

AMERICAN HISTORY, LIFE, AND INSTITUTIONS

1. Colonization of America/American colonial period
 - General idea of colonization (who, why, where),
 - English colonies: Roanoke, Jamestown, Plymouth – reasons for settling and basic history of all these places.
 - Life in the colonies (Northern colonies v. Middle colonies v. Southern colonies), Puritanism, Mayflower Compact, creation of the Protestant Work ethic.
2. Main events leading to the American Revolution
 - French and Indian War and its aftermath
 - Relations with George III, taxation, boycotts, and incidents leading up to the American Revolution
 - The outbreak of the Revolution (Lexington and Concord incident; advantages and disadvantages of both sides of the conflict; end of war; Peace of Paris)
 - The Declaration of Independence – its philosophical and political meaning
3. USA under the Articles of Confederation/Constitutional Convention and the US Constitution
 - The post-revolutionary United States (newly acquired lands, challenges on the domestic and foreign fronts)
 - Achievements and failures of the young country under the Articles of Confederation
 - Towards the US Constitution: the Constitutional Convention and the creation of the US Constitution
 - Adding the Bill of Rights (when, why, and what it includes)
4. American Expansionism and the Western Movement
 - Louisiana Purchase
 - Oregon Trail
 - Indian Removal Policy
 - Mexican Cession
 - Gold Rush
 - The Wild West experience – the role of frontier in American History (see also individualism, American Exceptionalism)
5. Black African-American experience in the US – towards the Civil War and through to Reconstruction
 - First Blacks in Virginia
 - Development of Southern economy (plantation system vs small farms in the North – see also (1) life in the colonies)
 - The establishment of the Peculiar Institution – the role of slavery in the South
 - Events leading up the outbreak of the Civil War (including Missouri Compromise, Dred Scott Decision, John Brown, election of Abraham Lincoln)
 - The war itself – main war theaters, advantages/disadvantages of both sides, Emancipation Proclamation, the Northern victory
 - Aftermath of the Civil War (social, economic, demographic, etc.)
 - Reconstruction (including 13, 14, 15th Amendments, Black Codes)
 - Ways of disenfranchising Black African Americans after the War: Grandfather Clauses, poll taxes, literacy tests, KKK, etc.)
 - Post-reconstruction issues: Plessy v. Ferguson and legal segregation

- Civil Rights Movement and its achievements (including Rosa Parks; Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and their philosophies; acts of Congress)

6. The Great Depression

- The causes of the stock exchange crash
- America after the crash
- Roosevelt's New Deal and getting out of the crisis (see also: (7) American involvement in World War I)

7. Modern US (selected issues)

- American involvement in World Wars I and II
- The Vietnam War.
- Cold War: definition and main characteristics of the period

8. American political system

- Idea of federalism
- Powers vested in States, in Federal Government and concurrent powers
- Role and characteristics of the US Constitution
- Division of Power (three branches)
- Checks and Balances (see also powers of the Congress and President)
- Two-party system (including the general character of Democrats and Republicans)
- The US Congress (chambers, major powers, the bill to law procedures)
- The US President (powers, position, role in international politics) and the executive branch (examples of departments and agencies)
- The Supreme Court of the United States (functions, powers, the power of Judicial Review, examples of famous Supreme Court cases)
- Presidential elections in the US (primaries, conventions, campaigns, counting the votes: popular vote v. Electoral College, inauguration)

9. American schooling system

- Main characteristics of American educational system (financing, responsibilities of Boards of Education, decentralization)
- Types of schools and degrees (from primary to tertiary education)

10. Religion in the US

- Separation of church and state
- Current religious make-up/trends
- Believers vs church goers.
- Evangelicals

11. Ethnicity and multiculturalism in US

- Concepts/definitions of race, ethnic group, minority group, prejudice, de jure and de facto discrimination, cultural hegemony
- Biggest ethnic minorities in the US
- Salad Bowl v. Melting Pot

12. American Creed – values and characteristics

- Idea of American Exceptionalism
- Idea of American Dream
- Main national values (including examples and historical origins)