

11th Grade AP United States History Student Information Sheet

Prerequisite: Student performance, teacher recommendation, and successful completion of Modern World History with an “A” or completing AP European History earning a grade of “A” or “B.”

Course Description

AP United States History is designed for students who are performing above the high school level, have a consistently strong work ethic, and who enjoy the in-depth study of American history and government. This one-year course of study is based on the 11th grade California Social Science and national Advanced Placement standards. This course is organized under the guidelines established by the College Board to prepare students for the national AP examination. This course covers the entire span of United States History; is an in-depth study of the development of American political, economic, and social institutions; includes selected interpretive study of ideas, issues, analytical materials, and biographical information. Students in this class will take the AP U.S. History national exam in May and may earn college credit for this course.

Course Requirements

Reading: Students in AP U.S. will be required to read roughly 32 - 38 pages of text per week throughout the entirety of the year. Please note that the text utilized in the course is a college-level textbook. Students will also read 10 chapters of a supplementary college level interpretive history text called The American Political Tradition by Richard Hofstadter as well as additional supplementary essays and documents.

Writing: Students in AP U.S. will be required to master a number of writing-based assignments including document analysis, document analysis, in addition to free-response & document-based essay questions. Students should expect to write 10+ essays per semester.

Assessments: Students in AP U.S. will be required to take bi-weekly chapter tests and write weekly essays. Students will also complete a summer reading assignment. Students will also be asked to complete one group project/presentation each semester. Finally, the AP U.S. History test held in May is encouraged for students who take the course.

Why take AP United States History?

AP U.S. History. is a 5-point class. Students who earn an “A” in AP U.S. History will receive 5 points for the semester. Students who take and pass the AP U.S. History test with a score of 3 or higher may receive college credit.

During Grant's second term, Republican desires to discard the "southern question" mounted as a depression of unprecedented scope gripped the whole nation.

The Panic of 1873

The postwar years brought accelerated industrialization, rapid economic expansion, and frantic speculation. Investors rushed to profit from rising prices, new markets, high tariffs, and seemingly boundless opportunities. Railroads provided the biggest lure. In May 1869 railroad executives drove a golden spike into the ground at Promontory Point, Utah, joining the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines. The first transcontinental railroad heralded a new era. By 1873 almost four hundred railroad corporations crisscrossed the Northeast, consuming tons of coal and miles of steel rail from the mines and mills of Pennsylvania and neighboring states. Transforming the economy, the railroad boom led entrepreneurs to overspeculate, with drastic results.

Philadelphia banker Jay Cooke, who had helped finance the Union effort with his wartime bond campaign, had taken over a new transcontinental line, the Northern Pacific, in 1869. Northern Pacific securities sold briskly for several years, but in 1873 the line's construction costs outran new investments. In September of that year, his vaults full of bonds he could no longer sell, Cooke failed to meet his obligations, and his bank, the largest in the nation, shut down. A financial panic began; other firms collapsed, as did the stock market. The Panic of 1873 triggered a five-year depression. Banks closed, farm prices plummeted, steel furnaces stood idle, and one out of four railroads failed. Within two years, eighteen thousand businesses went bankrupt, and 3 million employees were out of jobs by 1878. Those still at work suffered repeated wage cuts; labor protests mounted; and industrial violence spread. The depression of the 1870s revealed that conflicts born of industrialization had replaced sectional divisions.

The depression also fed a dispute over currency that had begun in 1865. The Civil War had created fiscal chaos. During the war, Americans had used both national bank notes, yellow in color, which would eventually be converted into gold, and greenbacks, a paper currency not "backed" by a particular weight in gold. To stabilize the postwar currency, greenbacks would have to be withdrawn from circulation. This "sound-money" policy, favored by investors, was implemented by Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch with the backing of Congress. But those who depended on easy credit, both indebted farmers and manufacturers, wanted an expanding

currency; that is, more greenbacks. Once the depression began, demands for such "easy money" rose. The issue divided both major parties and was compounded by another one: how to repay the federal debt.

During the war the Union government had borrowed what were then astronomical sums, on whatever terms it could get, mainly through the sale of war bonds—in effect, short-term federal IOUs—to private citizens. By 1869 the issue of war-debt repayment afflicted the Republican party, whose support came from voters with diverse financial interests. To pacify bondholders, Senator John Sherman of Ohio and other Republican leaders obtained passage of the Public Credit Act of 1869, which promised to pay the war debt in "coin," a term that meant either gold or silver. Holders of war bonds expected no less, although many had bought their bonds with greenbacks!

With investors reassured by the Public Credit Act, Sherman guided legislation through Congress that swapped the old short-term bonds for new ones payable over the next generation. In 1872 another bill *in effect* defined "coin" as "gold coin" by dropping the traditional silver dollar from the official coinage. Through a feat of ingenious compromise, which placated investors and debtors, Sherman preserved the public credit, the currency, and Republican unity. In 1875 he engineered the Specie Resumption Act, which promised to put the nation on the gold standard in 1879, while tossing a few more immediate but less important bones to Republican voters who wanted "easy money."

Republican leaders had acted not a moment too soon because when the Democrats gained control of the House in 1875, with the depression in full force, a verbal storm broke out. Many Democrats and some Republicans demanded that the silver dollar be restored in order to expand the currency and relieve the depression. These "free-silver" advocates secured passage of the Bland-Allison Act of 1878, which partially restored silver coinage. The law required the Treasury to buy \$2-million worth of silver each month and turn it into coin but did not revive the silver standard. In 1876 other expansionists formed the Greenback party, which adopted the debtors' cause and fought to keep greenbacks in circulation. But despite the election of fourteen Greenback congressmen, they did not get even as far as the free-silver people had. As the nation emerged from depression in 1879, the clamor for "easy money" subsided, only to resurge in the 1890s. The controversial "money question" of the 1870s, never resolved, gave politicians and voters another reason to forget about the South.