

The Making of a Super Power, USA 1865-1975.

Private Study and Deeper Learning Guide.



Unit 1 Breadth Study for AQA A-Level History

The Making of a Super Power, USA 1865 - 1985

The following guide provides a number of ways for you to maximise and deepen your learning in your A-level History Unit on the History of the USA 1865-1975. Many of these tasks should be completed in Private Study (PS) in addition to any homework tasks you have been set. You can use the core textbook and other key books available in the school library, as well as the following websites, to support you.

<http://spartacus-educational.com/USA.htm> - Useful summaries and overviews. Some good sources too.

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/index.asp> - Good range of summaries and articles.

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/> - Good basic overviews.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/> - Fantastic website on early Race Relations/Civil Rights.

<http://millercenter.org/president> - Excellent summaries of each President and their actions.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/as-and-a-level/history-7041-7042/teaching-resources>

AQA Exam Board link to materials such as course specification, past papers etc.

Key Topics Studied

- Civil War and Reconstruction c.1865-1877.
- The American West c.1865-c.1900.
- The Gilded Age
- Populism and Progressivism
- Foreign policy c.1865-1921
- The Roaring 1920s
- The Crash and Depression 1929 – 1932
- The New Deal and the 1930s
- Foreign Policy 1921-WWII
- The Early Cold War 1945-1960
- Government and Society 1945-1975
- The Cold War 1960-75

CORE PS TASK – As you complete each topic make sure your notes are organised and up to date in your folder under the headings to the left.

CORE PS TASK - As you complete each topic produce a summary diagram for each one covering the key ideas, events and details from that topic/period.

Useful Revision Extension –. You could also create sets of revision cards covering the key events and case studies from each Topic.

Key Themes Across the Whole Period

- Political developments – How did governments and political parties change and develop?
- How did the USA change and develop socially?
- How did the USA change and develop economically?
- How did the USA's role in World Affairs develop and change?
- How united was the USA over the period 1865-1975?
- How did ideas and ideology change and develop in the USA 1865-1975?

CORE PS TASK – For each of the above areas you might like to make and keep up to date a chronology of relevant developments for each theme. If you do this as you go along it will aid your revision and deepen your understanding of the bigger themes that run across the smaller topics we break the unit into. **Extension Task** – You could also turn the Chronologies into Living Graphs visually showing the extent of each change and development over the period 1865-1975.

Date and Development/Event	Brief Description	Impact/Importance?

Going Deeper – PS Tasks to extend and deepen your Knowledge

Whilst studying in each unit try to complete as many of the PS tasks set below as possible. You may also like to dip into the recommended reading to gain a sense of the historian's opinion on the topic and some extra depth/detail to your understanding.

Civil War and Reconstruction c.1865-1877.

1. Research the causes of the Civil War and consider the question was it a war about race and equality? Pages 17-22 of Race Relations in the USA will help with this.
2. Research the role of Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War. What does their experience tell us about the role and experience of Black Soldiers in the Civil War?
3. Read the Chapter in Race Relations in the USA, especially, pages 22-35 on the impact of Reconstruction. Create pros/cons chart on the 'success' of Reconstruction.
4. Read 31-33 Race Relations in the USA What are different historians views of reconstruction – which view to you most agree with? Why?
5. *Read Battle Cry of Freedom by James M. Macpherson (Conclusion).*
6. *Read We Ain't What We Ought To Be by S. Tuck (Chapters 1 and 2).*
7. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
8. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

The American West c.1865-c.1900

1. Research or discuss with another pupil who studied the SHP course for GCSE why the USA expanded into the west. Consider the role of Manifest Destiny, the need for resources (gold/cow towns/homesteaders etc.) and the search for political/religious freedom. Summarise notes on these.
2. Research Native American culture and how Native Americans were able to survive on the Plains.
3. Research the impact of the Indian Wars on the Native American People and the significance of the Battle of the Little Bighorn .
4. Research a case study of how an Indian Group was moved onto a reservation and the impact this had.
5. Research the Impact of the Railroad on opening up the and changing the West.
6. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
7. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

The Gilded Age

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
2. Research and create profiles of some of the Robber Barons of the era.
3. Create a diagram showing how on the surface this was a Gilded Age but underneath America had many issues.
4. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.
5. *Research the life and impact of Ida B. Wells on Black Civil Rights.*
6. *Consider how much progress social groups such as Immigrants and Black Americans had made by 1900?*

Populism and Progressivism

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
2. Read Chapter 3 Race Relations in the USA by Sanders and make notes on the how much progress was made by Black Americans in this era.
3. How successful was Theodore Roosevelt?
4. Does Wilson deserve to be called a Progressive?
5. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

Foreign policy c.1865-1921

1. Create a chronology of key events in foreign policy in this era.
2. Look into the following events in more depth and create a series of case studies on some of the following: US policy in Hawaii, The Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Panama. The Spanish American War. The nature of relations with Japan.
3. Research and explain how significant the role of the USA was in WWI on the Western Front.
4. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

The Roaring 1920s

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
2. Create a case study of the growth and impact of the Ford Motor Company.
3. Create a profile of a 1920s Flapper.
4. Use the PBS Jim Crow website to research the experience of Black's in the 1920s.
5. Look into the story of Al Capone and Elliott Ness. Consider what the story suggests about the failure of Prohibition, the issues it created and how successfully it was enforced.
6. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

The Crash and Depression 1929 – 1932

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
2. Write a Newspaper Style Article explaining why the Wall Street Crash took place.
3. Create some case studies on the impact of the depression i.e. what the 'Dust Bowl', what was the song 'bro' can you spare a dime' about?
4. Is it fair to view Hoover as failure? Research and analyse this statement.
5. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.
6. You may like to read sections from Prosperity, Depression and the New Deal by Clements.

The New Deal and the 1930s

1. Research and create a profile of FDR.
2. Create some case studies of the pros and cons of some New Deal Agencies i.e. the TVA, CCC etc.
3. Research and explain why some of the legislation of the 2nd New Deal was struck down and what FDR threatened to do about it.
4. Read chapter 4.6 Race Relations in the USA by Sanders to make notes on the how much the New Deal aided Black Americans.
5. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

Foreign Policy 1921-WWII

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements.
2. Research and explain the role of the USA in WWII in Africa, Asia and Europe.
3. Research and explain why the USA dropped Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. You may like to read Hiroshima by Jim Kersey.
4. Research why so many Americans were against US involvement in WWII.
5. Consider whether you think Roosevelt was a 'pro-war' President.
6. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

The Early Cold War 1945-1960

1. Research and create profiles of the Key President's and their actions/achievements in the Cold War.
2. Create fact files of the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, the Berlin Blockade, The Marshall Plan and the Warsaw Pact. Focus also on their impact on relations between Russia and the USA.
3. Read and make notes on Chapters 2 and 3 of The USA and Cold War by Edwards. Consider how responsible the USA was for starting the Cold War and How successful Containment had been by 1949.
4. Read the Coldest Winter by David Halberstam on Korea or sections from the Korean War by Peter Lowe. Focus your notes on its causes and the impact.
5. Watch the documentary Twentieth Century Battlefields, Korea, with Dan Snow. Make notes on the causes, key turning points and impact of the war.
6. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

Government and Society 1945-1975

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements domestically.
2. Research and make notes on American social and economic development in the 1950s in greater depth i.e. role of TV and Cinema, role of the automotive industry, 1950s popular culture etc.
3. Read chapters 5 and 6 of Race Relations in the USA or watch the Eyes on the Prize series. Make notes on the key steps forward that helped develop Civil Rights. You might also like to consider how successful the Civil Rights Movement was – what issues remained post 1965?
4. You may like to also read extracts from We Ain't What We Ought to be by Tuck and summarise his views on the developments of Civil Rights in the 1950s/60s locally, nationally and globally.
5. Read chapter 9.6 of Race Relations and make notes on the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Native Americans.
6. Using the following website analyse in a pros/cons table how successful Eisenhower was as President.
<http://millercenter.org/president/biography/eisenhower-domestic-affairs>
7. Research and summarise Truman's Fair Deal, JFK's New Frontier and Johnson's Great Society. Consider why they all failed to achieve their aims in the 1950s and 1960s.
8. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

The Cold War 1960-75

1. Research and create profiles of the President's of this era and their key actions/achievements in the Cold War.
2. Read sections from The Vietnam War by Hall and/or Watch the documentary Twentieth Century Battlefields, Vietnam, with Dan Snow. Make notes its causes, key turning points and impact of the war.
3. You may like to also read 13 Days which is Bobby Kennedy's account of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
4. We Were Soldiers Once and Young by Hal Moore is a gripping account of the Ia Draang Battle in the Vietnam War and makes a great case study of the issues the US faced in the war.
5. Create a topic summary and revision flash cards.

A few good textbooks...

- The Making of a Super Power, USA 1865-75 by Waugh*
- Race Relations in the USA 1863-1980 by Sanders*
- Prosperity, Depression and the New Deal by Clements.
- The USA and the Cold War 1945-63 by Edwards*
- Mastering Modern United States History by Traynor.
- The Limits of Liberty 1607 – 1992 by Jones.
- The Korean War by Lowe*
- The Vietnam War by Hall*

* **Available in the library!**

A few recommended reads...

- Battle Cry of Freedom, Macpherson.
- We Ain't What We Ought to Be, Tuck.
- Hiroshima, Kersey
- The Coldest Winter, Halberstam
- Thirteen Days, Kennedy
- We Were Soldiers, Hal Moore

Filmography and Literature Links

The below are films you could watch to extend your understanding of the period. For each one you will need to consider what it says about the period it was filmed in i.e. what can we learn about Hollywood's and public attitudes from it? Secondly where it is based on real events how accurate is it – what was the real story.

Birth of a Nation and the Klansman – NB. These films are have an inherently racist portrayal of Black Americans and glorify the Klu Klux Klan. Why might this be?

Gone with the Wind (First Black Oscar for best supporting female actor) – How is the South portrayed? Is this a fair interpretation?

Glory (First Black Oscar for best supporting male actor) – This is based on the memoirs of Robert Gould Shaw. Is it accurate portrayal of Black Americans role in the war?

Lincoln – Was he the Great Emancipator?

12 Years a Slave – Is this a good portrayal of the institution of slavery?

How the West was Won – What reasons/themes does it cover? Is it an accurate reflection of the period?

Dances with Wolves – How does this film show the changing view of Native Americans and their culture?

The Great Gatsby – What were the strengths and weaknesses of 1920s American Society?

The Untouchables – Was Prohibition a success? Is this a fair portrayal of the work of Elliott Ness and his team?

Men of Honor – Did desegregating the military work? What does the real experience of Carl Bashir tell us?

Pearl Harbour – A fair account of the attack ? Research the role played by Cuba Gooding junior – why is it significant?

Band of Brothers – What role did this unit play in WWII?

Guess who is coming to dinner – What is significant about the role of Sydney Poitier in this film?

Rebel without a cause – What does this film reveal about tensions in American Society in the 1950s?

The Butler – An accurate account of Civil Rights history?

Remember the Titans -

Mississippi Burning – What is significant about the fact the lead roles are white? Why was this film ground breaking?

Coach Carter – How far have racial tensions been resolved in modern America? What did the real coach Carter do?

Shaft (the original!) – Why was this a significant film for Black Cinema?

JFK – A fair portrayal of JFK's assassination or just another conspiracy theory?

Thirteen Days – An accurate account?

We were Soldiers – An accurate account of the experience of Colonel Hal Moore?

Platoon - What does this film reflect about attitudes to the Vietnam War?

NB. These are not tasks for PS they need a big screen and plenty of pop corn!

A few Literature Links...

- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- *Gone with the Wind*
- *The Great Gatsby*
- *A Street Car named Desire*
- *Catcher in the Rye*
- *Grapes of Wrath*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*