

AP[®] United States History

Syllabus 2

The AP[®] United States History course might best be described as “traditional plus.” It meets five times per week for 41 minutes each day, and it relies primarily on the developmental lesson, daily homework, quizzes, and multiple-choice and essay exams.

To this basic framework, a variety of activities—centered on the use of and analysis of documents and other primary sources—has been added. In the first term especially, small-group activities called “document shuffles” are frequently used—with each group given the same set of documents and the same “task” to perform with them. In the second term, full class analysis of documents clustered around a theme and individual written analysis of documents used in homework quizzes replace the “shuffles.”

Training students to handle the free-response section of the AP Exam in May provides the focus for the writing component of the course. Students are required, early in the year, to do four take-home document-based questions (DBQs) and later to write four in-class essays and DBQs—usually after preparing for any of three assigned topics for each essay. Much attention is paid to this process. Entire periods are devoted to the return of graded essays, discussions of the most common positive and negative aspects of each set, and the distribution of examples of well-done essays, etc.

Course Materials

The course’s basic text is *America: Past and Present* (New York: Longman, 2006), written by Robert A. Divine, et al. Some other works consulted for handouts to accompany daily lessons and to produce homework assignments and DBQs are listed below and are referred to in abbreviated form throughout the syllabus.

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004)

John Garraty, *Historical Viewpoints* (New York: Longman, 2002)

Nancy Hewitt, *Women, Families, and Communities* (New York: Longman, 1997)

Gary B. Nash and Ronald Schultz, *Retracing the Past*, Volumes 1 and 2 (New York: Longman, 2005)

Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005)

A variety of AP-level textbooks are also used, as well as a similar series produced by Holt, Rinehart and Winston and Little, Brown and Company. A subscription to American Heritage magazine has proved to be a fertile source of face-to-face teaching materials as well.

Major Themes of the Course

These themes are woven throughout unit discussions, with assessments (quizzes, essays, and exams) being structured around them:

America on a World Stage

National Identity and Citizenship

Political Change and Continuity

Pluralism and Group Identity

Free Markets and Economic Transformation [CR5]

CR5—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course uses themes and/or topics as broad parameters for structuring the course.

Curriculum Calendar

Unit 1: Colonial History to 1763

The first part of the course is handled by assigning students a series of tasks to complete over the summer vacation, including:

- Reading and note-taking for Chapters 2, 3, and 4 in the Divine textbook and the completion of questions in the text’s workbook for those chapters as well.
- The completion of a “colonial newspaper.” Students are provided with newsprint and assigned to create their own newspaper with hard news articles on a variety of colonies. Students are also required to include typical features such as interviews, editorials, advertisements, letters to the editor, and cartoons. The content should approximate the style and contents of a modern newspaper as closely as possible but be based only on information from the colonial period.
- Reading and not-taking on scholarly monographs from colonial history; maps, charts, and data on colonial settlement patterns

The first seven classes of the school year are devoted to a debriefing period that includes an exam on the Divine reading, quizzes on the articles, the collection and display of the newspapers, and discussions centered on sets of documents gathered around each of four major colonial history themes: the Salem witch trials, Puritan beliefs, differences in colonial regional development, and the African American experience in colonial America. Students are introduced in these lessons to the concepts of categorizing documents, recognizing bias in documents, and gleaning historical evidence from documents. [CR7] An essay interpreting the documents in context concludes the unit. [CR8]

CR7—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes extensive instruction in analysis and interpretation of a wide variety of primary sources.

CR8- Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course provides students with frequent practice in writing analytical and interpretive essays such as document-based questions and thematic essays.

Unit 2: The American Revolution (1763–1783)

Required Reading:

- Chapter 5 in Divine
- “The Revolution as a Social Movement” by J. Franklin Jameson [CR6]
- The Declaration of Independence

Key Discussion Topics: The origins of resistance; the British response; the decision for independence; the military course of the war; and peace negotiations.

CR6—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course teaches students to analyze evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship.

Special Activities:

- “Who Fired That Shot?”—a class analysis and discussion based on eyewitness accounts of hostilities at Lexington and Concord.
- Document Shuffle—the causes of the American Revolution from British, American, and Tory perspectives. In these small-group sessions, groups of four or five students are provided with a packet of 12 to 15 documents, a large piece of newsprint, a glue stick, and a marker. Each group is asked to distribute the documents equitably, determine the “document messages,” deciphering the categories into which the documents fall, and submit a group report on the newsprint. [CR7] Variations on this activity include requiring students to provide outside information related to some of the documents, including an “oddball” document that does not fit with the remaining documents.
- First Writing Assignment—Students are given the documents and questions from the “old-style” Wethersfield DBQ and are asked to respond, using only the documents, in a paper of 750 words or less. (For this first attempt, analysis of the documents begins in class.)

CR7—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes extensive instruction in analysis and interpretation of a wide variety of primary sources.

Unit 3: The Republican Experiment (1781–1789)

Required Reading:

- Chapter 6 in Divine
- “Shays’ Rebellion” by Alden T. Vaughn in *Historical Viewpoints* [CR6]
- Secondary sources on the antifederalists
- Maps and charts on sources of federalist, antifederalist support

Key Discussion Topics: The structure of the government under the Articles of Confederation; weaknesses and accomplishments of the Articles’ government; foreign affairs in the Confederation period; the nationalist critique and the role of Hamilton and Madison; the Constitutional Convention; and the debate over ratification. [CR1]

CR1—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of political institutions in U.S. history.

Special Activities: Document shuffle entitled “Feds vs. Antifeds”—all documents used here are contemporary letters to newspapers during the ratification debate.

Unit 4: The Federalist Era (1788-1800)

Required Reading:

- Chapter 7 in Divine
- “America, France, and their Revolutions” in *Historical Viewpoints*

Key Discussion Topics: The new government’s structure; an overview of the Constitution of 1787; Hamilton versus Jefferson; the rise of political parties; foreign affairs with Great Britain, France, and Spain; the “Revolution of 1800”

Special Activities:

- Document shuffle entitled “Hamilton vs. Jefferson—the Spectrum of Disagreement” using reader documents
- Second take-home DBQ—Students are asked to compare the relative effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy toward Great Britain and France under Washington and Adams versus under Jefferson and Madison (1800–1815) [CR7]

CR7—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes extensive instruction in analysis and interpretation of a wide variety of primary sources.

Unit 5: Republicans in Power (1801–1828)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 8 and 9 in Divine
- “Tecumseh, the Shawnee Prophet and American History” in *Retracing the Past* [CR6]

Key Discussion Topics: Jefferson’s imprint; causes and results of the “strange” War of 1812; [CR3] nationalism cum sectionalism; the demise of the Federalists and the rise of the two-party system; and the early Industrial Revolution.

Special Activity: Document shuffle—recognizing and differentiating among aspects of nationalism and sectionalism.

CR6—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course teaches students to analyze evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship.

CR3—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of diplomacy in U.S. history.

Unit 6: The Jacksonian Era (1828–1840)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 10 and 11 in Divine
- “Building a Community of Labor: Women, Work and Protest in Lowell” in *Women, Families, and Communities*
- “Was Jackson Wise to Dismantle the Bank?” in *Historical Viewpoints*

Key Discussion Topics: Mass democracy; Jackson versus Calhoun; the Bank War; the Indian removal; the rise of the working class; the Whig alternative; and the reformist “benevolent empire.”

Special Activity: The third take-home DBQ the College Board’s 1990 Jackson DBQ. [CR8]

CR8—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course provides students with frequent practice in writing analytical and interpretive essays such as document-based questions and thematic essays.

Unit 7: Manifest Destiny and the Mexican War

Required Reading:

- Chapter 12 in *Divine*
- Chapter 8 in *A People's History of the United States*

Key Discussion Topics: O'Sullivan's phrase — "Young America" — the lure of the West (1820–1840); Texas, New Mexico, Utah, and Oregon; Polk and war with Mexico; and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Special Activity: Final take-home DBQ—The causes of the Mexican–American war.

Unit 8: The Slave System and the Coming of the Civil War

Required Reading:

- Chapters 13, 14, 15 in *Divine*
- Secondary-source readings on slavery and abolition
- "Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Social Status in the Antebellum Plantation South" in *Women, Families, and Communities*

Key Discussion Topics: The "peculiar institution" and its impact on the South; "Helperism;" abolitionism and North–South relations; [CR2] the turbulent 1850s; "Free Soil" Republicanism; Lincoln; and secession.

CR2—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of social and cultural developments in U.S. history.

Special Activities:

- Document Shuffle in which groups categorize the same set of documents from the points of view of assigned personalities—John Brown, Hinton Helper, Stephen A. Douglas, Frederick Douglass, President Buchanan.
- First in-class DBQ — Five documents, 40 Minutes — "Radicals in both the North and South made the Civil War inevitable by 1861."

Unit 9: The Civil War and Reconstruction (1861–1877)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 15 and 16 in *Divine*
- "Freed Women?" by Jacqueline Joves in *Women, Families, and Communities*
- "Why They Impeached Andrew Johnson" by David Donald in *Historical Viewpoints*

- “The View from the Bottom Rail” in *After the Fact*

Key Discussion Topics: The South’s chance of victory; a question of leadership; Lincoln versus Davis; emancipation; the military course of the war in brief; Reconstruction; the sharecropping system; the “crime” of ’76; and the Compromise of 1877.

Special Activities:

- Review Document Shuffle—Student groups are asked to categorize documents representing a series of events of the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s through the eyes of a freedman, a Ku Klux Klan member, Andrew Johnson, Thaddeus Stevens, and W. E. B. Du Bois. [CR7]
- Maps and charts on Southern agriculture patterns
- First in-class non-DBQ free-response essay — Students are given three topics to research over the holiday vacation and will be asked to answer an essay question based on one of them on their first first day back from vacation. The topics usually are review topics selected from major events as early as the Revolutionary period.

CR7—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes extensive instruction in analysis and interpretation of a wide variety of primary sources.

Unit 10: The Gilded Age (1865-1900)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 17, 18, 19, and 20 in *Divine*
- “Robber Barons and Rebels” in Chapter 11 of *A People’s History*

Key Discussion Topics: Settling the West: a question of exploitation; laissezfaire and social Darwinism; the rise of the industrialists; labor’s response; urbanization; immigration and “Tweedism”; the “Social Gospel” [CR2]; the politics of the 1890s: big government Republicans and the Populists.

CR2—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of social and cultural developments in U.S. history.

Special Activity: Document Shuffle—Events of the Gilded Age as seen through the eyes of Bryan, Coxey, and Debs.

Mid-year Exam

Our mid-year exam is part academic, part social, and part “trial run” for the actual AP Examination in May. Its format is exactly the same as the May exam except that it covers material only to the year 1900 or so. The exam is given in the library (where the May exam will be administered) and is interrupted after the multiple-choice portion for a dinner prepared by the instructor. Essays and DBQs are the “dessert.” Topics reflect the themes of the course laid out on page 1.

Unit 11: The Progressive Era (1900-1917)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 22 and 23 in *Divine*

- “The Fight for Woman’s Suffrage: An Interview with Alice Paul” in *Historical Viewpoints*
- “The Socialist Challenge” in *A People’s History*

Key Discussion Topics: Progressivism: a ferment of ideas; the “muckrakers”; “trustbusting”; the “Social Justice” movement; the “Purity” crusade; state and local reforms; women’s suffrage; the progressive presidents — Teddy Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson; the “Square Deal” and the “New Freedom.”

Unit 12: Foreign Policy (1898–1920)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 21 and 24 in *Divine*
- “The Needless War with Spain” in *Historical Viewpoints*

Key Discussion Topics: The imperialist arguments; war with Spain and the Philippine institution; Teddy Roosevelt; the corollary and Panama; “Dollar Diplomacy”; moral diplomacy; neutrality (1914-1917); “Over There”; “Over Here”; and the treaty controversy. [CR3]

CR3—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of diplomacy in U.S. history.

Special Activity: In-class DBQ—40 minutes using the DBQ from the AP Exam in 1991. [CR8]

CR8- Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course provides students with frequent practice in writing analytical and interpretive essays such as document-based questions and thematic essays.

Unit 13: The Roaring '20s

Required Reading:

- Chapter 25 in *Divine*
- “Sacco and Vanzetti: The Case of History vs. Laws” in *After the Fact*

Key Discussion Topics: Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover: “Republican Orthodoxy”; normalcy; the “Red Scare”; immigration legislation; the “new” Ku Klux Klan; the Harlem Renaissance and Countee Cullen; the crash of the stock market and the onset of the Great Depression; and Hoover and Voluntarism.

Special Activity: Document Shuffle in which groups are asked to categorize documents representing key issues of the 1920s from either a “traditional rural” or “modern urban” point of view.

Unit 14: The Great Depression (1929–1940)

Required Reading:

- Chapter 26 in *Divine*
- Twelve readings from the Golden Owl Publishing Company’s *Jackdaw* entitled “The New Deal,” which include all six “Broadsheet” essays on various aspects of the Depression and New Deal as well as the transcript

of a “fireside chat,” a speech by Huey Long, and entries from Harry Hopkins’s diary, among other items.

Key Discussion Topics: The origins and effects of the Great Depression; [CR4] Hoover’s “Voluntarism” approach; Franklin Roosevelt and the “Hundred Days”; relief, recovery, and reform; critics of the New Deal — the “Economic Royalists” on the right and Long, Townsend, and Coughlin; the Supreme Court fight and the end of the New Deal.

CR4—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of economic trends in U.S. history.

Special Activities:

- Small-group Document Shuffle entitled: “The New Deal: Measures and Criticisms.”
- In-class DBQ using the documents and question from the 1984 AP Exam which asked students to characterize FDR and Hoover in terms of the labels of “liberal” and “conservative.”

Unit 15: America and the World (1921–1945)

Required Reading:

- Chapter 27 in Divine.
- A packet of op-ed and magazine pieces collected during the year 1995 leading up to the fiftieth anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and reflecting the disagreement over whether the bombings were justified

Key Discussion Topics: Isolationism, pacifism, and neutrality and their ramifications for U.S. policy in Europe, Latin America, and Asia during the 1920s and early 1930s; neutrality legislation of the 1930s; undeclared war in Europe and the course of U.S.–Japanese relations in the late 1930s; Pearl Harbor; halting the German blitz; turning the tide in the Pacific and the decision to drop the A-bomb; [CR3] the war on the home front; wartime diplomacy.

CR3—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of diplomacy in U.S. history.

Special Activity: Debate—Resolved: “Harry S. Truman was a War Criminal.”

Unit 16: Truman, Ike, and JFK: The Cold Warriors (1945–1963)

Required Reading:

- Chapters 28 and 30 in Divine

Key Discussion Topics: Cold War in Europe; the beginning of atomic diplomacy; containment (Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, NATO); crisis in Berlin; the Cold War expands: the loss of China and the Korean War; the Cold War at home: McCarthyism; Ike, Dulles, and the Cold War in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin

America; JFK and “flexible response”; the Second Berlin Crisis; the Cuban missile crisis.

Special Activity: In-class review essay. Students are given three topics to review over a weekend and write a non-DBQ essay on one of them. Review topics: The Great Depression and the New Deal; isolationism, neutrality, and World War II.

Unit 17: From the Fair Deal to the Great Society: The Triumph of Reform (1945–1968)

Required Reading:

- Chapter 29 in Divine
- “Desegregating the Schools” by Liva Barker in *Historical Viewpoints*

Key Discussion Topics: The postwar economic boom and the rise of the suburbs; did the 1950s represent the true “good life”?; [CR4] the civil rights struggle; the New Frontier; the Warren court; and the Great Society’s War on Poverty.

Special Activity: Over a weekend, students are given short biographical sketches of 10 important historical figures from the 1950s and 1960s. They are also given 10 quotations taken from the writing and speeches of the same 10 figures. The students’ assignment is to write a paper of two to three pages attributing the quotes to the proper author and explaining why the attributions are the correct ones. The task is made more difficult by the inclusion of people with fairly similar views, such as Thurgood Marshall and Earl Warren.

CR4—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of economic trends in U.S. history.

Unit 18: Protest and Turmoil: Vietnam and Watergate

Required Reading:

- Chapters 30 and 31 in Divine
- “Instant Watergate: Footnoting the Final Days” in *After the Fact*

Key Discussion Topics: Involvement and escalation in Vietnam; Vietnam dilemma and stalemate; the student revolt; Black Power and Women’s Lib; the election of 1968; Nixon, Kissinger — ending the Vietnam War; the election of 1972; and Watergate.

Special Activity: In-class practice DBQ using the DBQ from the May 1995 AP Exam to review the past two units. [CR8]

Unit 19: Malaise: Ford, and Carter in the Seventies

Required Reading:

- Chapter 32 in Divine

CR8- Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course provides students with frequent practice in writing analytical and interpretive essays such as document-based questions and thematic essays.

Key Discussion Topics: OPEC and the oil shock; inflation and the new economy; the start of affirmative action; setbacks and gains for women; the election of 1976; Carter; [CR1] Sadat; Khomeini; and disillusionment and the renewed Cold War.

CR1—Evidence of Curricular Requirement: The course includes the study of political institutions in U.S. history.

Special Activity: Document shuffle in which groups are asked to differentiate among statements and policies of the two one-term presidents of the 1970s—Ford and Carter.

Unit 20: A 10-Day Review for the AP U.S. History Exam

The two chief aspects of the review period are the assignment of three or four chapters per night for review and a quiz made up of 10–15 multiple-choice questions taken from the 1984 and 1988 exams to be given the next morning, graded immediately, and discussed. For the remaining 25–30 minutes of each class, an essay question or DBQ is placed on the board (selected to dovetail with the previous night’s review chapters), and the class analyzes, brainstorms, and outlines an answer to it.

After the exam, the class prepares for the Regents Exam in late June. First, the class studies a series of 10–12 lessons on the Constitution and U.S. government. Finally, the class culminates with practice in answering Regents-style essays.