

AP U.S. History Essential Questions

The answers to all of these questions can be found in the textbook. Be sure to thoroughly answer each question and answer each question in at least 1-2 full paragraphs

Chapter 1

1. Discuss the first English attempt to plant a permanent settlement in North America, and explain why that attempt failed.
2. Defend the following statement: "Europeans wanted to extract profits from the New World by exploiting its natural resources, including plants, animals, and peoples alike."

Chapter 2

1. Examine the forces present in English society in the 16th and early 17th centuries that led to English colonization of the New World.
2. Identify the characteristics of most of the indentured servants who immigrated to the Chesapeake in the early 17th century, and explain the type of life that waited them.
3. Examine the similarities and differences between the lifestyle of the Chesapeake colonists and that of the New England colonists around 1640. What accounts for the differences that emerged?
4. Discuss the case of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Why were Williams and Hutchinson perceived as threats by the Puritan authorities?

Chapter 3

1. Describe the impact of the Middle Passage and the impact of that experience on the slave cargo.
2. Discuss the causes and consequences of Bacon's Rebellion.
3. Discuss the economic philosophy of mercantilism, and examine Parliament's attempts to apply mercantilist philosophy to the economic relationship between England and its American colonies.
4. Examine the impact of the introduction of large-scale slavery on the political, social, economic, and cultural development of the South.

Chapter 4

1. Discuss the impact of tobacco cultivation on the social and economic development of the Chesapeake during the early 18th century.
2. Discuss the ideas associated with the Enlightenment, and examine the impact of the Enlightenment on colonial America.
3. What factors gave rise to the Great Awakening? What were its consequences?

Chapter 5

1. Explain the impact of the French and Indian War on interior Indian tribes, the American colonists, and the colonist's relationship with Great Britain.
2. Beginning with the passage of the Townshend Acts in 1767, examine the colonial events that led to the Boston Massacre. Was it truly a "massacre"? Explain. What were the consequences of the "massacre"?
3. Beginning with the passage of the Tea Act in 1773, discuss the events that led to the Boston Tea Party. Was patriot behavior justified, or should it be considered an intemperate act of lawlessness? Explain.

Chapter 6

1. Discuss the content, style, and timing of *Common Sense*.
2. Discuss the impact of the Revolutionary War on the lives of Americans.
3. Discuss the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Paris, and explain the significance of the treaty's provisions.

Chapter 7

1. Much of the debate at the Constitutional Convention focused on 3 critical questions relating to representation in Congress:
 - a. Should representation in both houses of Congress be proportional to population?
 - b. How was representation in either or both houses to be apportioned among the states?
 - c. How were the members of the 2 houses to be elected?Examine how the delegates resolved these questions.

Chapter 8

1. Examine the causes and consequences of the Whiskey Rebellion.
2. Examine and evaluate President John Adam's leadership in the area of foreign policy.
3. Examine the Alien and Sedition Acts, the reasons for their passage, and the reaction of Jefferson and Madison to these acts. Were the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions a proper response to the Alien and Sedition Acts or were they an overreaction? Why?

Chapter 9

1. Defend and offer evidence to support the main idea that John Marshall made the Supreme Court the third coequal branch of government. Why was the case of *Marbury v. Madison* so important in this respect?

2. Discuss the factors that led to the Louisiana Purchase. Why was Jefferson reluctant to agree to the purchase? Why did he ultimately agree to it? Why was the purchase significant?
3. CW: Using the War of 1812 as your evidence, submit a report to President Monroe that outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the American military system. Make specific suggestions for improvement.

Chapter 10

1. Why were the years following the War of 1812 termed the Era of Good Feelings? What events ended this era?
2. Why did Thomas Jefferson say that the Missouri statehood issue, “like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror”?
3. Discuss the emergence of the “Cotton South,” and explain the impact of the cotton boom on southern society.
4. Examine the factors that contributed to industrial development in the U.S. between 1816 and 1845.
5. Examine the treatment of American Indian peoples by white Americans from 1816 to 1845. How does this treatment relate to the professed American faith in equality, opportunity, and constitutional government?

Chapter 11

1. Discuss Andrew Jackson’s political, social, and economic beliefs, and explain how those beliefs are reflected in his actions and policies as president.
2. Discuss the confrontation between the federal government and South Carolina over the issue of state versus national sovereignty. How was the issue resolved and with what consequences?

Chapter 12

1. What factors explain the massive increase in immigration to the U.S. between 1820 and 1860? What impact did this immigration have on the U.S.?
2. Discuss the role of women within the family and within American society in the mid 19th century.
3. Examine the position of free blacks in American society before the Civil War. How did blacks attempt to deal with their status?

Chapter 13

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between the North and the South in the period from 1830 to 1860?
2. Discuss the conditions under which slaves lived, worked, ate, and slept on a typical southern plantation.
3. Examine the nature and extent of slave resistance. What was the primary objective of most modes of resistance?
4. Examine the political, social, and economic impact of slavery on southern society.

Chapter 14

1. Discuss the sectional disputes that led to the Compromise of 1850. How was the compromise reached? What were its provisions? What were its results?
2. Discuss the provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and explain the far-reaching consequences of its passage in 1854.
3. Explain the implications of the *Dred Scott* decision for African Americans and for the expansion of slavery into the territories.

Chapter 15

1. Examine the social, political, and economic impact of the Civil War on the South and its people.
2. Examine the social, political, and economic impact of the Civil War on the North and its people.
3. Analyze the Emancipation Proclamation in light of the following thesis statement: "As a moral and legal document the Emancipation Proclamation was wanting, but as a political document it was nearly flawless."
4. Discuss the cost and effects of the Civil War.
5. Discuss the major factors that led to northern victory in the Civil War.
6. Discuss the North's military strategy during the Civil War and identify the battles that represented important turning points in the war.

Chapter 16

1. The Reconstruction Era is generally divided into 2 phases, the presidential phase lasting from 1865 to 1867 and the congressional phase stretching from 1867-1876. Citing specific programs and policies, indicate how the 2 phases differed.
2. Examine the social, political, and economic policies of the Reconstruction governments in the South. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these policies? Explain the extent to which southern society was changed by these policies.

3. After the Civil War the nation committed itself to equality for the freedmen through law and constitutional amendment. Discuss the forces and events that caused the nation to abandon this commitment during the subsequent years.

Chapter 17

1. Discuss the features of the United States government's reservation policy and explain the consequences of this policy.
2. Discuss the characteristics of the natural-resource frontier and the methods used by developers to gain land and extraction rights. What role did the federal government play in the development of this frontier?
3. Discuss the expansion of America's railroad system in the late 19th century, and examine the impact of this expansion on the American economy and on American concepts of time and space.
4. Examine the characteristics of life on the Great Plains in the late 1800s. What developments ultimately helped to alleviate the hardships of Plains settlers?

Chapter 18

1. Discuss the contributions of technology and science to industrial growth in the U.S.
2. Explain and evaluate Henry Ford's contribution to manufacturing and to labor-management relations.
3. Discuss the arguments advanced by those who opposed Social Darwinism and laissez-faire capitalism.

Chapter 20

1. Discuss the characteristics of American politics and of the two major political parties during the Gilded Age.
2. Discuss the characteristics of the crop-lien system, and explain the system's impact on poor southern farmers.

Chapter 21

1. Discuss the political reforms sought by progressives. What were these political reforms supposed to accomplish? How successful were they in practice?
2. Compare and contrast the approaches of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois to the problems faced by African Americans during the Progressive Era. To what extent were these approaches successful?
3. Examine and evaluate Theodore Roosevelt's domestic accomplishments as president. Should he be regarded as a genuine reformer? Explain.

Chapter 22

1. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Hawaiian crisis of the 1890s.
2. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Venezuelan crisis of 1895.
3. Examine and evaluate American policy toward the Philippines from 1898 to 1916.
4. Examine and evaluate American policy toward China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
5. Examine the domestic sources of American expansionism and imperialism in the late 19th century.

Chapter 23

1. Discuss the various factors that prevented America from remaining truly neutral during the First World War, and explain how British and German naval policies eventually drew the U.S. into the conflict.
2. Examine the impact of the First World War on American women.
3. Outline the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, and explain the similarities and differences between the treaty and Wilson's 14 Points.

Chapter 24

1. Discuss the impact of the automobile on the American family, the American economy, and American values during the 1920s.
2. Discuss the leisure-time activities of Americans during the 1920s.
3. Discuss the impact of Prohibition on Americans and their society during the 1920s, and explain the failure of the "noble experiment."

Chapter 25

1. Explain why conservative and radical opposition developed toward the First New Deal by 1934, and discuss the ideas expressed by those voicing such opinions.
2. Discuss the legacy of the New Deal.

Chapter 27

1. Discuss the strategy undertaken by American forces in the Pacific theater, and explain how that strategy carried America to victory over Japan in WWII.
2. Explain the contributions made by women in the war work force, and describe the response of the public to their efforts.
3. Discuss the impact of WWII on the American economy.
4. Discuss the nature and purpose of the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. How did the Supreme Court respond to the policy?

5. Examine the Yalta Conference in terms of the goals of each of the Allies, the constraints that operated to prevent each from attaining its goals, and the strengths and weaknesses of the final agreement.

Chapter 28

1. Discuss the sources of international tension in the aftermath of WWII, and explain how the goals and policies of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. clashed and led to the Cold War.
2. Explain the containment policy and its implementation by President Truman.
3. Discuss the objectives of the U.S. in launching the Marshall Plan, and assess the extent to which those objectives were achieved.
4. Discuss the origins of the Korean War, and examine the war's impact on domestic policies and U.S. foreign policy.

Chapter 30

1. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and assess President John F. Kennedy's handling of the crisis.
2. Discuss President Johnson's Great Society program. What were its accomplishments? What were its failings?
3. Explain how and why the U.S. had become so deeply involved with the defense of South Vietnam by the time of President Kennedy's assassination in 1963.
4. Write an overview of American involvement in Vietnam during the Johnson administration, using as your main theme the idea that fear of failure was the driving force behind the policy.

Chapter 31

1. Explain the idea of affirmative action and discuss the successes and failures of the use of this idea to solve the problems of discrimination and inequality in American society.
2. Examine the course of the Vietnam War under President Nixon, and explain the debate in the U.S. over the meaning of the American experience in Vietnam.
3. Explain the objectives of détente, and discuss how successful Nixon and Kissinger were in achieving those objectives.
4. Explain the foreign policy objectives of the Carter administration, and discuss how successful President Carter was in achieving those objectives.
5. Examine the Iranian hostage crisis and explain the impact of the crisis on the Carter presidency.
6. Discuss how and why Jimmy Carter's presidency fell short of its initial promise. What were Carter's most significant accomplishments? What were his shortcomings?

Chapter 32

1. Examine the resurgence of conservatism in American society in the 1970s and 1980s, and discuss the goals of economic and social conservatives. Were the conservatives successful in achieving their goals? Explain.
2. Examine Ronald Reagan's economic policies and their impact on American society. What were the successes of his economic policies? What were the shortcomings or failings?
3. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Persian Gulf War.

Chapter 33

1. Discuss the social and economic problems faced by the Clinton administration, and explain the administration's response to those problems.
2. Discuss the emergence of ethnic wars in the Balkans, and explain the Clinton administration's response and the consequences of that response.
3. Explain the causes and consequences of the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon.
4. Explain the Bush administration's policy of preemptive action, and discuss the domestic and international debate generated by the adoption of this policy.
5. Examine the causes and consequences of the 2003 war against Iraq.