

Topic Outline

The following topic outline is based on the tables of contents of a representative sample of textbooks used in AP U.S. History courses. The outline is intended as a guide for teachers structuring their courses and for students preparing to take the AP United States History Examination. The outline is not intended in any way to be prescriptive of what AP teachers must teach or AP students must study. It is illustrative only of topics that might appear in any one edition of the examination.

1. *Discovery and Settlement of the New World, 1492–1650*
 - A. Europe in the sixteenth century
 - B. Spanish, English, and French exploration
 - C. First English settlements
 1. Jamestown
 2. Plymouth
 - D. Spanish and French settlements and long-term influence
 - E. American Indians
2. *America and the British Empire, 1650–1754*
 - A. Chesapeake country
 - B. Growth of New England
 - C. Restoration colonies
 - D. Mercantilism; the Dominion of New England
 - E. Origins of slavery
3. *Colonial Society in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*
 - A. Social structure
 1. Family
 2. Farm and town life; the economy
 - B. Culture
 1. Great Awakening
 2. The American mind
 3. “Folkways”
 - C. New immigrants
4. *Road to Revolution, 1754–1775*
 - A. Anglo-French rivalries and Seven Years’ War
 - B. Imperial reorganization of 1763
 1. Stamp Act
 2. Declaratory Act
 3. Townshend Acts
 4. Boston Tea Party
 - C. Philosophy of the American Revolution
5. *The American Revolution, 1775–1783*
 - A. Continental Congress
 - B. Declaration of Independence
 - C. The war
 1. French alliance
 2. War and society; Loyalists
 3. War economy
 - D. Articles of Confederation
 - E. Peace of Paris
 - F. Creating state governments
 1. Political organization
 2. Social reform: women, slavery
6. *Constitution and New Republic, 1776–1800*
 - A. Philadelphia Convention: drafting the Constitution
 - B. Federalists versus Anti-Federalists

- C. Bill of Rights
- D. Washington's presidency
 - 1. Hamilton's financial program
 - 2. Foreign and domestic difficulties
 - 3. Beginnings of political parties
- E. John Adams' presidency
 - 1. Alien and Sedition Acts
 - 2. XYZ affair
 - 3. Election of 1800
- 7. *The Age of Jefferson, 1800–1816*
 - A. Jefferson's presidency
 - 1. Louisiana Purchase
 - 2. Burr conspiracy
 - 3. The Supreme Court under John Marshall
 - 4. Neutral rights, impressment, embargo
 - B. Madison
 - C. War of 1812
 - 1. Causes
 - 2. Invasion of Canada
 - 3. Hartford Convention
 - 4. Conduct of the war
 - 5. Treaty of Ghent
 - 6. New Orleans
- 8. *Nationalism and Economic Expansion*
 - A. James Monroe; Era of Good Feelings
 - B. Panic of 1819
 - C. Settlement of the West
 - D. Missouri Compromise
 - E. Foreign affairs: Canada, Florida, the Monroe Doctrine
 - F. Election of 1824: end of Virginia dynasty
 - G. Economic revolution
 - 1. Early railroads and canals
 - 2. Expansion of business
 - a. Beginnings of factory system
 - b. Early labor movement; women
 - c. Social mobility; extremes of wealth
 - 3. The cotton revolution in the South
 - 4. Commercial agriculture
- 9. *Sectionalism*
 - A. The South
 - 1. Cotton Kingdom
 - 2. Southern trade and industry
 - 3. Southern society and culture
 - a. Gradations of White society
 - b. Nature of slavery: "peculiar institution"
 - c. The mind of the South
 - B. The North
 - 1. Northeast industry
 - a. Labor
 - b. Immigration
 - c. Urban slums
 - 2. Northwest agriculture
 - C. Westward expansion
 - 1. Advance of agricultural frontier

- 2. Significance of the frontier
- 3. Life on the frontier; squatters
- 4. Removal of American Indians
- 10. *Age of Jackson, 1828–1848*
 - A. Democracy and the “common man”
 - 1. Expansion of suffrage
 - 2. Rotation in office
 - B. Second party system
 - 1. Democratic Party
 - 2. Whig Party
 - C. Internal improvements and states’ rights: the Maysville Road veto
 - D. The Nullification Crisis
 - 1. Tariff issue
 - 2. The Union: Calhoun and Jackson
 - E. The Bank War: Jackson and Biddle
 - F. Martin Van Buren
 - 1. Independent treasury system
 - 2. Panic of 1837
- 11. *Territorial Expansion and Sectional Crisis*
 - A. Manifest Destiny and mission
 - B. Texas annexation, the Oregon boundary, and California
 - C. James K. Polk and the Mexican War; slavery and the Wilmot Proviso
 - D. Later expansionist efforts
- 12. *Creating an American Culture*
 - A. Cultural nationalism
 - B. Education reform/professionalism
 - C. Religion; revivalism
 - D. Utopian experiments: Mormons, Oneida Community
 - E. Transcendentalists
 - F. National literature, art, architecture
 - G. Reform crusades
 - 1. Feminism; roles of women in the nineteenth century
 - 2. Abolitionism
 - 3. Temperance
 - 4. Criminals and the insane
- 13. *The 1850’s: Decade of Crisis*
 - A. Compromise of 1850
 - B. Fugitive Slave Act and Uncle Tom’s Cabin
 - C. Kansas-Nebraska Act and realignment of parties
 - 1. Demise of the Whig Party
 - 2. Emergence of the Republican Party
 - D. Dred Scott decision and Lecompton crisis
 - E. Lincoln-Douglas debates, 1858
 - F. John Brown’s raid
 - G. The election of 1860; Abraham Lincoln
 - H. The secession crisis
- 14. *Civil War*
 - A. The Union
 - 1. Mobilization and finance
 - 2. Civil liberties
 - 3. Election of 1864
 - B. The South
 - 1. Confederate constitution

- 2. Mobilization and finance
- 3. States' rights and the Confederacy
- C. Foreign affairs and diplomacy
- D. Military strategy, campaigns, and battles
- E. The abolition of slavery
 - 1. Confiscation Acts
 - 2. Emancipation Proclamation
 - 3. Freedmen's Bureau
 - 4. Thirteenth Amendment
- F. Effects of war on society
 - 1. Inflation and public debt
 - 2. Role of women
 - 3. Devastation of the South
 - 4. Changing labor patterns
- 15. *Reconstruction to 1877*
 - A. Presidential plans: Lincoln and Johnson
 - B. Radical (congressional) plans
 - 1. Civil rights and the Fourteenth Amendment
 - 2. Military reconstruction
 - 3. Impeachment of Johnson
 - 4. African American suffrage: the Fifteenth Amendment
 - C. Southern state governments: problems, achievements, weaknesses
 - D. Compromise of 1877 and the end of Reconstruction
- 16. *New South and the Last West*
 - A. Politics in the New South
 - 1. The Redeemers
 - 2. Whites and African Americans in the New South
 - 3. Subordination of freed slaves: Jim Crow
 - B. Southern economy; colonial status of the South
 - 1. Sharecropping
 - 2. Industrial stirrings
 - C. Cattle kingdom
 - 1. Open-range ranching
 - 2. Day of the cowboy
 - D. Building the Western railroad
 - E. Subordination of American Indians: dispersal of tribes
 - F. Farming the plains; problems in agriculture
 - G. Mining bonanza
- 17. *Industrialization and Corporate Consolidation*
 - A. Industrial growth: railroads, iron, coal, electricity, steel, oil, banks
 - B. Laissez-faire conservatism
 - 1. Gospel of Wealth
 - 2. Myth of the "self-made man"
 - 3. Social Darwinism; survival of the fittest
 - 4. Social critics and dissenters
 - C. Effects of technological development on worker/work-place
 - D. Union movement
 - 1. Knights of Labor and American Federation of Labor
 - 2. Haymarket, Homestead, and Pullman
- 18. *Urban Society*
 - A. Lure of the city
 - B. Immigration
 - C. City problems
 - 1. Slums

- 2. Machine politics
- D. Awakening conscience; reforms
 - 1. Social legislation
 - 2. Settlement houses: Jane Addams and Lillian Wald
 - 3. Structural reforms in government
- 19. *Intellectual and Cultural Movements*
 - A. Education
 - 1. Colleges and universities
 - 2. Scientific advances
 - B. Professionalism and the social sciences
 - C. Realism in literature and art
 - D. Mass culture
 - 1. Use of leisure
 - 2. Publishing and journalism
- 20. *National Politics, 1877–1896: The Gilded Age*
 - A. A conservative presidency
 - B. Issues
 - 1. Tariff controversy
 - 2. Railroad regulation
 - 3. Trusts
 - C. Agrarian discontent
 - D. Crisis of 1890s
 - 1. Populism
 - 2. Silver question
 - 3. Election of 1896: McKinley versus Bryan
- 21. *Foreign Policy, 1865–1914*
 - A. Seward and the purchase of Alaska
 - B. The new imperialism
 - 1. Blaine and Latin America
 - 2. International Darwinism: missionaries, politicians, and naval expansionists
 - 3. Spanish-American War
 - a. Cuban independence
 - b. Debate on Philippines
 - C. The Far East: John Hay and the Open Door
 - D. Theodore Roosevelt
 - 1. The Panama Canal
 - 2. Roosevelt Corollary
 - 3. Far East
 - E. Taft and dollar diplomacy
 - F. Wilson and moral diplomacy
- 22. *Progressive Era*
 - A. Origins of Progressivism
 - 1. Progressive attitudes and motives
 - 2. Muckrakers
 - 3. Social Gospel
 - B. Municipal, state, and national reforms
 - 1. Political: suffrage
 - 2. Social and economic: regulation
 - C. Socialism: alternatives
 - D. Black America
 - 1. Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey
 - 2. Urban migration
 - 3. Civil rights organizations

- E. Women's role: family, work, education, unionization, and suffrage
- F. Roosevelt's Square Deal
 - 1. Managing the trusts
 - 2. Conservation
- G. Taft
 - 1. Pinchot-Ballinger controversy
 - 2. Payne-Aldrich Tariff
- H. Wilson's New Freedom
 - 1. Tariffs
 - 2. Banking reform
 - 3. Antitrust Act of 1914
- 23. *The First World War*
 - A. Problems of neutrality
 - 1. Submarines
 - 2. Economic ties
 - 3. Psychological and ethnic ties
 - B. Preparedness and pacifism
 - C. Mobilization
 - 1. Fighting the war
 - 2. Financing the war
 - 3. War boards
 - 4. Propaganda, public opinion, civil liberties
 - D. Wilson's Fourteen Points
 - 1. Treaty of Versailles
 - 2. Ratification fight
 - E. Postwar demobilization
 - 1. Red scare
 - 2. Labor strife
- 24. *New Era: The 1920's*
 - A. Republican governments
 - 1. Business creed
 - 2. Harding scandals
 - B. Economic development
 - 1. Prosperity and wealth
 - 2. Farm and labor problems
 - C. New culture
 - 1. Consumerism: automobile, radio, movies
 - 2. Women, the family
 - 3. Modern religion
 - 4. Literature of alienation
 - 5. Jazz age
 - 6. Harlem Renaissance
 - D. Conflict of cultures
 - 1. Prohibition, bootlegging
 - 2. Nativism
 - 3. Ku Klux Klan
 - 4. Religious fundamentalism versus modernists
 - E. Myth of isolation
 - 1. Replacing the League of Nations
 - 2. Business and diplomacy
- 25. *Depression, 1929–1933*
 - A. Wall Street crash
 - B. Depression economy
 - C. Moods of despair

- 1. Agrarian unrest
- 2. Bonus march
- D. Hoover-Stimson diplomacy; Japan
- 26. *New Deal*
 - A. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - 1. Background, ideas
 - 2. Philosophy of New Deal
 - B. 100 Days; “alphabet agencies”
 - C. Second New Deal
 - D. Critics, left and right
 - E. Rise of CIO; labor strikes
 - F. Supreme Court fight
 - G. Recession of 1938
 - H. American people in the Depression
 - 1. Social values, women, ethnic groups
 - 2. Indian Reorganization Act
 - 3. Mexican American deportation
 - 4. The racial issue
- 27. *Diplomacy in the 1930’s*
 - A. Good Neighbor Policy: Montevideo, Buenos Aires
 - B. London Economic Conference
 - C. Disarmament
 - D. Isolationism: neutrality legislation
 - E. Aggressors: Japan, Italy, and Germany
 - F. Appeasement
 - G. Rearmament; Blitzkrieg; Lend-Lease
 - H. Atlantic Charter
 - I. Pearl Harbor
- 28. *The Second World War*
 - A. Organizing for war
 - 1. Mobilizing production
 - 2. Propaganda
 - 3. Internment of Japanese Americans
 - B. The war in Europe, Africa, and the Mediterranean; D Day
 - C. The war in the Pacific: Hiroshima, Nagasaki
 - D. Diplomacy
 - 1. War aims
 - 2. Wartime conferences: Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam
 - E. Postwar atmosphere; the United Nations
- 29. *Truman and the Cold War*
 - A. Postwar domestic adjustments
 - B. The Taft-Hartley Act
 - C. Civil Rights and the election of 1948
 - D. Containment in Europe and the Middle East
 - 1. Truman Doctrine
 - 2. Marshall Plan
 - 3. Berlin crisis
 - 4. NATO
 - E. Revolution in China
 - F. Limited war: Korea, MacArthur
- 30. *Eisenhower and Modern Republicanism*
 - A. Domestic frustrations; McCarthyism
 - B. Civil rights movement
 - 1. The Warren Court and Brown v. Board of Education

- 2. Montgomery bus boycott
- 3. Greensboro sit-in
- C. John Foster Dulles' foreign policy
 - 1. Crisis in Southeast Asia
 - 2. Massive retaliation
 - 3. Nationalism in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America
 - 4. Khrushchev and Berlin
- D. American people: homogenized society
 - 1. Prosperity: economic consolidation
 - 2. Consumer culture
 - 3. Consensus of values
- E. Space race
- 31. *Kennedy's New Frontier; Johnson's Great Society*
 - A. New domestic programs
 - 1. Tax cut
 - 2. War on poverty
 - 3. Affirmative action
 - B. Civil rights and civil liberties
 - 1. African Americans: political, cultural, and economic roles
 - 2. The leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - 3. Resurgence of feminism
 - 4. The New Left and the Counterculture
 - 5. Emergence of the Republican Party in the South
 - 6. The Supreme Court and the Miranda decision
 - C. Foreign Policy
 - 1. Bay of Pigs
 - 2. Cuban missile crisis
 - 3. Vietnam quagmire
- 32. *Nixon*
 - A. Election of 1968
 - B. Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy
 - 1. Vietnam: escalation and pullout
 - 2. China: restoring relations
 - 3. Soviet Union: détente
 - C. New Federalism
 - D. Supreme Court and Roe v. Wade
 - E. Watergate crisis and resignation
- 33. *The United States since 1974*
 - A. The New Right and the conservative social agenda
 - B. Ford and Rockefeller
 - C. Carter
 - 1. Deregulation
 - 2. Energy and inflation
 - 3. Camp David accords
 - 4. Iranian hostage crisis
 - D. Reagan
 - 1. Tax cuts and budget deficits
 - 2. Defense buildup
 - 3. New disarmament treaties
 - 4. Foreign crises: the Persian Gulf and Central America
 - E. *Society*
 - 1. Old and new urban problems
 - 2. Asian and Hispanic immigrants
 - 3. Resurgent fundamentalism

4. African Americans and local, state, and national politics

In addition to exposing students to the historical content listed above, an AP course should also train students to analyze and interpret primary sources, including documentary material, maps, statistical tables, and pictorial and graphic evidence of historical events. Students should learn to take notes from both printed materials and lectures or discussions, write essay examinations, and write analytical and research papers. They should be able to express themselves with clarity and precision and know how to cite sources and credit the phrases and ideas of others. Teacher and student access to an adequate library is essential to the success of an AP course. Besides textbooks and standard reference works such as encyclopedias, atlases, collections of historical documents, and statistical compendiums, the library should contain a wide range of scholarly works in United States history, augmented annually by new book purchases and subscriptions to scholarly periodicals. The course can also make profitable use of television and audiovisual aids to instruction in the school, and of historical exhibits in local museums, historical societies, and libraries. Anthologies and paperback editions of important works of literature should be readily available for teachers dealing with cultural and intellectual history, as should collections of slides illustrating changing technology, the history of art, and architecture.