lecture notes on the presidency of JFK, learning about the Man on the Moon Speech, Cuban Missile Crisis, and creation of the Peace Corps. Students had to write 3-4 sentences that asked them to put these events in historical context using the Cold War. This allowed students to understand that each of these seemingly unrelated historical events were shaped by the tension between the United States and Soviet Union: winning the space race, stopping a communist nuclear threat less than 100 miles from Florida, and spreading goodwill into nations that might otherwise turn to communism all are strategies the United States used to thwart the Soviet threat. By doing this activity, students gain an appreciation for how historical context shapes events and decisions of the day.



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

# Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.

## **Teach Cause and Effect in United States History**

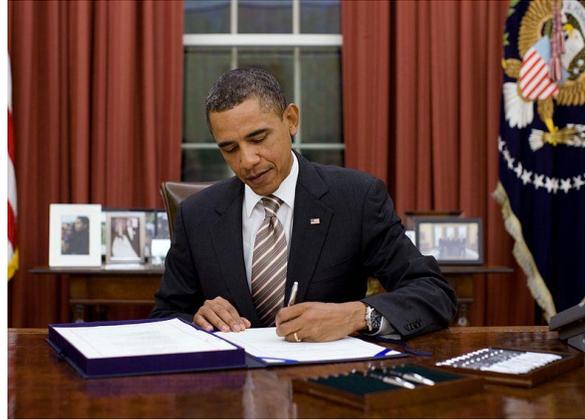
It is very easy to get caught up as a teacher in how to best get lots of minutia and factoids into students heads quickly and efficiently. However, if we can teach history not as a series of independent and unrelated events, but as a series of events that have a causal relationship that impact what happens next, this helps students grasp and understand contextualization. For example, in the lead-up to World War I, students create a timeline of events that led to America entering the conflict. As students examine the torpedoing of the Lusitania, unrestricted submarine warfare, the Zimmermann telegram, etc., they gain an understanding that it was not a random decision by President Wilson, but rather a series of events that precipitated the declaration of war. This is what contextualization is: the background that sets the stage for a particular moment in American history.

## **Examine Contextualization with Current Events**

I know what you are thinking, I have one school year (less if your school year starts in September) to get through 1491 to Present and now I am supposed to make this a current events class as well? The answer is yes and no. Will stuff from the news pages be content the students need to know for the exam: absolutely not. However, it is a great opportunity for students to understand that our past explains why our country is what it is today.

For example, President Obama’s decision to work towards normalizing relations with Cuba makes more sense if students think about it through the lens of contextualization. The United States invaded Cuba in 1898 in the Spanish-American War and set up a protectorate. Cubans, upset with what they perceived as U.S. meddling and intervention led a communist revolution in 1959, ousting the American-backed government and setting the stage for one of the scariest moments in the Cold War: the Cuban Missile Crisis. Looking at how the past shapes current events today helps students understand this skill, and it also helps them gain a deeper appreciation of how important history is in shaping the world around them.

## Ensuring Your Students Earn the Contextualization Point on the DBQ Cont.



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

Any time changes happen, there is a temptation to be reactionary and reject them. I have found that by being more deliberate about helping students understand historical context, their engagement and understanding have improved significantly. Teachers always are fighting that battle between covering the content (which is daunting in an AP course) and helping students understand the “so what?” question. Why does this matter to me? By making connections, students can see that history does not every happen in a vacuum. Our shared narrative is a series of events and ideas that continuously evolve and build off of each other. When students gain a firm understanding of how the past impacts their lives today, it makes learning way more meaningful and fun.

Contextualization is tough for students at first, but it is a skill application that can be perfected and improved to maximize your students’ chances of earning that point and rocking the AP exam.



*Ben Hubing is an educator at Greendale High School in Greendale, Wisconsin. Ben has taught AP U.S. History and AP U.S. Government and Politics for the last eight years and was a reader last year for the AP U.S. History Short Answer. Ben earned his Bachelors degree at The University of Wisconsin-Madison and Masters degree at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

# How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ

In this post, we will explore one of these points students will be looking to earn to help their chances at passing the APUSH exam this Spring: the Synthesis point.

## What is the Synthesis Point?

According to the College Board, Synthesis refers to:

*Historical thinking involves the ability to develop understanding of the past by making meaningful and persuasive historical and/or cross-disciplinary connections between a given historical issue and other historical contexts, periods, themes, or disciplines. (College Board AP Course and Exam Description, AP US History, Fall 2015)*

Synthesis is a crucial critical thinking skill that is featured in the newly redesigned course. In my opinion, this is a great skill to actively address in the classroom. Making connections between different time periods, events and various contexts throughout American history is something I have always attempted to do in my classroom, but the College Board explicitly defining this skill has made me much more cognizant and proactive in helping students see interconnectedness between our past and today.

The place it is most relevant in the course is as one potential point students can earn on both the Document Based Question (DBQ) and Long Essay Question (LEQ). In order to earn the synthesis point, students must “extend the argument.” This means that in addition to making an argument with a thesis and supported by evidence, students must do something beyond answering the specific prompt.

## How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

There are two different ways that the College Board has defined that students can “extend the argument:”

**A.** Make connections between a given historical issue and related developments in a different historical context, geographical area, period, or era, including the present. (College Board AP Course and Exam Description, AP US History, Fall 2015)

The first way to earn the synthesis point is to take a part of the essay and compare it to something else that was covered in the course. This could be something from another one of the nine time periods, another region or part of America, or a similar event.

**B.** Make connections between different course themes and/or approaches to history (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual) for a given historical issue. (College Board AP Course and Exam Description, AP US History, Fall 2015)

The second way essentially gives students the ability to add an additional category of analysis: If the question asks for political and economic factors, students could additionally discuss social factors for a particular issue or event.

*Note: There is also an additional way in that AP European History and AP World History students can earn the synthesis point, by using another discipline like anthropology or government to explore a historical issue. This third option is not open as a possibility for APUSH students.*

Synthesis can technically happen at any time throughout the essay. However, I encourage students to write their synthesis in a conclusion paragraph. I think it makes the most sense there because going beyond the argument of the essay is a good way for students to tie up their thoughts, which typically occurs in the final paragraph. It also ensures that students are thorough and don't just treat the connection in a superficial way (more on this below). Finally, it makes it less likely that their synthesis attempt will get confused with evidence they are using to build their argument.

# How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

## Examples of Successful Student Synthesis Points

Regardless of which way students try to earn the synthesis point, one of the biggest pitfalls that students fall into is simply referencing the connection in a few words or a phrase without going into substantive depth. Students need to go into detail explaining *what* the connection is and *why* there is a relationship between their essay and the examples they chose.

### Comparing Different Time Periods and Events

For example, if students are writing an essay about the causes and effects of the abolitionist movement, they may write:

*This is similar to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.*

This is not enough depth to be awarded a Synthesis point. Students need to explain *what* the Civil Rights movement is: who are the main leaders, what were some of their goals, and/or what were successes and failures of the movement. Students also need to be clear on *why* the abolitionist movement and Civil Rights movement are related. What are similarities and differences? What specific connections can be made between the two? A better response would be:

*Similar to the abolitionist movement, the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s continued to promote better conditions and increased equality for African Americans. Like David Walker and Nat Turner, some leaders of the Civil Rights era advocated for violence, including Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. However, like the Free Soil Party and the orator Frederick Douglass, Civil Rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee supported peaceful and political tactics to bring attention to their goals of increased social equality and basic rights for African Americans.*

## How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

Note the dramatic difference. The first is an offhand vague reference that lacks evidence of a depth of understanding. The second example has specific pieces of information that provide substantial evidence of a connection between the two movements.

### Comparing Different Geographic Regions

In addition to referencing similarities between different time periods, students can earn the synthesis point by comparing geographic areas. For example, if students are asked to identify the causes of industrialization before the Civil War, students could look at the lack of industrialization in the South in this same time period. One example of a solid student example is below:

*While the Northeast began rapid industrialization in the 1830s and 1840s, the South remained predominantly rural and agricultural. Large cities were few and far between, and with the invention of the cotton gin, the plantation economy and an emphasis on farming and agriculture was reasserted. The South shipped their cash crops to European and Northern factories, remaining mostly unindustrialized in the years before the Civil War. These economic differences created stark differences between the North and South on a variety of issues, including protective tariffs, which northern industrialists favored and southern consumer opposed.*

### Making Connections to Different Course Themes

One effective strategy students can use to earn the synthesis point is to add an additional course theme (or category of analysis). This works best when the prompt explicitly calls for specific themes. For example, if a prompt calls for economic and political causes and effects of the Vietnam War, students could write an additional paragraph on social causes and effects. A good response for students would include class tensions, war protesters, racial tensions in the armed forces, etc. In this scenario, students could also reference specific social documents if it is a DBQ. Again, it is crucial to make sure that students don't do this in a drive-by sort of way, but go into depth with a variety of specific examples.

# How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

## Strategies for Teaching Synthesis to Students

### 1. Make Connections Early and Often

Synthesis is all about making connections between different time periods and situations. After each unit or chapter, have students make 2-3 connections to something else they learned in the class. For example when your class is studying the Espionage and Sedition Acts in 1917, students could connect these laws to the United States Constitution's freedom of speech and press, President Adam's Sedition Act of 1798, Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus during the Civil War, or even the Patriot Act during the War on Terror. This could be done formally as a written assignment, or informally as a warm-up or exit ticket as a formative assessment. The more comfortable students are in making these connections, the better off they will be on the exam date.

### 2. Incorporating In-Class Activities

Making teaching Synthesis a part of your class time is crucial in observing student growth on this skill. I have done a few activities that have been especially useful. One is to find a news story that makes a comparison to historical events in the past (one recent piece compared Trump to Andrew Jackson) and ask students to discuss or debate on the similarities and differences (more on current events below).

Additionally, I printed out a variety of terms and events from the first semester cut them out, and randomly handed them out to students. Students had to go around the room and try to figure out how their term was related to another students' term. Some inevitably were not really related at all, but it forced students to try to make connections between the various periods and subjects we focused on (many times beyond just basic surface-level stuff), which is essentially what synthesis is all about.

# How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

## 3. Assign Many DBQ and LEQ Assessments and Share Specific Examples

The more often students write DBQ's and LEQ's, the more comfortable students will get with the entire process and skill set involved, including Synthesis. One thing that has been especially successful in my classroom is to collect a handful of student attempts at the Synthesis point and share them with students. Students then get to examine them and look at effective and less effective attempts at earning Synthesis. Often the best way for students to learn what to do or how to improve is to see what their classmates have done.

## 4. Review Historical Themes Throughout the Year

The College Board has broken all of the learning objectives into a handful of themes (identity, culture, politics and power, etc.) that are relevant throughout United States history. By relying on these themes, students can see these connections throughout the year, making Synthesis more approachable for students.

For example, one theme I follow throughout the year is immigration and demographic changes. By tracing America's immigration from colonization to Irish and German in the 1840s to New Immigrants after the Civil War and so on, students are able to find ample opportunities to make historical connections throughout American history. Additionally, being explicit about covering events through a variety of historical categories of analysis (political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual), allows students to see multiple factors that play a role in key events in American history. For example, when covering the causes of US imperialism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, breaking them down for students into economic factors (such as business markets), social factors (such as Social Darwinism and religious missionaries) and political factors (such as increased government and military power) is useful in helping student organizing their thoughts in a potential essay, as well as giving them some possible ways to go beyond the prompt in adding synthesis.

# How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

## 5. Make Connections to Current Events

I know what you are thinking, I have one school year (less if your school year starts in September) to get through 1491 to Present and now I am supposed to make this a current events class as well? The answer is yes and no. Will stuff from the news pages be content the students need to know for the exam: absolutely not. However, it is a great opportunity for synthesis.

For example, examining the LGBT movement could offer some interesting comparisons for other reform movements in the past. Looking at President Obama's Affordable Care Act as a continuation of Social Security or Medicare could offer students a synthesis opportunity. Examining similarities and differences between the Boston Tea Party and the Tea Party movement or how the 2016 election compares to some presidential races in the past allows students unique ways to earn their synthesis point. I have found this approach makes the class more interesting and meaningful for students and allows students to observe that history has continuities and changes that evolve over time.

Any time changes happen, there is a temptation to be reactionary and reject them. I have found that by being more deliberate about helping students make connections between historical events, their engagement and understanding has improved significantly. Teachers always are fighting that battle between covering the content (which is daunting in an AP course) and helping students understand the "so what?" question. Why does this matter to me? By making connections, students can see that history does not every happen in a vacuum. Our shared narrative is a series of events and ideas that continuously evolve and build off of each other. When students gain a firm understanding of how the past impacts their lives today, it makes learning way more meaningful and fun.

## How to Earn the Synthesis Point on the DBQ and LEQ Cont.

Synthesis is tough for students at first, particularly because they have little to connect with in the first period, but especially as you enter second semester, it is a skill application that can be perfected and improved to maximize your students' chances of earning that point and rocking the AP exam.



*Ben Hubing is an educator at Greendale High School in Greendale, Wisconsin. Ben has taught AP U.S. History and AP U.S. Government and Politics for the last eight years and was a reader last year for the AP U.S. History Short Answer. Ben earned his Bachelors degree at The University of Wisconsin-Madison and Masters degree at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*



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# How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses

The APUSH Redesign (and the Re-Redesign that followed immediately this year) has brought a great deal of uncertainty, angst and confusion to many teachers. This is my eighth year teaching the course, and while I had certainly reached a comfort level with the traditional multiple-choice and free-response questions, I have come around to almost all of the aspects of the redesign.

In my opinion, the best addition to the test is the new short answer section, found in Section 1 of the exam (along with the stimulus multiple-choice questions). Last June, I was fortunate enough to attend the AP US History Reading in Louisville Kentucky. For one week, I graded the same Short Answer Question over 3,500 times (for the record, I never want to read about John Adams or Benjamin Rush and their interpretation of the American Revolution again). While I certainly do not claim to be an expert, or have any “insider information” on the inner workings of the College Board, I am happy to share my insights and advice based on my experiences and conversations with colleagues.

## Short Answer Format

Students have four short answer questions to complete in 50 minutes (12.5 minutes per prompt). Short answers are worth roughly 20 percent of students’ grade on the AP exam, and take a variety of different forms, including

- Two different secondary sources written by historians with varying perspectives on an event or time period.
- Primary sources (quotations cartoons, maps, etc.)
- A simple prompt or identification question with no stimulus

## How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

Each prompt is broken down into three parts (A, B, and C), each worth one point.

- These parts vary in difficulty, meaning that certain points may be more challenging (for example one part might ask for simple fact recall, while another part might require higher-level analysis).
- Different parts of the same question can build off of or reference each other (for example, Part A may ask for students to explain a quotation, and Part B might ask them to provide an example of something related to that same quotation).

Some of the prompts will have “internal choice.” This means that students have options within the question. For example, a prompt may ask students to “explain why ONE of the following was the most significant cause of the Civil War: The Dred Scott Decision, Bleeding Kansas, or publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Students can choose any of the options, describing WHAT it is and WHY it is the most significant.

### Scoring Short Answer Questions

There is not really a rubric for these types of questions, like there is for the Document-Based Question (DBQ) or Long Essay Question (LEQ). Students are simply scored on whether or not they answered the prompt correctly. Students either receive one point or zero points for each part of the question (A, B, and C), for a maximum total of three points per prompt.

Each letter is scored separately, meaning that students completely missing the point on Part A does not necessarily mean they are doomed for Parts B and C.

## How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

Readers are instructed that students receive credit as long as the “meet the threshold,” meaning they have completed the minimal amount needed to answer the question. While what constitutes the threshold depends on the question, what this essentially means is that some students may earn all points by going into incredible depth, giving detailed and intricate examples, and taking up the entire page, while others may simply answer in a sentence or two for each portion, barely meet the requirements, and still receive all three points. While I would never encourage my students to do the bare minimum, I do let them know that if you are short of time or unsure, it is better to put something rather than nothing.

If the amount of historically accurate and inaccurate information is roughly balanced and equal, the reader has discretion whether or not to reward the point.

One thing I was encouraged by at the reading is that in general, readers were told to give students the benefit of the doubt when scoring responses. The goal was to award them points whenever merited, not to penalize or deduct points based on minor mistakes or misunderstandings.

# How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

## Ten Tips for Student Success

To help illustrate my advice, I will refer to the prompt that still haunts me in my dreams, Short Answer Question #3 from the 2015 AP US History Exam:

“As to the history of the revolution, my ideas may be peculiar, perhaps singular. What do we mean by the revolution? The war? That was no part of the revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington.”

Former president John Adams to former president Thomas Jefferson,  
August 1815

“There is nothing more common than to confound the terms of the American Revolution with those of the late American war. The American war is over: but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed. It remains yet to establish and perfect our new forms of government; and to prepare the principles, morals, and manners of our citizens, for these forms of government, after they are established and brought to perfection.”

Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence and delegate  
to the Continental Congress, January 1787

3. Using the excerpts, answer (a), (b), and (c).
  - a) Briefly describe ONE significant difference between Adams’ understanding and Rush’s understanding of the American Revolution.
  - b) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development from the period between 1760 and 1800 could be used to support Adams’ interpretation.
  - c) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development from the period between 1760 and 1800 could be used to support Rush’s interpretation.

*Source: 2015 AP US History Exam, Short Answer Section from AP Central (College Board)*

### 1. Put it in Own Words

To receive full credit for responses, students must fully answer the question using their own words. For the above prompt, many students parroted the prompts or excessively quoted them for Part A rather than describing the differences in their own words.

# How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

For example, students would regularly say a difference between Adams and Rush was that:

“Adams thought the revolution was in the minds of the people, while Rush said it would not be complete until principles, morals and manners of citizens were established.”

Students would not receive the point for this, as it is simply paraphrasing what is said, and does not demonstrate genuine understanding.

An example of a more successful response would be:

“Adams believed the American Revolution was not the actual War for Independence, but rather the psychological change in mindset of Patriot colonists leading up to the conflict. Rush agrees with Adams that true revolution was not the war, but argues that the revolution is incomplete until stable federal government is established.”

## **2. Provide Specific Examples: HOW and WHY?**

Parts B and C of the prompt ask the student to provide evidence that would support the claims of both Adams and Rush. When doing so, students should provide specific examples AND explain WHY they are relevant. For example, students might use the U.S. Constitution as an example that supports Rush’s interpretation of the revolution, as this document officially established the structure of the federal government and provided a Bill of Rights that defined people’s basic rights.

## **3. Get Right to the Point**

No introductions are needed, as space and time are limited and these are not essays. Nor is a thesis required or terribly helpful. Students should dive right in and start directly answering the question.

# How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

## 4. What is Acceptable?

Complete sentences are required. Sentence fragments or bullet points will not be scored. They were very strict in enforcing this.

Use of common abbreviations is acceptable (for example, FDR, WPA, FBI, etc.).

With limited time and space, it is better to go into depth and explain ONE example rather than superficially list multiple.

## 5. Stay in the Time Period

One of the most common mistakes is that students do not stay in the time period. For example, if the students use the Great Awakening as evidence that supports Adams' quote, they would not receive the point because the religious movement preceded the period of 1760-1775.

## 6. Stay in the Boxes

Students need to be careful to leave themselves enough room to address all three parts on the 23-line page. Students are NOT permitted to write onto a second page or even outside the boxed area. Anything written outside the box will not be scored.

## 7. Make Sure Evidence and Examples are ESSENTIAL

If a question asks for ONE similarity or difference, the readers are actually looking for the MAIN or ESSENTIAL similarity or difference. For example, students could not simply say:

“Adams thought the Revolution occurred between 1760-1776, while Rush thought the Revolution was after the war.”

## How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

This would not count because it is too superficial and simplistic. It is not the MAIN difference described in the text.

### **8. Watch for Categories of Analysis or Historical Themes**

Students should watch for categories of analysis (political, economic, cultural, social, intellectual). Often students give examples that do not match the category they are being asked to identify.

Students should assume the reader has no background knowledge and fully explain their examples and evidence.

### **9. Minor Errors will NOT Kill your Score**

Minor errors do not necessarily mean students will not be awarded points. For example, for Part C, many students used Bacon's Rebellion as an example that a stable federal government was needed to prevent uprisings or create a fairer and more equal society. They are mistaking Bacon's Rebellion for Shays' Rebellion, but since their description of the events is correct and they simply switched the names, they still would be awarded the point for their example. I have not shared this with my students per se, as I hold them to high expectations and want them to focus on knowing their content and striving for accuracy, but I do stress to them that even if you don't know the law or person, describe them as best you can, as this is better than leaving it blank.

### **10. The Debate Over How to Organize Writing**

There was a lot of debate at the reading as to which is better: writing responses in paragraph form without letter labels, or to have separate sets of complete sentences broken down and labeled by the specific letter being addressed.

## How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

The benefit of writing in paragraph form without labeled letters was that students were free to address the prompt in whatever order they preferred, and for good writers, it often had a more natural feel. Additionally, if students failed to answer Part A in the beginning where they were initially trying to, but eventually answered it later on in the response, readers could still award the point when there were no labeled letters. If the students labeled their sentences with the corresponding letters, students could not get credit if they answered the question in a different section (for example, some students failed to fully answer A in the section so labeled, but eventually got to it in Part C, but they could only receive the point in the labeled section. However, a benefit to labeling their sentences was that it ensured students actually fully addressed the specific questions for A, B, and C. Often students who wrote in unlabeled paragraph form forgot to answer parts or had incomplete responses as they jumped from one part to another.

I advise my students to do a hybrid of these two scenarios, as I believe it gives them the best of both worlds. I suggest my students label their sections so they do not forget any portions, but when they are done writing they cross out the letters, so that they are able to be awarded points if they address them inadvertently in other parts of their response.

### **How to Teach the AP US History Short Answer Question**

#### **1. Work with Students on Answering the Question**

Students sometimes tend to have a tough time with these types of questions initially. Some jot down fragments of vague partial answers that do not go far enough; overachievers want to turn them into complex essays with introductions and transitions. It really is a skill that needs to be practiced and perfected. Student answers should be concise (hence the SHORT answer), yet thorough with specific examples.

## How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

In the beginning, our class worked on short answers together and as partners, and walked through and discussed good responses. I also pulled student samples from the College Board's website and had students assess them and score them. This was a great activity in helping students see the difference between incomplete, borderline and exceptional responses.

Students should be in the practice of putting their responses in their own words, not paraphrasing, parroting, or quoting the source's language. This does not demonstrate understanding, which is what the College Board is looking for. Working with students on putting responses in their own words is definitely worthwhile.

### **2. Expose Students to a Wide Variety of Historical Sources**

Exposing your students to a wide variety of sources is great preparation for the Short Answer section (as well as the multiple choice and essays for that matter).

Looking at historians that differ in their ideological or other interpretations of history and discussing or debating in class helps students gain an understanding and appreciation of nuance and different points of view. Using Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* and Larry Schweikart's *Patriot's Guide to American History* gives students both liberal and conservative perspectives on key events in American history.

I also like to do Socratic Seminars or debates using secondary texts that take a compelling or unorthodox perspective and allow students to discuss whether they agree or disagree with the historian's argument.

Additionally, primary source exposure can be beneficial in preparing students for reading and comprehending texts that they could see in the prompts for any parts of the exam, including short answers.

# How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

## 3. Timing is Everything.

The short answer portion is part of Section 1, and students have 50 minutes specifically for these four questions after the multiple-choice section is completed. This gives students less than 13 minutes per question. Students need practice in this time crunch. Many students will want to spend lots of time planning and writing that they will not have on exam day. I typically start out more lax early in the year, but by October or November, students need to be in the habit of reading the prompt quickly and thoroughly, and moving into writing their responses under a time crunch.

### Why I Have Learned to Love the Short Answer Question

The short answer section of the exam is a brand new addition to the AP exam, but I actually believe it might be the most beneficial in many ways. Students used to be forced to memorize “everything” and were at the mercy of what random factoid the College Board would ask them on the multiple-choice section. With short answers, students can bring in relevant examples that they learned and recall. They don’t need to know “everything” they just need to know some key things about each period. This can be reassuring to students and liberating for teachers who are trying to cram everything into their classes in the few short months before the AP exam.

Additionally, what I like best about the Short Answer Question is that unlike the other types of questions, it is very obvious when students know their stuff (and conversely, when they have no clue what is going on). Multiple-choice can be “multiple guess,” and students can rationally narrow the distractors down and make an educated selection. Essay pages can be filled with fluff, and a simple thesis and analyzing a couple of documents may get them a couple of points.

## How to Improve APUSH Student Success on Short Answer Responses Cont.

With the short answers, there is really nowhere for students to hide. They either know what the author is arguing, or they don't. They either can provide an illustrative example, or they can't. As a teacher, I love the pureness and authenticity of this type of assessment.



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# The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips



Tackling the AP US History exam is a tough undertaking. There is a ton of information to be learned, many skills to master, and not a lot of time to do it all. But you absolutely can do it! And we want to help you through these easy to use study tips!

## AP US History DBQ and Free Response Tips

**1. Answer the question.** If I could only give you one piece of advice for your essay questions, it would be just to answer it. You will probably have this said to you over and over again, and you are probably already tired of hearing it. But the reason people say it so much is because students tend not to do it! It doesn't matter if you have the best-written paper of all time, or include a ton of history facts, if you don't answer the question; you aren't going to get all the points.

# The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

Before you start outlining your answer or reading through documents, make sure you know what the question is really asking you.

**2. Pay attention to the rubric.** The number one priority of a DBQ or FRQ is answering the question. Aside from that, you need to know what the AP test is looking for in your answer. For a starting point, [check out our breakdown of the DBQ rubric here](#). Understanding this rubric gives you a mental checklist to work through as you write your response.

Writing an outline of your essay will result in a better answer. When you just write without planning ahead much, you might get to the last paragraph and realize that you have nothing left to say, or that none of your ideas flow together. If you just do a rough outline of your main points and supporting details, you will write a much more fluid paper that is easy to follow and stays on track.

**3. Understand the documents.** As you read through the documents, don't waste too much time analyzing every single detail and sentence. Instead of picking out every detail, read the documents for understanding. Highlight or underline important parts. At the end of the document, write a sentence or two explaining the main idea of the document and which side of the argument it supports. This will be handy for outlining your essay and seeing how the documents can be used as evidence.

**4. Group the documents.** This is something you want to do while reading the documents initially, when you are outlining your essay and when actually writing your essay. The test grader is going to be looking for your ability to do this. Most good essays will contain at least three main points, and you want to be sure that you have sources or evidence to support each of those points. For example, you might group documents based on whether they are related to the political, social, or economic side of a question.

## The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**5. Use the documents.** You want to make sure you use a lot of the documents, but don't force it. You can get the highest score possible by using most of the available evidence. Just use the sources in a way that naturally supports your argument. Don't simply throw the documents in randomly just to check it off the list.

**6. Don't "data dump."** One of the key parts of the rubric is that you need to bring in outside information and evidence to support your answer. However, don't overload the reader with unnecessary information that doesn't really fit the context. Just because you know the date of Abraham Lincoln's assassination does not mean you need to throw that into an essay about the first Great Awakening.

**7. Go specific.** For your free response question choices, choose the topic that is most specific instead of something broad. The broadest topic seems appealing because you think you know a lot about it, but it can actually be really tough to formulate a good thesis because it is so broad. The specific question is more likely to create a solid detailed answer. It makes it easier to **answer the question**, which we already know is incredibly important.

**8. Find the right voice. Your voice.** This can be tricky, because it is all about finding a balance between too formal and too personal. You don't want to write like a robot, stating only facts and not expressing any hints of personality, but you also don't want it to be like a letter to a friend. Avoid "I" and "you" statements. Basically, don't be afraid to be yourself in your answer; it just needs to be a very well-spoken version of yourself.

**9. Take a stand.** Writing for historical purposes is about making an argument and supporting that argument well. When you are writing, it can be easy to just explain both sides of an argument and nothing else. All that does is show your ability to reword information. The essay section of the test wants to know how well you can synthesize lots of information into one cohesive argument. In order to do that, you have to actually take a side. Don't be biased or make unreasonable claims. Just use the evidence to support a specific claim that is rooted in facts. Got it?

# The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

## AP US History Multiple Choice Tips

**1. Read the question and answers all the way through.** This is a super basic test-taking tip, but it's still worth mentioning here. Don't fall into the trap of reading the question partially and jumping to conclusions, or picking the first question that seems right. There are 55 source-based multiple choice questions and 55 minutes to do them, so you have a minute per question. This is enough time to carefully read the question and each answer choice, and consider the best option.

**2. Cross out obviously wrong answers.** No matter what, you should know that Theodore Roosevelt did not sign the Declaration of Independence. Immediately cross his name off the list of answer choices. This is beneficial because it brings you one step closer to the right answer, and it tells your brain that you are doing something. It is a good way to build confidence, which is going to help you score much higher.

**3. Use context clues.** If you are unsure of an answer, just try to approach it from a logical perspective. You may not know the exact date of a certain event, but when you put that event in context of other events that you do know the dates for, it can definitely help you narrow down your choices. When you think of history as a giant puzzle that you are trying to put together, you can use all the pieces you do know to try and figure out the piece that you don't know.

**4. Use questions to give you answers.** You can learn a lot just from reading the questions. You may not directly get the answer to a question from other questions, but it can certainly give you more information and put you one step closer to the correct answer. You will almost always be able to walk away from the test knowing more than you did before. Also, keep the multiple-choice questions in mind as you write your free response and DBQ essays. You can also just try to think logically about it. Sometimes it works out that if the answer to question 3 is C, then the answer to question 6 has to be D.

## The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**5. Take a guess.** Losing points for incorrect answers is a thing of the past so you might as well take a stab at the ones you don't know. Obviously, you want to take your best guess and use all of the skills and techniques you can to narrow down the possible correct answers. But if you get to the point where you really just don't know, just give it your best shot. As Wayne Gretzky said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

**6. Pace yourself.** Definitely read the question and answers carefully, but don't spend too much time getting hung up on one particular question. If you read it, don't know it, and can't figure it out, move on. It is much better to finish the test and answer all of the questions that you do know than to get stuck on a question early on and not have time to answer all the latter questions. Like I mentioned earlier, you have less than a minute per question, so use your time wisely.

**7. Answer the right question.** It might seem silly, but when you are answering 80 questions at a time it can be really easy to get mixed up on your answer sheet. Don't accidentally skip a question and get to the end wondering what you did wrong. Sometimes you just get into a flow and stop paying attention to which bubble you are filling in.

**8. Pay attention to wording.** Skimming over a question can sometimes cause you to totally misinterpret said question. Don't do that. Make sure that you know if the question is asking "Which of the following IS..." or "Which of the following IS NOT..." That is a huge difference and is going to make for two very different answers. This is such a common and easy mistake to make.

**9. Practice!** Practice makes perfect, right? But seriously, there are a ton of resources out there for you to practice your AP test taking skills. This will give you a much better idea of what to look for in multiple-choice questions and can guide you in your studying.

# The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**10. Use flash cards.** Using flash cards is a great way to consistently study and practice. Lucky for you, we even have a [guide to making great AP US History flash cards](#). This is especially helpful for studying for the multiple choice section because you can write the information on flash cards in a question form, or use old questions to make your flash cards. They are also really great for last minute or speedy study sessions, because you can cover a large amount of material in a short amount of time.

## General AP US History Study Tips

**1. Start early.** We aren't your parents, and we aren't going to nag you about doing your homework. But it is absolutely so important that you get an early start on your APUSH review. There is a lot of information to learn, but it is only daunting if you are trying to learn it all in one night. Get out ahead of the game and start chipping away at it. You will be able to spend more time on each idea and will actually learn and remember the things you are studying. When you frantically cram for an exam, you usually only remember the stuff for that day.

**2. Outline the course.** The wonderful people over at AP CollegeBoard have provided a [breakdown of the entire AP US History course](#). This is such a good place to start, because it breaks the course into nine different periods, ranging from 1491-present. These pre-set periods make it super easy for you to study chunks of history at a time. A really helpful thing when outlining the course is to write a paragraph summary of each section and then explain how each time period transitioned into the next. This helps you establish some continuity in your thinking.

**3. Use a giant whiteboard.** This is one of my favorite study tips for almost any type of course. Whiteboards allow you to think about things on a big picture scale. Flow charts outlining the transitions between time periods are super helpful. Also, when you use a whiteboard to diagram historical ideas, those ideas become ingrained in your visual, as well as auditory memory. It's crazy how much having a visual representation of something can help it stick in your mind.

## The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**4. Study with friends.** This is a pretty dangerous game, because friends can sometimes be the biggest distraction from studying. But if you do it right, they can also be a huge help! Being able to talk about ideas helps you better understand them. And if there is a part of history that you are just really struggling with, chances are you have a friend who is pretty knowledgeable about it. Using the whiteboard technique or a course outline can be very effective when studying with friends. Just be sure to pick your friends wisely and don't waste your time together watching funny cat videos on YouTube.

**5. Get a review book.** A review book is one of the most helpful study tools out there. They usually have a pretty comprehensive overview of course material and break down the information in an understandable way. Most are broken into chapters with summaries and review questions at the end of each one. Another great feature of review books is that they usually include test taking strategies or techniques to help you succeed. They also, typically, have practice tests included to put those techniques to good use.

**6. Create a study game.** No matter how interesting (or boring) you may think APUSH is, studying any type of material for a long time can grow very tiresome. Sometimes, you just need to mix things up and making a game out of it is a good way to do so. A lot of people do Jeopardy style review for history. I prefer to do some kind of weird punishment or wager with friends. For example, we will go through asking each other various questions and for every question one of us gets wrong we have to do three push ups. Or we win a couple of skittles for each correct answer. Whatever it takes to mix things up.

**7. Ask your teacher for help!** Once again, probably not a piece of advice that you really want to hear, but it is a good thing to do. Your teacher is teaching the class for a reason, and they are probably not only super knowledgeable, but also passionate. Most teachers would be thrilled to give you an extra hand or piece of advice. They are such an untapped resource that students generally don't take advantage of. If they offer any kind of after school help or study hours, take the opportunity! It certainly isn't going to hurt, and if anything else, it's always great to be in good graces with your teacher.

## The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**8. Watch extra review videos.** Crash Course, a YouTube channel, has a series of [47 videos dedicated to helping you understand US History](#). They are each anywhere between 10-15 minutes long and are great ways to learn. They are quick and entertaining, but also incredibly informative. They can serve as a great introduction to a topic or a good summary after you have finished reviewing it. And there are many more videos like these out there. Aside from helping you learn actual information from the course, there are also a lot of videos to help with test taking strategies. Tom Richey has created a great AP US History review page [here](#).

**9. Look at practice questions.** Seriously, there are so many resources out there to help you succeed. One of those is a [compilation of AP US History sample questions](#). This 16-page document features not only realistic AP test questions, but also answers and explanations for each one. They even tell you which “Historical Thinking Skills” and key concepts are being tested. This is really an efficient way to become familiar with AP style questions and to see which material you are struggling with. You can also simply do a Google search for APUSH test questions and find a ton to work with.

**10. Make a timeline.** This kind of goes along with making a course outline, but this is more about testing yourself than using the course description. Take key events, without looking at their dates, and try to put them in order. Some people use a whiteboard for this or just try to organize flash cards. Basically this is just a good way of seeing how things fit together. As you make the timeline, try to pay attention to the sequence of events, or any cause and effect relationships that may be at play.

**11. Figure out your greatest weakness.** A great way to do this is through practice tests. A lot of practice tests online will show you which areas you need to learn the most in. Use these areas as a starting point and work from there. You don’t want to waste a lot of time focusing on the areas that you are already familiar with. Be smart about your time management.

# The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**12. Think about things thematically.** This is one of the main historical skills that you are tested on. Encompassed in the testing of themes is the analysis of change over time. These go hand in hand as you think about the way that certain themes evolve through history. For example, you need to be able to explain how the economy of the US has changed over the years, or think about America's evolving philosophy on foreign affairs.

## Tips from the Pros: Teachers and Former Students

**1. Pay attention in class!** AP US History is a course that is usually pretty heavy on the lecture side. You won't be able to rely on worksheets or handouts to get by in class. Instead, you will have to pay attention to what the teacher says and take great notes. Even if you don't think you'll ever look at your notes again, it is still worth writing things down because the act of writing actually helps you remember.

**2. Take part in class discussion.** The ultimate way to know that you are fully engaged in class is to be part of a class discussion. Teachers usually mix these in with lectures, and it is so important to be involved. It shows the teacher that you care, and it shows a good study ethic. But also, when you get involved and contribute to discussion, those ideas that you discussed will stick out in your mind. The best way to learn something is by being a part of something.

**3. Keep up with your assigned reading.** Chances are, your teacher has a lot of reading for you to do throughout the year. There might not always be quizzes on the reading, but it is SO important that you do it. There is no way you can always catch up on an entire year's worth of AP US History reading, so it is essential to stay on top of things.

## The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**4. Do it for the college credit.** Sticking with an AP class throughout the year can be pretty tough, but it is absolutely worth it when you get your passing score. It's impossible to understand how great it is to have college credit when you start; but let me tell you, it's awesome! College isn't cheap these days and any extra help you can get is worth it. AP US History can usually get you out of at least one General Education History requirement. That's one less class you have to take, and one step closer to graduation. Let that be your motivation!

**5. Show up to everything extra.** Teachers are usually willing to take time out of their busy schedules to do some extra review or give you some more tips. Take them all up! It might not seem like the most fun to spend your free time learning about AP US History, but I promise, it is worth it. It is a great way to consistently study and stay up to speed.

**6. You can never practice writing too much.** The DBQ and FRQ are pretty consistent topics of concern among APUSH students, and for a good reason. They can be pretty tough, and are usually obstacles between students and the grade they want. One of the hardest parts about this section is that, it just takes a really long time to be writing. Your hand will start to get tired, and you will slowly feel your brain turn to mush as you go. You have to build up a certain kind of stamina for writing long essays, and you can only do that by practicing. There is no shortage of practice questions, and classmates or teachers are usually willing to grade them for you.

**7. Start reading your review books early.** Lots of students have nightmarish tales of rushing through their review books in the last couple of weeks leading up to the exam. It's doable, but it sure isn't fun. Review books are crucial to passing the test, so make sure you actually have enough time to dedicate to actually reading it. This will make your studies a lot less overwhelming. If you need help choosing one, make sure you check out our guide to the [best AP US History review books of 2015](#).

## The Ultimate List of AP US History Tips Cont.

**8. Try to have some fun.** It may not sound like the most fun, but APUSH really can be. Or at least you can try to make it be fun. Chances are, you don't plan on dropping the class, and so if you are going to stick it out, you might as well try to make it an enjoyable experience. It can actually be pretty fun learning about the historical events that made America what it is today. If anything else, think of it as a chance to make some new friends while learning some new skills. Oh, and if you pay attention, AP US History might even make you a little better at Trivia Crack and show off for your friends.

**9. Always ask, "Why do we care?"** Students are conditioned to focus on names and dates as opposed to causes and results; "Why" gets them to start thinking in depth.

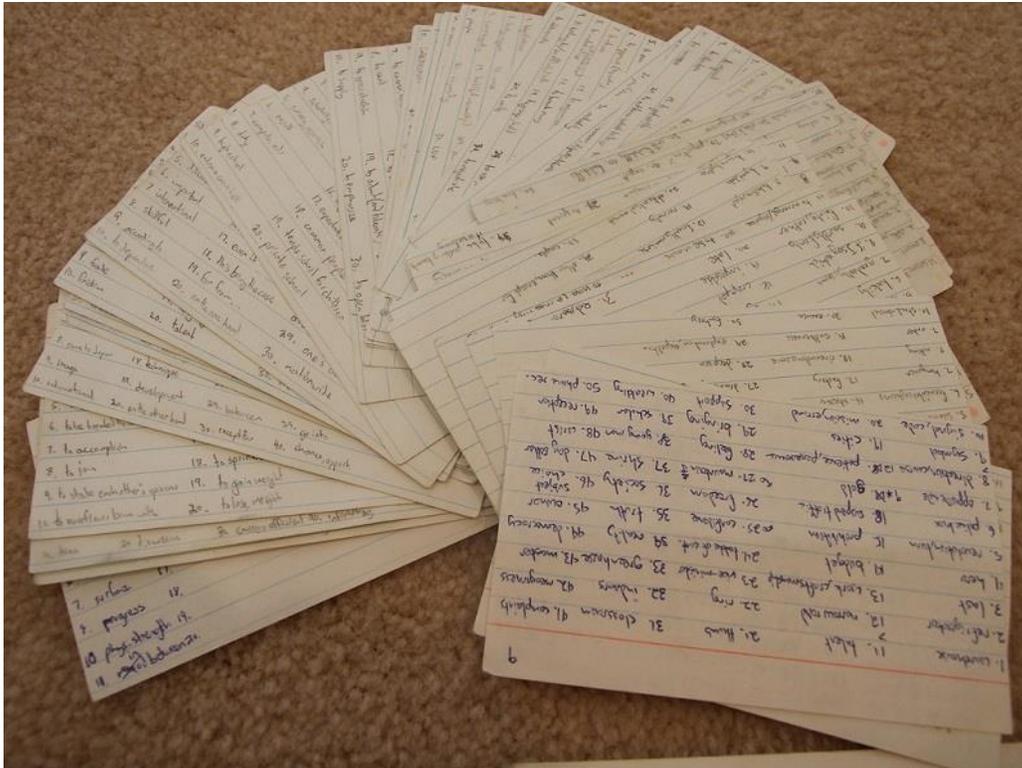
**10. Support every claim with evidence.** My favorite "catch phrase" is... "Evidence please...." Everyone has a theory in APUSH... Who has the evidence to back up their theory?

**11. Think like a test maker and not a test taker.** Think about what the AP question writer might have been looking to test you on when answering each question. Understanding this is key to knowing how to answer the question.

### The Send Off

If you made it to this point in the article, good job. You are already on your way to being ready for your APUSH exam. Work hard, use some of our helpful tips and ideas, and you are going to crush it.

# How to Make Effective AP US History Flashcards



*Image Source: Flickr*

You have probably seen “Make Flash Cards” show up on just about every AP review guide article. Well, it’s for good reason! Flashcards are one of the simplest and most helpful study tools around, and they should be an essential part of your AP US History study plan. The only thing that can take this study strategy to the next level is making some killer effective flashcards.

## Why Make Your Own?

There are some APUSH flashcards [available for sale](#), and they would certainly be helpful for your studying. They cover a ton of information and are certainly convenient. However, making your own flash cards can be way more beneficial.

# How to Make Effective AP US History Flashcards Cont.

When you make your own flash cards, you are responsible for finding the information yourself. This means searching through your textbooks and being fully immersed in the course material. Also, research says that the simple act of writing things down can help us remember things better. Since you are writing out all the information for your flashcards, you are already helping yourself!

## How Do I make Effective AP US History Flashcards?

Use index cards. Index cards were virtually made to be used as flashcards; particularly those with one blank side and one lined side. They are just the right size to fit a decent amount of information, and are incredibly portable. If index cards are not available to you, use printer paper. Fold it over itself, making 4 or 8 squares, and then cut down the crease lines. Ta-da! Homemade index cards.

Categorize your information. Since AP US History covers almost 500 years worth of time, it is a good idea to divide flashcards up into sections. I recommend using the 9 different time periods outlined in the APUSH course description. Within these categories, find the important dates, events, people and terms that you need to know.

Write the information down on flashcards. This idea is of course not that complicated. You take one piece of the information and put it on one side of the flashcard, and the rest of the information on the other side. There are two main ways to do this, each with its own pros and cons:

**1. Question form.** The benefit of writing all of the information on cards in question and answer format is that it helps you start thinking about how things might be asked on the test. It allows you to practice directly answering questions instead of simply reciting information. This way, the flash cards almost become a practice quiz. The downside of this method is that it becomes difficult to answer the cards in reverse order, which is an effective study technique (although then it becomes like Jeopardy, which is kind of cool).

## How to Make Effective AP US History Flashcards Cont.

Also, you can find sample [APUSH questions online](#) to put on your flashcards or to use as a guide for making our own questions.

**2. Simple information form.** Instead of writing things down in a question, you just write down the main idea on one side, and the explanation of that main idea on the other. This usually causes you to go a little more in depth with your answers as you are addressing a bigger idea, instead of just a question. You can also work backwards by reading the explanation and providing the main idea.

Both of these methods are helpful, and you will likely use a combination of both when you are making your own flashcards. A good question card might say “When was the Civil War?” on one side and “1861-1865” on the other. The other format might just say “reconstruction” on one side of the card and an explanation of that era on the other.

Make the information stand out. Part of what makes flashcards so helpful is that they serve as visual reminders. The more memorable your cards are, the more the information will stick. Use brightly colored pens, or draw diagrams when necessary. Write out the information using clear and bold handwriting. You want your photographic memory to kick into high gear when it sees your cards.

### Study!

As mentioned earlier, the very act of making flashcards is going to help you study, so running through them a couple times is really going to solidify the information in your memory. These flash cards will be the thing that takes your AP US History review to the next level.

**Pro tip:** Make a game out of the flashcards with your friends. Use skittles as bets for correct or incorrect answers, or have everyone do 3 pushups for every flash card you get wrong. Its crazy what a little extra incentive will do to help you focus, and it also just makes things a little more fun.



# Get more 4s and 5s

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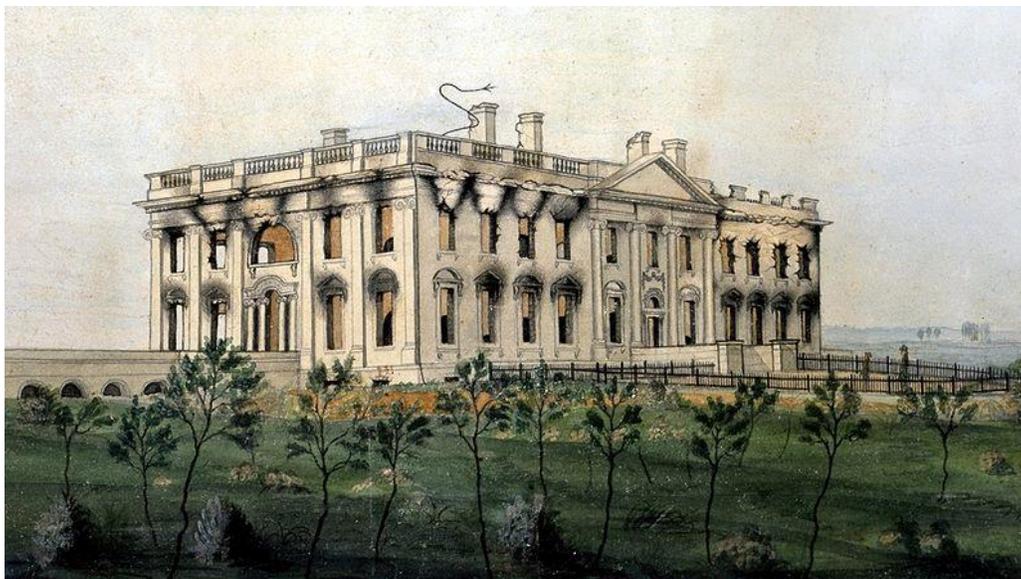
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[Start Practicing](#)

# AP US History Multiple Choice Strategies



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

Are you gearing up to take the AP US History exam? We have all the tools you need to master the APUSH multiple choice portion, from preparation to performance.

The multiple choice segment of the APUSH exam is the first portion you will complete. It is 55 minutes long, and contains 55 questions. Having only a minute per question seems difficult, but with the right preparation, you'll be on your way to a 5 in no time.

When you know what to expect from the multiple choice questions, you already place yourself a step ahead on exam day. The questions will call for more specific knowledge than the more open-ended, conceptual questions posed in the AP US History free response questions and document based questions. In other words, they call for more “fact” based answers.

# AP US History

## Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

This is not to say you don't need to know names, dates, and battles for the FRQs and DBQs; however, in the writing sections you are given the opportunity to share and show off your wide range of knowledge on a topic and make historical connections on your own. In general, the AP US History multiple choice section will be a more specific recall based set of questions.

So how should you study for such a broad range of multiple choice questions?

### **Break Down the Information by Time Periods.**

Think about historical trends and patterns rather than endless lists of facts. When you can connect people and events with each other instead of studying them in isolation, you'll begin to understand the material instead of simply memorizing it. This is the key to recalling the information on exam day.

According to the [CollegeBoard](#), certain time periods appear more frequently and extensively in the multiple choice section than others. Here is an approximate breakdown: roughly 20% of the questions will deal with the pre-Columbian period through 1789; 45% will ask about 1790 to 1914; and 35% will involve the period from 1915 to the present.

Using these numbers, you can plan a study strategy that will focus more heavily on the more frequent material. The period 1790 to 1914 is very dense, so the topics assessed in these questions will be varied. Also, this time span deals heavily with overlapping patterns of behavior, reform movements, and political attitudes, so familiarize yourself with the connections and transitions between the movements. Knowing similarities and differences between the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era, for example, will help you connect material in your mind and remember it faster on the exam.

# AP US History

## Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

### **Familiarize Yourself with Cultural History.**

In addition, while the APUSH multiple choice section will have some economics-based questions, in general, the focus is more towards social change, political institutions and behavior, and public policy. This means you want to be familiar with how the American people felt during various movements and time periods, and what laws, reform movements, wars, or policies were affecting their attitudes. Exam writers love to ask about the intersection of social and cultural history.

### **Practice Before the Exam.**

Take the time to look up AP US History practice questions so you can be ready for the different types of content and phrasing that show up most often. If you expect the way in which graders ask the questions, you will better understand how to answer them.

Now that you've reviewed, you're ready to tackle the real thing. Here are our best APUSH multiple choice tips for exam day:

### **Read the Excerpts All The Way Through.**

Some sets of multiple choice questions will be based on a short excerpt from a historical writing, such as *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. You will be provided with the excerpt and asked to answer 3-5 questions about its contents and significance. Make sure you don't skip the reading! These questions are more about textual evidence than total recall of facts. The source will provide you with the information necessary to answer the questions. Read it quickly, but thoroughly; if you skip it altogether or merely skim the contents, you could be tripped up by a question such as "The excerpt suggests that which of the following was *most influential* on New England religion in the 1700's?" If you do not read the source, you could choose an answer that is correct in a general context but not on the basis of the evidence.

# AP US History

## Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

### **Pay Close Attention to the Wording.**

Many APUSH questions begin with the phrase, “Which of the following IS...” or “Which of the following IS NOT...” In these cases, one or more of the answer choices will almost certainly be the opposite of what the question is asking. Addressing the right question is the first step in choosing the correct options and eliminating the wrong ones. Answering the wrong question is a common but preventable mistake; read carefully, and you’ll already be one step ahead. Look out for qualifiers like “all,” “none,” “always,” and “never.” This will ensure you are not only choosing a correct option, but the most correct option based on the question content.

### **Immediately Eliminate Wrong Answers.**

If, after reading the question, you read an answer choice you know is completely irrelevant or incorrect, cross it out. You are allowed to write in your test booklet, and the visual of a crossed-out answer choice will help you narrow down the rest of the options. If an answer choice does not fit within the time period of the question, eliminate it. For instance, if an answer choice for a question about antebellum Southern society is Andrew Johnson, this is most likely not the best answer. This trick is especially helpful when there are several similar answer choices within a question.

### **Answer Every Question, Even If You’re Unsure.**

There is no penalty on the APUSH exam for incorrect answers, so you should mark a choice for every question. You will not receive points if you guess incorrectly, but you won’t lose them. Plus, you have a chance at guessing correctly and getting yourself a higher multiple choice score. Take advantage of this opportunity.

# AP US History

## Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

### **Read Through the Multiple Choice Portion Twice: Once to Answer the Questions You Know for Sure, and Once to Answer the Tougher Questions.**

On your first walkthrough of the section, quickly answer the questions you know, and circle the numbers you need to return to next time. This will build your confidence and keep you from spending too much time going back and forth between answers, when simple questions are waiting for you at the end of the section. When you go back through the set a second time, think carefully about the choices, but don't spend too much time on each individual question. Each one is worth the same amount of points, no matter the difficulty. Often, the questions that first seemed impossible will now be an easy recall, because you are more relaxed and have gained a little confidence. Plus, the APUSH exam often groups similar topic questions together, so moving on to the next question could remind you of the earlier answers.

### **Pay Attention to the Questions; They May Help you Later on!**

The multiple choice portion is the first section on the exam; use this to your advantage! Take note of questions that remind you of a topic you maybe haven't spent as much time reviewing. If anything, the relationship between the questions and the answer choices can provide you with the broader conceptual connections that you will be asked to write about in the free response questions. Later, although you cannot flip back to the multiple choice in your booklet during your writing portions, you can recall some of the information presented in those questions and use it to boost your writing.

For example, there will be more fact-based multiple choice questions about the Gilded Age and robber barons. The questions or answer choices will likely contain names or dates, which will be a boost to your writing and make it more specific. Drawing on particular figures is an advantage in essays, so you can use this section to strengthen your score.

# AP US History

## Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

### **Review your Answers, but Go With your Gut.**

If you have extra time, use it to look over your answers one more time. However, don't change an answer unless you are completely sure that your initial choice was wrong. The APUSH exam writers will often put two similar answer choices on the same question, but you need to make sure you're choosing the *most* correct answer. For instance, a question about Revolutionary War leadership may contain the names of John Adams, John Hancock, and Samuel Adams; although they all played distinct roles, if you can only recall a first or last name, this question will give you some trouble. When in doubt, choose the first answer that comes to your head or the first one that feels natural. Most of the time, if you are choosing between two answers, your first instinct will be the right choice. This way you can avoid changing your answers several times and ending up choosing the wrong one.

### **Relax.**

Stress is your number one exam-taking enemy. Just stay calm, and have confidence in your study skills. You won't be able to get every question correct, but you don't need to in order to get a good score. You've studied in and out of class, you've done practice tests, and you've prepared thoroughly. Trust yourself to choose the best option. If you relax during the APUSH multiple choice questions, you will feel more calm for the nerve-wracking essay portion.

Now you have a head start on the strategies for conquering the AP US History multiple choice section of the APUSH exam. For many students, this portion is a confidence booster that refreshes their memory of major events and movements so they can gear up for the demanding writing section. Use the questions to your advantage, and trust what you know. As long as you prepare strategically, take your time, and pay attention, you'll be well on your way to a 5 in May.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

So you want to get a 5 on the AP US History Exam? Let me tell you now that it's going to take some effort but in the end it will all be worth it. You will have studied your heart out and when you finally have that 5 in your hands then you'll realize that you've become a US history whiz. So let's get started, below you will find 35 terms that appear every year on the exam. On your quest to get that 5 it can only help you to know all of these terms and why exactly they're so important to the history of this great nation.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## The Colonial Era

### 1. Bill of Rights

After the U.S Constitution had been written and ratified there were many who still feared the strict wording of the document. The document was powerful in the power it gave to the federal government but some felt that the document granted too much power. Penned by James Madison the document assuaged the fears of those who feared a centralized government with too much authority. Historically the Bill of Rights only referred to the first ten amendments to the Constitution guaranteeing things like freedom of speech and religion, but the Bill of Rights eventually came to represent the fluid nature of the Constitution and how nothing was set in stone. Its impact lies in the influence how it was interpreted during many historic Supreme Court cases.

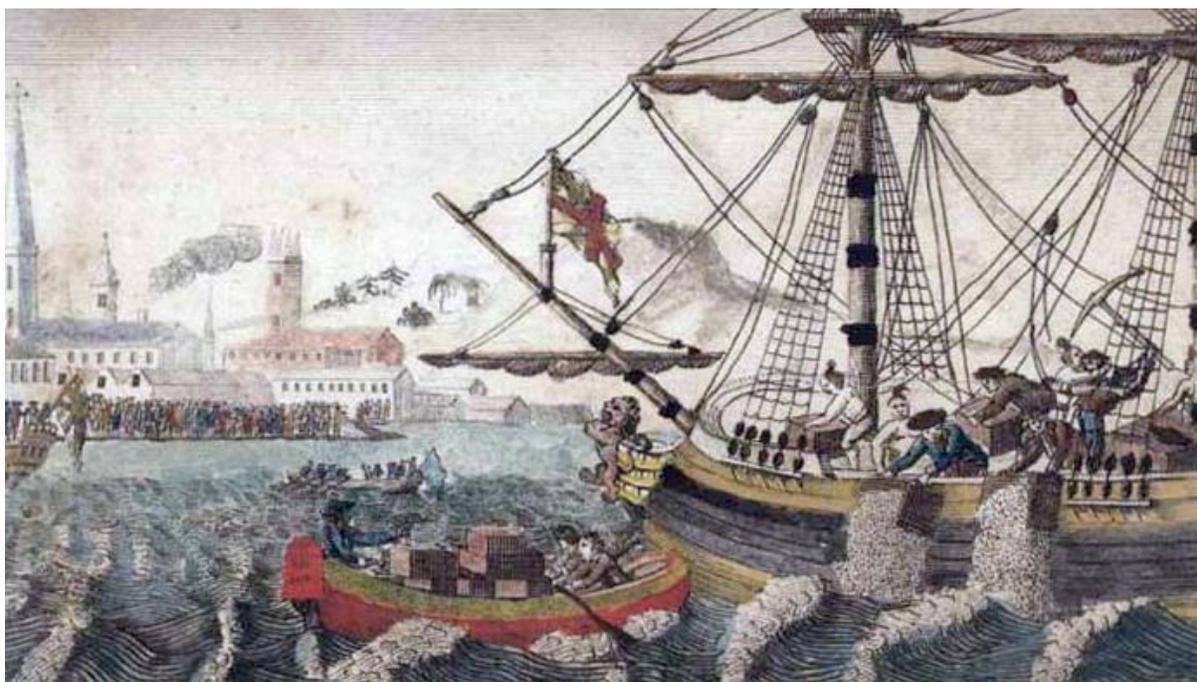
### 2. Boston Massacre

The truth surrounding the Boston Massacre has been clouded by the mists of time but we do know that for Americans of the time it was considered to be the first in escalation towards the eventual Revolutionary War. In reality, the event was more of a scuffle but the propaganda that rose around it whipped the colonies into a frenzy. What we do know about the incident is that in 1770 British troops had been sent to Boston to protect officials trying to administer legislation applied to the colonies by British parliament. A crowd led by Crispus Attucks, a slave, began to harass British soldiers who were forced to fire upon the crowd. Several Americans were killed and the episode was heralded as a turning point where colonial sentiment turned from support of the British crown towards independence.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## 3. Boston Tea Party

The Boston Tea Party was the final straw that broke the camel's back and led to the beginning of the American Revolution in earnest. The event was a protest of Parliament's Tea Act of 1773 which gave the East India Company a monopoly in selling tea in the colonies. The Sons of Liberty saw this as an intentional act to weaken the local economy and merchant class and decided that they would not stand for it. Men of Boston disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians and boarded the three East India Company ships that were held in the harbor and began to toss the tea shipment overboard. This act committed Massachusetts and the rest of the American colonies to outright rebellion.



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## 4. Checks and Balances

One of the most important concepts in the foundation of the American government checks and balances. Checks and balances was the separation of power into a three-way system that prevented one portion of the government from gaining dominance over the other two. The United States government is divided into the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches. Each of these branches is granted a very specific scope of power that the other branches do not. Also each of the branches of government is given powers that allow it to keep its counterparts in check. The significance of this model cannot be understated because it was and continues the prevention of a seizure of absolute power by a single man which is the basis for which our nation was founded, that all men were created equal and that this is a nation of equals.

## 5. Constitution

The U.S Constitution is one of, if not the most important documents in United States history. It established the three-branch system that the United States government has come to depend on. It instituted the Congress that is comprised of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the military power of the President of the United States, and the right of the Supreme Court to interpret the law as it applies for every citizen of the United States. Its power and influence comes from the fact that the document is not set in stone and since it was originally ratified has been amended by the Bill of Rights a total of twenty-seven times.

## 6. Declaration of Independence

Written by Thomas Jefferson, approved by the Continental Congress in 1776, and distributed to the colonies this document embraced the official formation of a new nation.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

With the outbreak of the Revolutionary War Congress deemed it important to outline their reasoning for breaking from the British throne and forming their own nation of the United States of America. Within the body of the document it claimed that all men were created equal with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also declared the crimes the British throne had committed against them and denounced the Parliament for its treatment of the colonies. By its ratification the American colonies bound themselves on the path of self-governance and sovereignty.

### **7. House of Burgesses**

The precursor to Congress it was the first form of legislative power to appear in the colonies. Formed in Virginia the House of Burgesses was established by the Virginia Company to manage and administer to the needs of colonists. It was led by burgesses who were elected officials raised from within the population of the colony itself. Its importance comes from its very nature. The House of Burgesses was the American forerunner to self-determination and it was in charge of passing rulings that would affect every member of the colony similar to how the U.S. Congress seeks to pass bills for the benefit of the whole nation.

### **8. Joint-Stock Companies**

They are a type of business venture where any man with the resources to invest may purchase stock in the company. The amount of stock you own determines your sway in the company's dealings. This plays a key role in U.S. history because it was through the actions of many joint-stock companies that colonies were founded in North America. These English joint-stock companies sought to harvest the natural resources of North America and bring them back to England. An example of this was the venture by the Virginia Company to found a colony in the state would come to be known as Virginia.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## 9. Mercantilism

The dominant economic theory in Europe during the period lasting from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century was known as Mercantilism. The key requirements of mercantilism came from a nation's drive to establish colonies quickly and efficiently, anything the colony produced was to be shipped and sold only in the home country, all efforts must be made for a nation's exports to be greater than its imports, and all gold and silver that the nation encounters must be hoarded and kept within the domestic money supply. This policy was the framework of the English, Spanish, and French when forming colonies in the New World.

## 10. Neutrality Act

The Neutrality Act was a declaration by President Washington protecting the fledgling nation. During the French Revolutionary Wars, Revolutionary France had declared war on Great Britain and several other European nations in a war of conquest. Due to the alliance between the United States and France many within America felt compelled to support France in its violent acquisition of territory. President Washington prohibited any action by an American citizen to support France and stated that any such act would be prosecuted in a court of law. His argument was that America was in a defensive alliance with France and it was France who was the aggressor. Also by supporting France the United States was giving free rein to the British to attack them as well and they were simply not ready to take on a European superpower like Britain.

## 11. Order of Colonization of Colonies

In order from oldest to youngest the colonies were settled first in Virginia then New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Georgia. Each of these colonies was founded for different reasons, cultivated different cash crops, and faced different challenges.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Why is it important to know when they were colonized? They each came to the conclusion that self-determination was better for them as they each suffered their own injustices at the hands of the British crown. Had one or two colonies decided not to turn from England and towards independence than the Revolutionary War might have taken a vastly different turn since each colony played an important role in the war effort.

### 12. Sons of Liberty

Who were the Sons of Liberty exactly? They were a group of men who lived in Colonial America that were unhappy with the practices of the British Crown. With this in mind they were formed in order to defend the colonists from further injustices at the hands of Great Britain and combat any further taxation that they deemed unfair. Names you might recognize among the ranks of the Sons of Liberty were notable men like Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and Paul Revere. Another famous member was Patrick Henry who spoke the words, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" Also you might recognize the Boston Tea Party as one of the iconic events of the Revolutionary War; the act of revolution was carried out by the Sons of Liberty.

### 13. Triangular Trade

The triangular trade route refers to the route taken by trade ships from Africa, to the New World, and back to Europe. A ship looking to make a profit would begin in Africa and pick up a shipment of slaves to be sold in the New World. After the ship sailed across the Atlantic and it sold its shipment of slaves in the New World. These slaves would work on plantations, growing cash crops like cotton, tobacco, and sugar. The trade ships would then pick up a shipment of these cash crops to sell back in Europe which was its third stop and formed the third corner of the triangular trade. This trade system for all intents and purposes set up the system of slavery that was prevalent in the New World for centuries while at the same time enriching Europe and depopulating Africa.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## The Civil War

### 14. Articles of Confederation

Did you know that before we had the U.S Constitution we had another document that dictated how the United States would be run? It was called the Articles of Confederation and it was meant to bring the original thirteen colonies together during the Revolutionary War and act as the governing document after independence had been won. The document itself covered funding of the Continental Army, taxation, and foreign policy. However, the Articles of Confederation failed to properly unify the thirteen colonies. This is important because it led to the writing of the U.S Constitution and the empowerment of the federal government that we recognize today.

### 15. Emancipation Proclamation

Decreed by the Abraham Lincoln, president of the Union, the command free all slaves in the states that were rebelling during the Civil War. The purpose of the proclamation was to make the eradication of slavery an unambiguous and clear goal of the Civil War and Union Army. In areas where the rebellion had been pacified the Emancipation Proclamation free about 30,000 slaves and as the Union army moved into Confederate territory it set up the background for how slaves were to be freed. The act only further angered the south yet it set the Union towards not only reunification of the United States of America but the establishment of true freedom for all citizens.

### 16. Tariff of Abominations

The Tariff of 1828 was known as the Tariff of Abominations to the American South. The tariff was passed to protect the American economy from cheap English goods that were flooding in due to Napoleonic Wars preventing the English from trading with the European mainland.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

The tariff ended up mainly protecting the North because it created goods that competed with English manufactures. The South was mostly agrarian at the time and enjoyed the cheap trade it had with the British, but the Tariff of Abominations drove up the prices and forced the South to trade with the more expensive North. This tariff was one of the signs of the American Civil War to come because it showed the clear disunity between the North and the South that was beginning to grow.

### Reconstruction

#### 17. Gilded Age

It was the period of time between 1870 and 1900 in the United States. The period got its name from Mark Twain and his novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*. During the Gilded Age economic growth was rapid and robust. Wages rose explosively in the states combined with heavy industrialization pulled immigrants from Europe. The name is derived from the point that despite the economic growth in the United States there was a deep social upheaval and unrest as African Americans were systematically disenfranchised and the American South was still devastated by the Civil War.

#### 18. Roosevelt Corollary

This piece of legislation was an addendum to the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine was a document by President James Monroe that stated any attempt by a European power to further colonize North or South America was forbidden. However, the Roosevelt Corollary made the outright declaration that if a European power tried to intervene in the affairs of North or South America the United States would exercise any and all forms of military forces it had to keep Europe out. This document was key in that it was the first serious step the United States had taken in foreign policy and turning its vision outwards past its borders.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## 19. Sherman Antitrust Act

In what other ways did the United States protect the rights of the individual? The Sherman Antitrust Act was the first piece of legislation of its kind passed in the United States. Its purpose was to bust monopolies and cartels that protected big business and prevented the little guy from participating in the free market commerce of America. It made a broad statement that banned any form of dealings that lead to the formation of a monopoly or protected monopolistic practices. It also forbade any practices that were anti-competition in nature and in some ways was more meant to protect competition in general and in this way keep the consumer protected as well.

## 20. “Speak Softly, and Carry a Big Stick.”

A phrase made famous by President Theodore Roosevelt, it is an essential summation of President Roosevelt’s foreign policy during his presidency. The phrase refers to how President Roosevelt dealt with encounters between Europe and the fledgling nations that had begun to sprout in South American from former colonies. It comes from the fact that President Roosevelt would always calmly approach deliberation and negotiations peacefully but he backed up his claims with a “big stick” or the brand new United States Navy. A prime example of this was President Roosevelt’s Great White Fleet composed of 16 brand new battleships that sailed around the world to show that the United States was now a power to be reckoned with.

## 21. Transcontinental Railroad

The Transcontinental railroad was the physical manifestation of the American dream of Manifest Destiny. One end started in San Francisco and the other started in Iowa on the Missouri River. It was a railroad that linked the east coast with the west coast, but was simultaneously more than that as well.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

By bringing together the east and west coast via land route the formerly intimidating and dangerous west was opened up to more regular settlement. In addition, trade was facilitated because you no longer had to move goods via ship but instead could rely on the railroad to move product. States that formerly seemed inaccessible due to the amount of time it took to get there and the danger that came with the overland route were made secure by the existence of a reliable railroad.



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## World War I to World War II

### 22. Wilson's 14 Points

During the United States' entry into World War I, President Wilson thought it prudent to outline what exactly were the goals of the United States. By the time the United States saw combat Europe was already firmly entrenched in the fighting but most participating nations had not made it clear as to what their intentions were after the completion of the war. In President Wilson's 14 points he described the type of world he hoped to build which included free trade between all nations, open navigation of the seas, and the formation of the precursor to the United Nations: the League of Nations. His points were seen to be idealistic and not really taken seriously, but it was important in President Wilson's eyes to establish that the United States was not entering the war for economic gain. Had his 14 points been better received then perhaps we might have avoided World War II.

### 23. Great Depression

It was the worst economic crisis of the 1930's. The Great Depression lasted the longest and was the deepest economic slump the entire world was in during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning in the United States and following the economic boom of the Roaring 20's it started with the stock market crash in October 1929 that came to be known as Black Tuesday. The United States had an unemployment rate of 25% and many Americans were forced to work backbreaking, manual labor jobs. It was only with the policies of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and looming approach of World War II that the United States was able to recover from this economic downturn.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

### 24. Manhattan Project

The Manhattan Project was the endeavor undertaken by the United States to create the first atomic weapons. Who led the creation of some of the most powerful weapons in human history? The actual scheme was led by the premiere physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer. The bulk of the engineering and design took place at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. However, in order to create these weapons they needed to enrich uranium and this was done in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The end result of the project was the creation of two atomic bombs, Little Boy and Fat Man, which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively leading to the end of the war in the Pacific Theater.

### 25. Potsdam Conference

Ever wonder how the Allies dealt with Germany after they had surrendered? All the Allied leaders at the time decided that they would meet in Potsdam and determine Germany's fate. Nine weeks prior had been V-E Day which was the official closure of the Western theater, but a lot had changed since then. The United States had a new president, President Truman had taken the presidency because President Roosevelt had died during his fourth term. Winston Churchill who had led Britain through the war had finally been replaced by Clement Attlee. Finally, Stalin's forces occupied all of Eastern Europe all the way up to Eastern Germany. The Potsdam Conference was markedly different from the Yalta Conference for President Truman had developed a deep mistrust of Stalin's plans for his newborn superpower. This was in contrast to President Roosevelt who believed that Stalin was harmless and would work with him to create a new democratic world.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

### 26. Scopes Monkey Trial

The Scopes Monkey Trial can be called the first instance of religion versus science in the United States. It begins with a substitute biology teacher who unwittingly taught evolution in a Tennessee high school. The Butler Act had made it illegal to teach any form of evolution in a Tennessee school that received money from the state. Major figures in the American political landscape at the time came from all over to partake in this debate. Clarence Darrow defended the John Scopes, the teacher accused of the crime, and against him stood William Jennings Bryan. The case itself was made even larger as major newspapers came from all over the country to cover the trial. In the end John Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100, but the main takeaway was that this event was the first time religion and science would butt heads and it certainly would not be the last in American history.

### 27. Teapot Dome Scandal

Ever wonder if there was a scandal that preceded the Watergate scandal in notoriety? From 1921 to 1923 the United States turned its attention inwards toward Wyoming. When the Navy began using oil instead of coal President Taft deemed it wise that the Navy always have a reliable source of fuel and set aside specific oil-producing portions of the nation specifically for the Navy. One of these areas was the Teapot Dome Oil Field in Wyoming. The land's lease was changed hands from the U.S Navy to private oil companies and behind it all was the Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall. The scandal lies in that Secretary Fall essentially offered the lease to private companies in exchange for personal bribes. This was the first instance of an American administration trying to hide a scandal from the American Public.

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## 28. Yalta Conference

Do you ever wonder who brought Europe back to its feet after World War II? Just as World War II was entering its final stages the three major powers in the war, the United States, Great Britain, and Russia, all met to determine how to deal with the post-war recovery. Those who were in attendance were the respective nations' leaders, President Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin. The conference determined how Germany was to be dealt with after the war. This included how Germany would pay off its war debts, its demilitarization, and the decision to hunt down Nazi war criminals. The Yalta Conference also decided what was to be done with all the land Stalin had appropriated during his march west. While he promised that democratic elections would be held he never fulfilled his promise from this we can see the beginning of the Iron Curtain.



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## The Cold War

### 29. Bay of Pigs

During the Cold War Cuba was at a crossroads. Fidel Castro led a left-wing government that supported the Soviet Union and was looking to cultivate further ties with them. He had come to power after usurping the democratic, but corrupt, President Fulgencio Batista. Apprehensive about Castro's left-wing sympathies President Eisenhower ordered the but the final stamp of approval was given by President Kennedy. The invasion ultimately failed and the United States was embarrassed on the international stage while simultaneously granting Cuba's new political system legitimacy. The significance of this event is that it would eventually bring the Cold War to a head at the Cuban Missile Crisis.

### 30. Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the height of tension during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. It arose as the result of the United States' failed ploy to topple the left-wing government of Cuba and Cuba seeking aid from further intervention by the United States requested that the Soviet Union arm the island nation with nuclear missiles pointed towards the United States. In response the United States strategically placed its own nuclear arsenal in Turkey and Italy aimed towards Moscow. The crisis ended with negotiations between Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy. The United States agreed never to attempt to subjugate Cuba again and promised to remove their own nuclear weapons from Turkey and Italy if the Soviet Union removed theirs in Cuba. This was the culmination of tension that had been building during the Cold War and from this point forward pressure began to relax.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

### 31. Détente

Détente was the beginning of easing of tensions during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. It began with the installation of the direct hotline between Washington D.C. and Moscow in order to properly facilitate quick, precise communication between the leaders of both nations. This thawing of relations between the two superpowers was brought about by events such as the Strategic Arms Limitation talks and the signing of the Helsinki Accords. Both were efforts taken by the participating superpowers to reduce their ballistic missile arsenal and the Soviet Union's guarantees to allow Eastern European countries the right of self-determination. Détente was the first time during the Cold War that both superpowers realized that the continued escalation might lead to a potentially devastating nuclear war and the destruction of both their nations.

### 32. Domino Theory

Domino Theory was a concept that dominated United States legislation and the national consciousness from the 1950's to the 1980's. It was the belief that during the Cold War if one country fell to Communism then it would begin to affect all the countries around it leading to the explosive growth of communism. It outlined that there would be a "domino effect" where if China fell to communism then it would be followed by Korea then Vietnam and so on till all of Asia was under the spell of the Soviet Union. The weight the theory carried comes from how it dominated American foreign policy through the duration of the Cold War and its interventionist procedures that led to the Korean and Vietnam War.

## 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

### 33. Red Scare

The Red Scare refers to the period of time between 1947 to the early 1950's. During this period the American national consciousness was inundated with fear regarding all things communist. This was brought on by the raising of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe, the news of a Chinese Civil War set to determine the type of government China would have, and the damage to American security by Soviet espionage. The main figure at the heart of all this fueling the flames of fear was Senator Joseph McCarthy. Led by Senator McCarthy the United States began a period of fear-mongering and repression against those who professed even the slightest sympathy for Communists.

### 34. Tonkin Incident

The Vietnam War began with the Tonkin Incident. In August 1964 a military engagement between the USS Maddox fired upon three North Vietnamese torpedo boats and the aftermath saw Vietnamese casualties and none on the American side. Why exactly is this important? Back in the United States the Tonkin Incident was painted in such a way to make Vietnam the aggressor and the United States was merely defending itself. As a result of this distortion of events Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that gave President Lyndon B. Johnson the power to deploy American forces in the event a southeast Asian country asked for help defending itself from Communist influence, and from this stems the beginning of the Vietnam War.

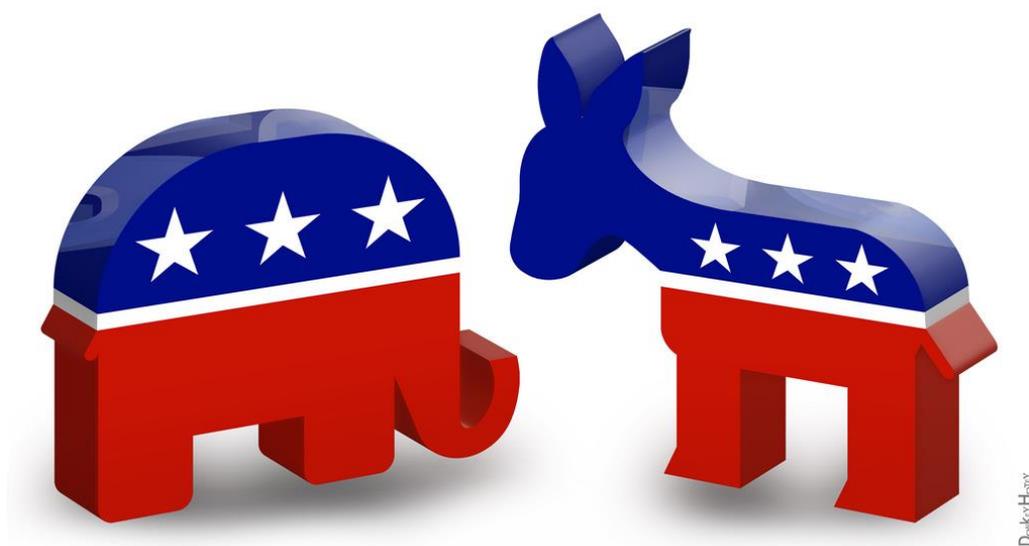
# 35 Frequently Tested AP US History Terms & Concepts Cont.

## 35. Truman Doctrine

During the Cold War the United States took an aggressive stance against the Soviet Union and Communism in general. The Truman Doctrine was the foreign policy adopted by the Truman administration. It stated that the United States would make its best effort to contain communism in Europe and prevent its spread to Asia and eventually to the rest of the world. It is because of this policy that the United States took on the role of international policeman and due embroiled itself in several military conflicts from post-World War II to the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union.

From the colonial period to the present the United States has had a rich history. Every event listed here was a key turning point in the American story and each concept described affected American lives. This country was born in the midst of conflict, but through the American spirit and hard work we forged ourselves into a mighty superpower. If you truly want to understand how the United States then you want to make sure you know every item on this list. If you do then that perfect score on the AP US History exam will be within your grasp.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties



*[Image Source: Flickr](#)*

You are probably well aware that the current political party situation in the United States has been dominated by a two-party system—a contest between the Republican and Democratic Parties. But did you know that these two parties didn't really come to dominate the scene until 1856 (one of the two parties has claimed a win in every single presidential and congressional election since then)? Or did you know that the reason the symbol of the Democratic Party is the donkey is that the party's founder, Andrew Jackson had earned the nickname "jackass" by his political adversaries? The name has stuck around since.

It's okay if you don't know every detail about the US political party system...yet. But you will want to know as much as possible for your upcoming AP US History exam and that's why we are here to help.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

We have created this AP US History review on US political parties as a way to better understand the history of American politics.

You may think you know quite a bit about American politics today, but that doesn't mean you fully understand the history of US political parties. By the end of this AP US history review, however, we'll make you not only a pro about the topic of US political parties, but get you to understand how the histories of these parties have evolved and shaped over time.

## US Political Parties and APUSH

Before we jumped right into the nitty-gritty details of each political party, we wanted to give you a little bit of an explanation of how we have organized this AP US history review. You should already get the gist that US political parties have changed over time. The Republican Party that Lincoln was a part of, for example, looked very different than it does today.

So, as a way to emphasize the historical nature of US political parties, we have organized this review in terms of time period. We are going to be using the time periods the way they are used by historians and political scientists throughout the academic world. So, we will begin with the Anti-Federalist/Federalist era in the country's beginning and end with the Era of Liberalism. It'll make sense as we move along, we swear!

And although the Democratic and Republican Parties have dominated the political landscape since 1852, that doesn't mean there weren't any other competitors out there. From the Bull Moosers to the Populists, there have been challenges to the political norm. Stick with this AP US history review, and we'll let you in on the histories of all those you'll need for your upcoming APUSH exam.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## **Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists, 1792-1824**

This era really covers the first years that US political parties even existed. Since the nation was still relatively young, the major political debates revolved around whether or not federal rights should trump states' rights, or vice versa. Thus the US political party system revolved mostly around the Federalists vs. the Anti-Federalists (who would form the Democratic-Republican Party). Much like today, the period was dominated by two primary parties: the Federalists and the Democratic-Republican Party.

### ***Federalist Party***

The origins of the Federalist Party actually began well before the creation of the US political system itself. Ultimately, the Federalists wanted to see a more powerful central government, a continued relationship with Great Britain, a regulated and centralized banking system, and a healthy relationship between the elites and upper crust of society with government officials.

Key players included bankers and economic thinkers like Alexander Hamilton and longtime political figures like John Adams. The party had mostly controlled the government until 1801, when Jeffersonian notions of individual rights became more popular and views of the wealthy in America took a downward turn in common opinion.

### ***Democratic-Republican Party***

This was the anti-Federalist Party through and through. Spearheaded by Thomas Jefferson, this was the party meant for the people. Party leaders argued for states' rights, no central banking system, individual liberty, and a very constitutionally limited view of the federal government.

## The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

Ultimately the party emerged as a response to the increasingly powerful relationship between bankers, businessmen, and the US political party systems that was developing under the Federalist Party. Originally called that Anti-Administration Party because Jefferson wanted to combat Alexander Hamilton's increasing efforts (1790-ish) to federalize debts and banking, it would soon become the Democratic-Republican Party. That is, until the Second Party era came along...

### **The Antebellum Era, 1828-1864**

Two major developments define this era in the history of US political parties. First, this is the time period when the political parties that we all know and love (we're talking about the Republican and Democratic Parties, here) begin. And second, slavery and possible secession really dominated the political and economic scene at this time, so it only makes sense that these two topics would dominate the US political party situation as well—so we see specific parties related to these issues popping up.

### ***Democratic Party***

Simply put, the modern Democratic Party began with Andrew Jackson. Even the symbol of the Democratic Party, the donkey, began with Jackson, who was often (lovingly, we are sure) called a "jackass" by those who despised his policies. Jacksonian Democracy ultimately revolved around the idea that the federal government should serve the people, not money and not politicians.

They also argued for strong presidential power, and when South Carolina almost threatened to secede from the Union in 1832, Jackson nearly sent the military in to start a war. Slavery would become an issue that eventually weakened the party prior to the Civil War, but Democrats during these years ultimately argued that slavery was a decision to be made by the states.

## The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

This kind of a platform convinced many in the North to leave the party, making the up-and-coming Republican agenda more appealing to many (more on that below).

### ***Whig Party***

If the Democratic-Republican Party of the early years was the anti-Federalist Party, then the Whig Party was the anti-Democrat. These were the people who came up with names like “jackass” and “King Andrew” for Jackson. This was a time in the history of US political parties where feuds reigned and grudges were held. And Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun both hated Jackson enough to create a new party to oppose him.

Whigs were more business friendly than those in the Jacksonian Democracy camp, they wanted to national bank to remain intact, and federally sponsored internal improvements. It was hugely popular from its foundation until its ending years in the early 1850's. They even got two presidents in, William H. Harrison and Zachary Taylor. But a wishy-washy stance on slavery, especially its expansion into the west, split the party apart as things intensified in the years before the Civil War.

### ***Republican Party***

There was actually a National Republican Party that existed between the years 1828 and 1836, but they had a hard time getting off the ground. These were the original Jacksonian Democracy haters—including Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams. They would merge with the Whigs for a more powerful union, but when the Whigs started falling apart over the issues of slavery and expansion, the Republican Party became a thing again.

Politicians with a Jeffersonian twist began getting together in 1854, exploiting all the debating and flip-flopping that several parties were taking on the issue of expansion and slavery. Republicans decided to be clearly against the expansion of slavery in the US.

## The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

They quickly gained traction and got John C. Fremont into the presidency in 1856. Antislavery Republicans were getting elected left and right and after Lincoln got into office, the nation plunged into civil war.

### ***Anti-Masonic Party***

Did you think that conspiracies involving Masonic rituals and secrecy were only part of the modern day? Well, think again. Americans were so paranoid about the existence of the secretive Masons that they formed a party to try to get rid of them. Despite a general distrust of secret societies in the US, Freemasons were still popular (George Washington was one!) among politicians but generally disliked by the populace. And when a Freemason named William Morgan disappeared after planning to publish a book on the secret society, conspiracy theories exploded. The result was that an anti-Masonic Party was founded as a way to get the Freemasons out of politics, but the whole thing really only lasted from 1827 to 1836.

### ***Liberty Party***

The first anti-slavery party, the Liberty Party was founded in 1840 from frictions developing in the American Anti-Slavery Society. Ultimately, a number of members of that group felt that William Lloyd Garrison's ideas about quality in America were a little too radical, so they left in order to find a more political solution. The numbers of this party were actually fairly small and by 1848, its leadership was asking its members to vote for the emerging Free Soil Party.

### ***Free Soil Party***

Well, as you might have gathered from the above info, this was also a primarily anti-slavery US political party, but only kind of. Free Soil situated itself as a compromise between abolitionists and pro-slavery Americans.

## The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

Its platform was that slavery should not be expanded into the growing US west. It became a popular party and even got ex-president Martin Van Buren on board with its principles.

Ultimately it went into decline as the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act each convinced many of its members to go full blown abolitionist. The Republican Party soon picked up many of its non-expansionist rhetoric, helping to kill off the party by 1854.

### ***Constitutional Union Party***

This party was a mish-mash of all the discontented from the Free Soilers, Whigs, and Know Nothings. It was short lived and was ultimately about compromise. They wanted to uphold the constitution, keep the south from seceding, and figure out a solution to the problem of slavery. Sound vague? Well, it was a vague party. It influenced little and fell out of favor as Republicanism expanded, dying out before the Civil War.

### ***Know-Nothing Party***

Founded in 1845, this was the anti-immigrant party of the mid-nineteenth century. It was actually called the American Party, and occasionally, they took on the title of the Native American Party, but most people knew them by the name of the Know-Nothing Party. The party began in 1845, when Irish immigration into the US was at its highest. This made nativists and anti-Catholic Protestants very nervous, so they founded this party to try to keep others out. It was mostly a middle-class institution but had very little success.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## **The Reconstruction Era, 1864-1890's**

Reconstruction is the word here. The Civil War had torn the country apart and even after its end it would continue to do so. Just as the US political party situation in the first half of the nineteenth century dealt with the issues of a fracture nation, the parties of the latter half of the century dealt with its aftermath.

However, unlike the antebellum years, you're not going to see as many new parties popping up after the war. The Republican and Democratic Parties won the dominance game and spend the post-Civil War years sharpening their disagreements with one another. Always remember for the APUSH exam, that political parties in US history have always been in transition, and the Reconstruction era is no different.

### ***Democratic Party***

The Reconstruction era was not the Democratic Party's highest point. Associations with the Civil War kept the party unpopular and the devastation of the Civil War kept the south impoverished. They wouldn't regain control of Congress until 1874 and the presidency until 1884.

Democrats retained strong control in the South, but were ultimately split into three groups. The first believed in a very limited government, keeping out of the lives of individuals, the second consisted of immigrant groups who argued for labor rights and better lives in urban areas, and the third group saw the South and the West getting together to criticize the growing strength of the industrial economy.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## ***Republican Party***

Between 1868 and 1892, the Republican Party would win five of seven presidential elections. This was the hot party of the Reconstruction era. They maintained a policy of not rocking the economic boat, supporting a strong central bank, the railroad industry, tariffs, and aid to homesteaders. Freed slaves increasingly flocked to the party due to their stance on slavery before the war, giving them a new sense of strength. Increasingly, it was becoming the urban party, as northern industrialists, merchants, and professionals counted themselves amongst its ranks.

But they were increasingly having trouble keeping united. One fissure began to develop as more immigrants joined the populace. Anti-immigrant Republicans were hostile towards the melting-pot status of American cities. Party politics also helped to fracture the party. As the party system grew, established Republicans were unwilling to criticize corruption of President Ulysses S. Grant and other Republicans. Tired of this, many fled the party (these were called Mugwumps), and helped to Democrats win in the 1890's.

## ***Greenback-Labor Party***

Ever heard of the quote “You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold” by William Jennings Bryant? Well, it basically sums up the Greenback-Labor Party. After the Civil War, the federal government printed money (“greenbacks”) without basing it on silver or gold, but they cancelled that program by going back to the gold standard in 1875. Green backers hated this idea and ran on the ticket of going back to the postwar standard.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

Unfortunately for the party leaders, the gold standard years ended up OK, so they fell out of favor. Laborers who supported the party began looking towards socialism for answers and those who wanted to get rid of the gold standard drifted towards the Democratic party, just like Bryant did (he was a Democrat when he gave his “cross of gold” speech). Like many of the other third parties, it fizzled in the end, and disappeared by 1884.

## **The Progressive Era, 1896-1932**

Progressive era politics were, well, progressive. Industrialization dominated cities, as workers started to demand more rights and privileges, while a distrust of business began to sweep through the country, as unique immigrant, social, and economic groups began to vie for attention in the US political party system. The Republican Party could be described as being more “progressive,” but the problem of disunity continued to plague both of the main parties.

### ***Democratic Party***

The twentieth century started off in debate for the Democratic Party. As you can tell from the Reconstruction era, farmers were concerned about the US economy. So, this became an issue for the Democratic Party, which was still trying to appeal to urban workers and immigrants. Ultimately, the farmers won out in the end with nominating Bryant, but at the cost of losing urban support. And the Democrats lost in general, since Bryant lost out to Republican William McKinley.

But Republicans kept arguing with themselves as well, helping Woodrow Wilson win the presidency. He argued for involvement in WWI, and even though support for the war was strong at first, support dwindled, and so did the population’s patience for Wilson’s Democratic Party. His League of Nations was shot down by Congress and civil rights groups fought back against police state policies that emerged during the war years.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## ***Republican Party***

As we said above, this was the Republican era—but only kind of. Initially, Republicans fought strongly against corruption in the government, tried to break down corporate interests in the government, and sought out more worker’s rights across the country.

And although the Republican Teddy Roosevelt was a popular president, he split the party into the Progressive Party, hurting Republican chances to gain control of the presidency during and after the WWI years. Republicanism kept being viewed as being in favor of industrial cities, so during these years, the party attempted to align itself with rural politics, the South, and against immigrants in much stronger ways than in previous years.

## ***Progressive Party***

AKA the Bull Moose Party (which we think is a way better name). Just like the other parties, this one began with drama and disagreement. Theodore Roosevelt was the president from 1901 to 1908 under a Republican ticket, but soon became disenchanted in the later years. Mostly he had a falling out with the following Republican nominee, William Howard Taft. Teddy was a boisterous, my way or the highway kind of guy (he claimed to have the strength of a bull moose, thus the party’s nickname). And when Taft didn’t do everything Roosevelt wanted, Teddy ran against him, but lost.

So, he founded a new party, the Progressive Party. He argued for reforms on tariffs, voting rights for women, the regulation of businesses, and increased labor rights. Although he beat out the Republican nominee, the Democrats still won. The party itself fell apart when Roosevelt rejoined the Republican Party.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## ***Know-Nothing Party***

Despite losing membership and popularity by the middle of the nineteenth century, the American Party actually stuck around well into the 1920's. Just like the Antebellum era, immigration peaked once more during the turn of the twentieth century. The party's nativist, anti-immigrant appeal drew in folks from Ku Klux Klan and other nativist supremacy groups like that. They stayed on the platform of keeping anarchists, socialists, and invalids out of the country, educating only Protestant children, and keeping a large border-patrolling military. By the end of the Progressive era, they once again fell out of favor.

## ***People's Party***

This was the farmers' party of the Progressive era. Many of the Greenbackers joined this group in the 1880's, which also ran on the idea of printing more money without precious metal restrictions. This, they hoped would help the debt-ridden farmers across the South and the West. Supporters of the party were also called Populists, because they wanted a more direct relationship with the government. They believed in the popular vote of senators, referendums, and the abolition of national police, and were generally very anti-immigrant.

They also really hated the Democratic and Republican Parties. But when Bryant was elected after his "cross of gold speech," the Democratic Party took away their momentum. The party wouldn't make it past the first decade of the twentieth century.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## ***Socialist Party***

As industrialization began to dominate the US economy, the Socialist Party became more and more appealing. It was actually founded in 1874, but wouldn't become influential until the twentieth century, when between 1900 and 1920, they nominated Eugene V. Debs to run for president (he got 6 percent of the popular vote in 1912). Between these years, Milwaukee voted a socialist in as mayor, several members of Congress were elected, and numerous city counselors were elected under the ticket of Socialism.

The party, like many of the others in US political history, was fragmented. Although nearly every cross-section of society found membership in the party, debates raged between reform vs. revolution. Both unions and cooperatives were supported, but the American Federation of Labor, one of the country's biggest unions, hated the party. These internal problems would plague the party well into the latter half of the twentieth century and it would never be as strong again.

Strangely, this was the closest thing to a labor party that developed in US history at this time. Historians debate this topic all the time, asking why did labor take off throughout Europe but not really in the US?

## **The Era of Liberalism, 1933-Present Day**

Ah, we've come to the modern age as we know. This is when the US political party system develops into what we know it as today. The Democratic Party aligns itself with the tenets of economic liberalism, while Republicanism moves towards conservative government and national strength.

We also see a number of challenges popping up to try and take on the main two-party system. From the Green Party to the Libertarian Party, there have been efforts to change the US political party system, but with very little success.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## ***Democratic Party***

Liberalism is the word you are going to need to know for this segment of APUSH. The Democratic Party began to adhere to the proponents of Keynesian economic thought, which put government intervention into the economy in direct ways. As Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal policies helped the nation get out of the Great Depression, Democrats had success with this model throughout the country.

John F. Kennedy, during his presidency, increasingly aligned the Democratic Party with civil rights, as Republican leaders decried immigrant groups and radicals. By the 1970s, Democratic platforms had married notions of strong central government in the economy and the party of civil rights, both being central issues in nearly every Democratic presidential candidate since.

## ***Republican Party***

The Republican Party in the first couple of decades that followed the Great Depression could be seen as the anti-New Deal party. They spent their time and effort trying to dismantle the programs put forward by Roosevelt and by criticizing radical left groups like communism, but to little avail. But this also meant that they increasingly turned to platforms of small government, states' rights, pro-business, anti-radicalism, and pro-military strength.

These policies could be seen in Richard Nixon's anti-radicalism efforts, Ronald Reagan's growth of the military and theory of "trickle down economics," and George W. Bush's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan in the twenty-first century. There are plenty of important Republican figures to think about here, but what you really want to remember for the APUSH exam is the ways that the Republican Party's platform shifted according to Great Depression New Deal efforts. This was what helped form modern Republicanism as we know it.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## ***Libertarian Party***

The Libertarian Party showed up in the 1970's in order to provide an option that differed from the main two parties dominating the US political Party system. They have stood on the firm belief of individual freedom and a no-interventionist federal government, tenets that don't quite fit into either Republican or Democratic categories. Ultimately, they have had very little electoral success and are considered a fringe group in the US political party system.

## ***Reform Party***

In 1992 and 1996, presidential candidate Ross Perot became one of the biggest challenges to the two-party system that the US had seen in years. In 1992, he ran as an independent, but during the next election, he created his own party, calling it the Reform Party. He opposed NAFTA and argued that the national debt was choking the economy. In 1992, he received nearly 20 percent of the popular vote (but not one Electoral College vote), making him the most successful third-party candidate since Teddy Roosevelt and the Bull Moosers.

## ***Independent Parties (Not the Independent Party)***

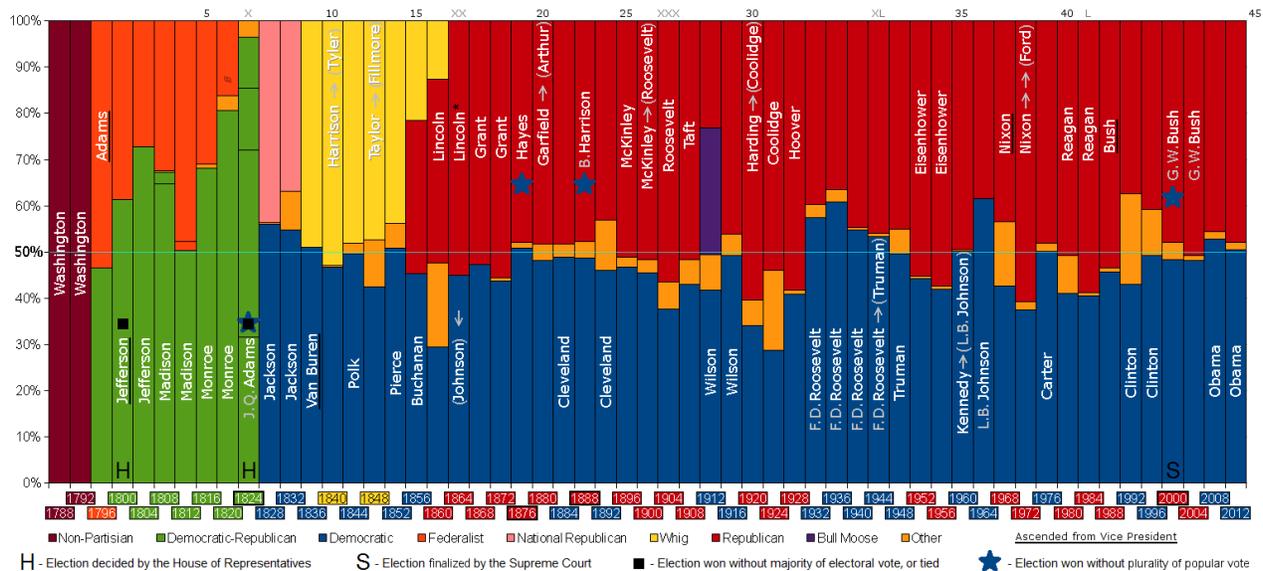
Those candidates looking to not align with any particular party, and especially not the two dominant parties, often run on an independent ticket. This means that they are not obligated to adhere to a specific set of policies or platforms that are decided by a party. Examples: Minnesota's Jesse Ventura, Ross Perot in 1992, and Joe Lieberman.

Don't confuse this with the Independent Party, which was a far-right party best known for its nomination of George Wallace for president. Wallace became popular in the 1970s for his extreme anti-immigrant policies, protectionist thought, and celebration of nationalism.

# The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

## The History of US Political Parties and the AP US History Exam

OK, you got all that? Whew, we know that this is a lot of info to digest for your APUSH exam. Just be glad we didn't cover every single party that has ever popped up in US election cycles—this list would be ginormous if we did. No, instead, we covered everything that you'll need to know for the AP US history exam. But always remember that this is the APUSH exam, and you always need to keep your eye on historical context.



*Image Source: Wikimedia Commons*

## The Ultimate Guide to AP US History Political Parties Cont.

Just remember how we've organized this AP US history review. Time periods are important here—and always remember that the history of US political parties has shifted significantly over time. Your mantra should be “context and time.” When studying, think about the historical context that each party emerged and was strong under. For example, the Socialist Party piqued at a time when industrial labor led to many disenchanted workers looking for solutions. And always consider time period. The Democratic Party during the 1930s was very different when Jacksonian Democracy was the biggest this in the US political party system.

Now let's take a look at an example from a real APUSH exam. Here's a good Long Answer Question from 2014. In fact, it's rather perfect, since we spent a bit of this APUSH review on the topics of Jacksonian Democracy and their relationship to the Whigs:

Compare and contrast the Jacksonian Democratic Party and the Whig Party of the 1830s and 1840s. Focus on TWO of the following: The role of the federal government in the economy, social reform, and westward expansion.

This should be much easier for you after reading through this review on US political parties. By now, you know that Jacksonian Democracy was not a fan of a centralized banking system, but the Whigs were, Jackson viewed himself as a champion of the people, and that Whigs did not like Jackson's views on increased westward expansion.

Remember these, and all the other tips on US political parties, and you're sure to ace your upcoming APUSH exam.

Good luck!



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# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List

When Franklin D. Roosevelt took over from Herbert Hoover in 1933, the United States was going through a time of great crisis. The Great Depression, and later the Dust Bowl, had hit the nation hard, causing widespread unemployment, business and farm failures, and severe international trade problems. In order to combat the nation's problems, FDR developed his New Deal "alphabet agencies." This APUSH review will list every New Deal program and initiative, from 1933 to 1938 chronologically, split up into the First New Deal and the Second New Deal. The programs in bold are the ones you should study the most for the AP US History exam. Don't get too hung up on the details of each agency or act, but make sure you have a good general knowledge of them.

## **The First New Deal**

The First New Deal dealt with the immediate and pressing needs of the nation. Focusing on recovery, its immediate goals were decreasing unemployment and providing welfare to needy Americans.

### **1933**

#### **March 9: Emergency Banking Relief Act**

Before this act, banks were not always a safe place to keep your money. Banks could lose all of your money and fail. FDR attempted to fix this problem by shutting down all US banks for a period of four days. During that time, he introduced the Emergency Banking Relief Act, which allowed the treasury secretary to issue loans to banks in need, limit operations of banks who were failing, and giving the president executive power to investigate and regulate banks during emergencies. The act restored the American public's confidence in the banking system and the stock market began to recover.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## March 20: Economy Act

The Economy Act cut the salaries of government employees and reduced benefits to veterans by 15%. The goal of this act was to reduce federal debt by \$500 million, but only ended up reducing it by \$243 million. Ultimately the Economy Act had little to no effect on the federal deficit or the economy in general.



*[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)*

## March 22: Beer-Wine Revenue Act

Legalized the sale of beer and wine with an alcohol content of less than 3.2% and raised much needed tax revenue. Since FDR was not a fan of prohibition, this act effectively amended the National Prohibition Act and relaxed alcohol laws. It was eventually replaced by the Twenty-First Amendment.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## **March 31: Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC)**

This was one of the most popular and successful relief programs of the New Deal. It put unemployed, unmarried men (and eventually unemployed war veterans) to work planting trees, building fire towers, restoring forests, and creating camp grounds and picnic areas. Workers received free food, accommodation, clothing, medical care, and a salary. The program ended in 1942 but has lasting effects on the infrastructure of the United States.

## **May 12: Federal Emergency Relief Act**

Created the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), which provided state assistance to the unemployed and their families. It also created unskilled jobs in local and state government and provided projects for professionals (writers, actors, etc.) FERA terminated in 1935 and was taken over by other similar programs.

## **May 12: Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)**

This act limited farm production to help raise prices. It worked by paying farmers to reduce their crop production and kill off excess livestock. This prevented a surplus and increased crop/livestock prices. The AAA was eventually declared unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court but it helped to raise farming incomes by nearly 50%.

## **May 18: Tennessee Valley Authority Act (TVA)**

A relief program that built dams, controlled flooding, and brought electricity, and agricultural and industrial development to rural areas in the Tennessee Valley, which was hit hard by the Depression.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

This program made farms more productive, brought new industries to the area, and provided jobs to those who were unemployed. The TVA is still in existence to this day and is the nation's largest public power provider.

## **June 6: National Employment System Act (Wagner-Peyser Act)**

This act established a national employment system, known as the United States Employment Service (USES), which assisted with state public employment services, provided a labor exchange system, and created job-finding assistance to unemployed Americans.

## **June 13: Home Owners Loan Act**

Created the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which provided financing for small homes to prevent foreclosure and allowed homeowners to pay off loans in monthly installments over the course of several years. Eventually led to 25- or 30-year mortgages. The HOLC stopped operating in 1951.

## **June 16: National Industrial Recovery Act (NIA)**

Created the National Industrial Recovery Administration (NRA), which promoted industrial growth and recovery. Supported fair competition in businesses, established the right for workers to bargain collectively, regulated working hours, and more. The NIA is widely considered to be a failure, since it led to monopolies, labor unrest, and lack of support in the business community.

## **June 16: Public Works Administration (PWA)**

An agency that spent over \$3.3 billion dollars on public works projects, creating jobs and providing loans to private industries for the creation of large-scale projects, such as bridges, power plants, hospitals, sewage plants, and more.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

It's notable that this program include African Americans workers. The program ended when FDR started gearing up for WWII.

## **June 16: Glass-Steagall Act (Banking Act)**

This act established the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which gave government the authority to investigate and supervise banks, gave federal oversight to all commercial banks, and stopped banks from paying interest on checking accounts, among other banking reform measures. Parts of this act were later repealed in 1999, which some say led to the financial crisis of the late 2000s. The FDIC still exists today.

## **November 8: Civil Works Administration (CWA)**

The CWA was a temporary job creation program that put unemployed people to work building bridges, sewage systems, roads, and more. By the time it ended in 1934, over 4 million people had been given jobs and 225,000 miles of road, 30,000 schools, 3,700 playgrounds, and 1,000 airports had been constructed.

## **1934**

### **January 30: Gold Reserve Act**

This act changed the price of gold from \$20.67 per troy ounce to \$35. This increased the amount of money in circulation, which greatly helped the economy. It also helped the government control the fluctuations of the US dollar.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## **June 6: Securities & Exchange Act**

This act, which established the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), had the goal of preventing another Wall Street Crash. It helped regulate the stock market, enforce federal security laws, and required full disclosure of stock information.

## **June 18: Indian Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act)**

Sometimes called the “Indian New Deal,” this act decreased government control over American Indian affairs, encouraging written constitutions, self-government, and a credit program to foster land purchases, education, and tribal organization. It helped Indian people survive the Depression and improved relations with American Indians and the government. Today, this act is still used as the basis for laws regarding Indian affairs.

## **June 28: National Housing Act**

The National Housing Act created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the United States Housing Authority, and the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation. These agencies made low-interest, long-term loans for the construction of low-income housing. It lowered foreclosures on homes, and formed the basis of the mortgage and housing industries.

## **June 28: Federal Farm Bankruptcy Act**

This act limited the ability of banks to repossess farms. It was later ruled unconstitutional.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## **The Second New Deal**

The Second New Deal focused on reforming the nation. It consisted of more aggressive and liberal programs and responded to the Supreme Court's resistance of previous campaigns.

### **1935**

#### **April 8: Emergency Relief Appropriation Act**

FDR initiated this act as a way to get jobless Americans back to work, employing them in large-scale public works, arts, media, and drama programs. Nearly \$5 billion was authorized to create jobs for over 4 million people.

#### **April 8: Works Progress Administration (WPA)**

Out of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act came the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This was the largest of all New Deal agencies and mostly employed people to perform unskilled work, constructing public buildings, roads, airfields, hospitals, and more. The WPA also created Federal Project Number One, which was the name for a number of projects that employed Americans in the categories of Art, Music, Theater, Writing, and Historical Records. Any American was allowed to participate, regardless of race, color, religion, or political affiliation.

#### **May 1: Resettlement Administration (RA)**

FDR established the Resettlement Administration (RA) for the purpose of relocating and resettling poor urban and rural families who had been displaced, implementing soil conservation programs, and providing low-interest loans. Due to poor management, the program was not as effective as intended and the agency eventually became the Farm Security Administration in 1937.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## **May 11: Rural Electrification Administration (REA)**

The REA was created to bring electricity to rural areas. At the time of the Great Depression, 90% of urban areas had electricity, but only 10% of rural locations did. The REA was a success: by 1939, 25% of rural areas had electricity and by 1945, 9 out of 10 farms had electricity. This completely changed the lives of many rural families and farmers, who now had access to radios, running water, refrigeration, and more.

## **July 5: National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act)**

The Wagner Act is a very important piece of labor legislation you need to know about for the APUSH exam. It established the National Labor Relations Board, securing workers' rights to collectively bargain, organize, and strike. It was very important in stopping employers from interfering in workers' unions and in preventing unjust working conditions. It is still an important law today.

## **August 14: Social Security Act**

This social welfare act created the Social Security system in the US. This marked the first time a president advocated for federal assistance for the elderly. The act provided benefits and support to retirees, the unemployed, the handicapped, and the aged. It excluded many women and minorities at first, but it has changed over time to improve the lives of millions of Americans.

## **August 23: Banking Act**

(Basically an extension of the 1933 Glass-Steagall Banking Act). The Banking Act of 1935 finished the dramatic alteration of the Federal Reserve Bank that began during the Hoover administration. It made the Federal Reserve Bank more independent from the Executive and Legislative branches and made the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) a permanent government agency

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

This act helped further restore public confidence in the US banking system.

## **August 30: Revenue Act (Wealth Tax Act)**

FDR signed The Revenue Act of 1935 to help redistribute wealth in America. It worked by raising income taxes on higher income levels. This was known as the “Wealth Tax,” and took up to 75% of the highest income earners. The tax angered some Americans and many wealthy people found loopholes to evade the tax. It’s important to note here that FDR most likely imposed this tax as a means to win voters, as it was an election year, and not to create any long-term solutions.

## **1936**

### **February 29: Soil Conservation & Domestic Allotment Act**

After the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 was deemed unconstitutional in 1936, FDR signed the Soil Conservation & Domestic Allotment Act into law. With the ultimate goal of conserving soil and preventing erosion on farmland, this law allowed the government to pay farmers to stop producing soil-depleting crops. Landlords were also required to share these payments with the people who worked on their land. The act was successful: in three years, soil erosion was down by 21.7% and many of the “dust bowl” effects had been reversed.

## **1937**

### **July 22: Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act**

This act’s main goal was to make sure sharecroppers and tenants could remain on their land. It also provided low-interest loans for tenants to buy family farms. The impact of this act was limited since small farms had to compete with the bigger farms previously formed by the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA).

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## **August 26: Judicial Procedures Reform Bill (“Court Packing”)**

In order to combat the Supreme Court striking down any further New Deal programs and acts as unconstitutional, FDR decided to reorganize the system. For the AP US History exam, it is essential that you know about his “court packing” scheme. It’s also important to realize that it never passed. FDR proposed that the President should be given the power to add a new Supreme Court justice for every member over the age of 70 ½ (up to a maximum of 6). The entire plan was very unpopular and was received negatively.

## **September 1: Housing Act (Wagner-Steagall Housing Act)**

Created the United States Housing Authority (USHA) for the purpose of abolishing slums. It provided \$500 million in loans for low-cost constructing projects for low-income families. The act ultimately led to greater economic security for thousands of Americans and was essential for creating housing for WWII defense workers.

## **September: Farm Security Administration (FSA)**

The main goal of the Farm Security Administration was to alleviate rural poverty in America. It sought to relocate tenants, poor farmers, and sharecroppers onto government-owned group farms. It also developed a successful photography project, which documented the challenges of living in rural poverty. However, the FSA was ultimately a failure because farmers wanted to own their land and because WWII created jobs in the cities for poor farmers to fill.

# The Ultimate AP US History New Deal Programs List Cont.

## **1938**

### **February 16: Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC)**

Both the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl drought made producing crops difficult for rural farmers. This meant that they couldn't produce enough crops to feed themselves or to sell. Because of this, FDR created the FCIC to provide insurance for farmers' crops, meaning that they could receive compensation for their crops, even if they did not produce said crops. It is still active today.

### **July 31: Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**

This act introduced laws concerning labor standards. It introduced the forty-hour work week, set minimum wage, made it illegal to employ anyone under the age of 16, and more. FDR called the FLSA the most important New Deal legislation since the Social Security Act of 1935. 700,000 workers were affected by the wage increase and 13 million were affected by the new working hours limitations. The FLSA is still in place today.

## **Summary**

Knowing each and every one of the listed New Deal programs is *not* essential to do well on the APUSH Exam. However, reviewing the list and understanding each program in context can give you a better knowledge of the New Deal and what FDR's goals were. The AP US History exam mostly focuses on the impacts and effects of certain New Deal programs, so be sure to focus those. With all of this New Deal knowledge, you are sure to do well on the exam!

# The Ultimate AP US History Guide to the 13 Colonies

Without the 13 colonies there would be no AP United States History. Kind of obvious, right? But how much do you really know about these early European communities and the governments that they created? It can be a little daunting getting them all straight, especially since they each had their own identities, histories, places of origin, etc. But not to worry, we've created this APUSH review to get this info down for you just in time for the upcoming AP US history exam.

This APUSH review on the 13 colonies has been organized to provide you with all the details you will need for your exam. We've got the nitty-gritty dates and names of when each colony was created, populated, etc., but we've also organized each colony's history into easy to understand themes, including the analytical information you'll need to know for the essay writing sections of the APUSH exam. Stick with this ultimate AP US history guide to the 13 colonies and we'll get you that much closer to earning a 5 on your exam!

## The 13 Colonies

Let's get the most obvious information out of the way first. The 13 colonies consisted of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island (and the Providence Plantations). The colonies eventually spread over almost the entire eastern seaboard of what would become the United States as we know it today, giving each their own uniqueness in terms of geography, economy, and history. But they did share a number of similarities as well.

What follows is a thorough breakdown of both the similarities and differences that make up the history of the American 13 colonies. First, we are going to categorize the 13 by region: the New England colonies, the Middle colonies, and the southern colonies.

# The Ultimate AP US History Guide to the 13 Colonies Cont.

Here we will highlight the ways that each colony held historical similarities similar to their region, but unique to the others.

Second, and this is key for the APUSH exam since it seems to pop up quite a bit, we will cover the ways that all 13 colonies maintained cultural, political, and ideological ties to one another. This discussion will be a perfect segue for you to start studying the Revolutionary War (another obvious common topic for the AP US history exam!). And finally, we will tie all this info together by providing you with specific examples of how the lovely people at the College Board have asked about the 13 colonies in previous versions of the APUSH exam.

## The 13 Colonies by Region

### The New England Colonies

#### *Massachusetts*

Much like Virginia to the South, this is the most important colony in the northern region of England's 13 colony experiment. Originally called the Massachusetts Bay colony, this site was founded in the Plymouth area by the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1623. However, unlike the Chesapeake region, money was not the number one concern of those living in the area, religion was.

This colony, right off the bat, was founded by a small group of Puritan separatists (who were also called Pilgrims) who were looking for a safe haven to practice their religion. Also unlike those to the south, the colonists who settled here were willing to listen to the native peoples, who ended up helping to teach them the best ways to hunt, fish, and farm the area.

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The key things to remember about this colony for your upcoming AP US history exam is that the people of Massachusetts (and much of the rest of New England) were concerned with raising healthy, Christian families more so than making profit. They too created a representative government, but you had to be a landowning male if you wanted to vote. These two things became a spring board for more of the other 13 colonies in New England to sprout from.

## ***New Hampshire***

As Massachusetts continued to grow and succeed as a colony, many wanted to expand the British territories. So, in 1629, an offshoot of colonists from the Massachusetts colony got permission from Plymouth and the crown to create a new colony in what is now New Hampshire and Maine.

Unlike many of the other 13 colonies, New Hampshire residents generally stayed to themselves and kept out of trouble. The most important thing to remember from this review of the New England colonies is that New Hampshire was evidence that the New England model was expanding its reach in North America. Although they were religiously tolerant, the colonists mirrored what was taking place in Massachusetts. Their government was tied to the one in Massachusetts; they created small communities of farmer families, and relied on agriculture and timber for profit.

## ***Rhode Island and Providence Plantations***

The land that would come to be known as Rhode Island was originally settled by the Dutch and was part of the colony of New Netherlands. Much like New Hampshire, this colony was created as an offshoot of Massachusetts but with its own twist.

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Whereas the colonists of New Hampshire were looking for new ventures and new horizons, those of Rhode Island were looking to escape religious persecution taking place in Massachusetts. Exiled preacher Roger Williams and Baptist leader Anne Hutchinson each laid claim to extensive plots of land in the area. They eventually appealed for and received an official charter in 1643.

Unlike the other New England colonies, Rhode Island only had an elected “president” as a government representative. But what you should ultimately take away from this APUSH review is that Rhode Island became a safe haven for those who were religiously persecuted. Quakers, Jews, Catholics, etc. who did not fit into the Puritan or Protestant models of living found safety here (for the most part). And the colonies began to look more diverse as time went on.

### ***Connecticut***

Much like New Hampshire this New England colony was created as an offshoot of Massachusetts. As successes in farming and family life led to growth in the Massachusetts colony, colonists moved north to the New Hampshire area, but also went south towards the Connecticut River. Finding excellent water supplies and fertile land for agriculture, these settlers founded the colony in 1636.

But there are two ideas that you really want to get down for your APUSH exam. First, unlike Rhode Island, founder Thomas Hooker was a Puritan minister and wanted to replicate the religious society that had been created by the founders of Massachusetts. Those who lived in Connecticut elevated religious purity to the highest level, similar to those in Massachusetts. And second, the representative government that formed in Connecticut created the first constitution of sorts. Called the Fundamental Order (1638), this document argued that the government’s job is to protect the rights of the individual. This would obviously become an important model for things to come...

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## The Middle Colonies

### ***New York***

New York was actually originally founded by Dutch colonists. Eventually, however, the area did fall into the hands of the British in 1664. After gaining the territory from the Dutch, the King of England gave the land to his brother, the Duke of York (thus, the name). The ties between England and Holland became so deep in fact that the Prince of Orange married the Duke of York's daughter (they are better known as William and Mary).

Ultimately, what you want to remember about New York for your AP US exam is that it was truly a middle colony. Being smack dab in the middle of the New England and Southern colonies, New York's harbor acted as a perfect central trading epicenter for the New World. Because of this industry boomed in the big cities and agriculture thrived in the more rural areas. New York was also interesting because a lot like today, the people who lived there were from all over the place. This meant that unlike the other regions, not one religion dominated and there was no single economic powerhouse characterized the workforce.

### ***New Jersey***

Just like New York, New Jersey was originally a territory of the Dutch. And, as a result, their histories parallel New York's almost perfectly. Just like the other Middle Colonies, New Jersey had a long history of population diversity, from the presence of the Dutch, to the French, and even the Swedes in the region. When England gained the territory from the Dutch in 1664, it was to be governed by the Duke of York as well. Ultimately, neither industry nor agriculture dominated the economy, the population was diverse, and there was no religious monopoly. Just remember for the APUSH exam, that New Jersey and New York or almost exactly the same.

# The Ultimate AP US History Guide to the 13 Colonies Cont.

## ***Pennsylvania***

Somewhat similar to New York and New Jersey, the land that was to be Pennsylvania was originally occupied by other Europeans. But instead of the Dutch, this time, it was the Swedes. But alas, the Dutch eventually took over anyways. When the British received the Dutch territories in 1664, the king of England used the land to pay off a debt. He owed the Penn family significant money and gave the land in the New World to William Penn in 1681 as repayment. Pennsylvania actually means “Penn’s woods.” Very fitting, right?

Almost accidentally Penn would help to create on one of the most religiously tolerant places in the 13 colonies. He himself was a Quaker, but did not intend on Pennsylvania to become a Quaker’s paradise. Instead, Quakers and other persecuted believers fled Europe and heard that Penn himself was a tolerant man. Plus the land was rich and fertile. This attracted quite a few families who could afford to leave their homeland without falling into servitude.

What is most important about Pennsylvania is that this combination of rich land and religious tolerance helped it to become the most egalitarian of the 13 colonies. But similar to the other Middle colonies, cities like Philadelphia emerged as industrial hubs, where outside the cities, farming dominated, which led to a diversified economy. Again, diverse populations, varied economic opportunities, and religious diversity characterized this middle colony.

## ***Delaware***

Delaware ultimately came as a result of an argument between Duke Baltimore and William Penn (remember them?). And like the other Middle Colonies, Delaware began as a Dutch territory, then went to the Swedes, back to the Danes, and then was eventually handed over to the British. Anyways, Penn wanted Pennsylvania access to the sea, so he tried to get his hands on the Delaware area, but Baltimore said no way.

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The battle went on for 100 years until 1750 when the border was finally defined. But what's important to note for the APUSH exam is how similarly this history is to the rest of the Middle Colonies—in fact, most of the main actors are even the same!

## The Southern Colonies

### *Virginia (Often Called a Chesapeake Colony)*

This was the first successful British colony in North America and a topic you are simply going to have to know if you want to ace your APUSH exam. Whereas previous voyages were mostly military or intel related, the crown had sent John Smith (backed by the London Company) in 1607 with over 170 colonists with the idea of staying permanently.

This colony was created in the Jamestown area with profit in mind. Unfortunately this almost led to their demise. Men greatly outnumbered women (so families didn't grow), they spent most of their time looking for gold rather than planting crops, and constantly fought with the indigenous peoples. After their first several years, nearly 80 percent of the population had perished from starvation or battle.

Two events took place in the early years of the Virginia colony's history that would forever change the rest of the 13 colonies and the history of the United States forever. First, they began planting tobacco in 1612 which became a huge cash crop. And second, in 1619 the colonists created the House of Burgesses, which was the first representative form of government in the New World.

So, in brief, for your APUSH review, remember that Virginia was founded as a money maker. This also almost led to its downfall until tobacco started bringing in the dough. It became so essential to Virginia that the colonists began using indentured servitude to multiply the product and quickly turned to enslaved Africans (1619) because that would bring in even more money.

# The Ultimate AP US History Guide to the 13 Colonies Cont.

Finally, Virginia is the birthplace of representative government in America. What they did would become a model for the other 13 colonies.

## ***Maryland (Often Called a Chesapeake Colony)***

Maryland became the fourth colony to be established in North America by the British. It started off as a proprietary (these were colonies that the king or queen gave to allies and were ruled by people in place of the British crown) colony granted by the king of England in 1632 to George Calvert, Lord Baltimore. If you remember anything from this APUSH review on Maryland, remember that it was a colony that was created for the idea of religious freedom.

When Lord Baltimore received this land, England was in religious turmoil. Catholics were commonly persecuted and being a Catholic himself, Lord Baltimore wanted his Maryland colony to be a safe haven for religious tolerance. But this didn't last long and when Protestants outnumbered the Catholics, they overthrew the government and replaced it with one that mimicked that of Virginia—Protestant and profitable. These two things would come to define the 13 colonies.

What started out as an experiment in religious freedom ended up as a place of persecution for non-Protestants. But they had taxes to pay as well. With Virginia being so successful to the south, leaders decided to turn towards the plantation system and the cultivation of tobacco in order to gain economic profits. Also like Virginia, this led to the increase of labor needs and the eventual exploitation of enslaved Africans.

## ***North Carolina and South Carolina***

North and South Carolina were actually just Carolina until the British crown split them in two in 1729. The area had originally been fought over between the French, Spanish, and British. The Brits eventually beat them all out and built towns beginning in 1655.

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Now, for the APUSH exam, you are going to want to think about the Southern economy. The area of the Carolinas was actually rather massive, stretching all the way to Florida. But there were no real cities except for Charleston, which became hugely successful because of how close it was to the Caribbean points of trade.

But remember that agriculture was king here. And eventually cotton would come to dominate. North Carolina was filled with smaller, struggling farms that ultimately aimed for survival. But South Carolina had some of the wealthiest colonists in all the 13 colonies. Massive plantations began to develop, with tobacco, indigo, and rice being main products. But cotton soon picked up in popularity and the plantation owners increasingly turned to slaves in order to make immense profits. Slavery was so central to South Carolina's economy that in 1720, 65 percent of the population was enslaved.

### ***Georgia***

Georgia is sort of the odd man out here. The area rested in between Florida and the Carolina, and like we mentioned above, there was a constant struggle going on over the region. This was Georgia for you. It was a battleground and nobody wanted to live there until the British took over and made it a colony in 1732.

But still nobody really wanted to live there, so the British army built a fort and Georgia became sort of a buffer between Spanish Florida and the British 13 colonies. Eventually as the Spanish left North America, Georgia's economy began to mimic that of North and South Carolina—plantations sprouted up as the system of slavery made farmers very wealthy.

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## The Lost Colony

### *Roanoke*

Roanoke was one of the first colonization efforts by the British and if luck had been on its side, you probably would be studying the 14 colonies for your APUSH exam. Sir Walter Raleigh was granted a charter to set up a colony on Roanoke Island in North Carolina and after some fits and starts it was colonized in 1587. It has been called the “Lost Colony” because when resupply ships returned less than five years later, it had been entirely abandoned. To this day, no one is sure what happened.

This is ultimately a fascinating story and one you should be familiar with for you APUSH exam, but the mystery of this is not likely to pop up on test day. What you do want to remember, however, is how willing the British were to get a stronghold set up in the New World. True, this was the Age of Exploration, but Europeans were also looking for wealth. Failures like this (even Jamestown almost starved itself into nonexistence!) prevented neither the monarchy nor the explorers from returning with greater resolve.

## **The 13 Colonies and the Road to Revolution**

OK, so we have shown you in this APUSH review the ways that the three regions that made of the 13 colonies were geographically, culturally, and economically different from one another. But you should have also noticed that there were similarities not only within each region, but between the regions as well. These are the things that explain the origins of the American Revolution—which is pretty much the entire reason for the existence of the United States, and therefore, something you really should get to know for your APUSH exam.

## The Ultimate AP US History Guide to the 13 Colonies Cont.



*Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)*

First, religion played a key role. And in several of the 13 colonies, the idea of religious tolerance was seen as an important asset. Remember, this was a time when religious wars were taking place across Europe. The colonists wanted to escape this for sure.

Second, this was the age of mercantilism. In fact, the main reason for the colonies to have existed was to make profit. So, even though the South increasingly relied on slavery, when the New England colonies did not, profit was still a central goal.

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And third, even though all the colonists were British, they were all starting to get real tired of the crown. The king and queen taxed their businesses, even though they received little in return. They couldn't even vote in English elections, only their own. Which gave them a sense of independence from the crown—something that would keep getting stronger over time.

So, remember these three central themes about the 13 colonies for your upcoming APUSH exam. If you think about all 13 in these terms, you'll get an idea of how different each region was, but also how similar. These are the foundations for both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.

### What You Need to Know for the AP US History Exam

Now that we've got a pretty solid sense of the histories and themes that are important for the 13 colonies, let's take a look at the ways the College Board has looked at the topic in years past.

Here is an example multiple-choice question taken from the [AP US History Course and Exam Description](#) put out by the College Board. Read the excerpt and then answer the question:

“Be it enacted ... That after the five and twentieth day of March, 1698, no goods or merchandises whatsoever shall be imported into, or exported out of, any colony or plantation to his Majesty, in Asia, Africa, or America ... in any ship or bottom, but what is or shall be of the built of England, Ireland, or the said colonies or plantations ... and navigated with the masters and three fourths of the mariners of the said places only ... under pain of forfeiture of ships and goods.” — English Parliament, Navigation Act, 1696.

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1. The excerpt most directly reflects which of the following goals for England's North American colonies?

- (A) Developing them as a producer of manufactured goods
- (B) Aiding them in developing trade with other European nations
- (C) Integrating them into a coherent imperial structure based on mercantilism
- (D) Protecting them from American Indian attacks

If you remember the three main themes that we discussed at the end of this APUSH review on the 13 colonies, you should now know that the answer is C. Remember that this was an age of mercantilism and profit. All the 13 colonies—New England, the Middle, and the South—were concerned with this and this passage proves it.

“Analyze the origins and development of slavery in Britain’s North American colonies in the period 1607 to 1776.”

You now know that the Southern Colonies increasingly relied on cash crops like tobacco, rice, and eventually cotton in order to make profits. This was especially true after Virginia failed extraordinarily at searching for gold and other ways to make a quick buck. These crops were labor intensive, however. But that didn't stop the South from importing numerous slaves from Africa and making themselves rich in the process.

Just remember everything that we have covered in this APUSH review of the 13 colonies and you're sure to get questions like these down for your upcoming AP US History exam!



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