

Civics Study Packet 6: U.S. History (Part II)

By Lance Waring (updated Jan 2017)

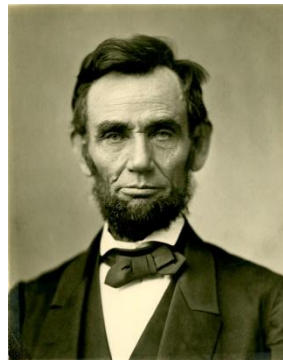
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THE CIVIL WAR

In 1860, there were 34 states in the Union. Slavery was legal in fifteen of those states. It was illegal in the other nineteen of them. This imbalance made the leaders of the slave states nervous.

At the time, Abraham Lincoln was the Republican candidate for President of the United States. During his campaign, he spoke out strongly against expanding the practice of slavery to any state in which it was not already legal.

Lincoln won the 1860 election to become our 16th President. By the time he took office in March of 1861, seven of the slave states formally seceded from the United States and proclaimed a new country, which they called the Confederate States of America. A month after Lincoln's inauguration, armed forces of the Confederacy attacked a U.S.

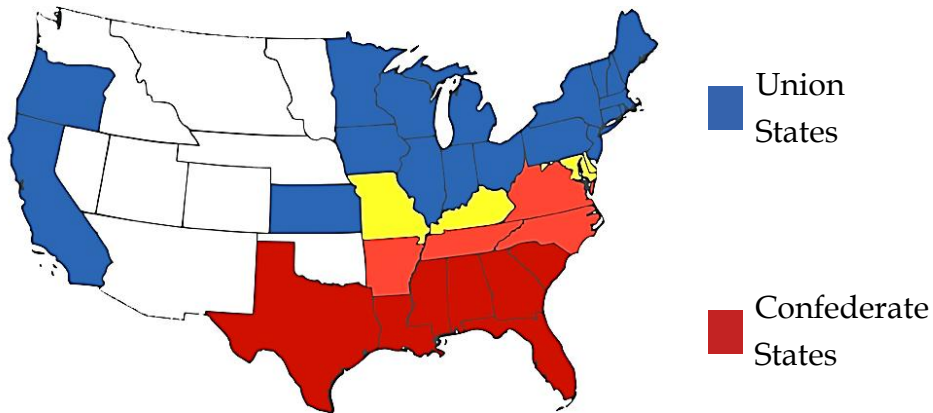


President
Abraham Lincoln

Army fort located in South Carolina. This was the beginning of the American Civil War.

Slavery was the major reason that led to the Civil War. It was a war in which the slave states fought against the rest of the nation. All of the slave states were in the southern United States. For this reason, *the Civil War is also known as the war between the North and the South.*

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The most important thing Abraham Lincoln did was to lead the United States during the Civil War. As the war raged on, Lincoln hardened his position. At first, he just wanted to prevent the expansion of slavery in America, but later he adopted the more ambitious goal of completely eliminating slavery in the nation. On New Year's Day of 1863, Lincoln issued an executive order known as *the Emancipation Proclamation*. This document clearly *called for the freeing of slaves in the Confederate States.*

The year 1865 marked the end. The commander of the Confederate forces surrendered on April 9 of that year. Five days later, President Lincoln was assassinated. His Vice President, Andrew Johnson, assumed office. President Johnson soon issued an official declaration ending the Civil War on May 9, 1865. The next day, the President of the Confederate States of America was captured. The Civil War was over.

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the U.S. war between the North and the South?
2. What was the major reason leading to the Civil War?
3. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?
4. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

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The United States was involved in many important wars throughout the nineteenth century. First, America defeated British forces for a second and final time in the War of 1812. Then the boundaries of the nation expanded through the U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War. Finally, the Union was preserved against the Confederacy through the Civil War. However, before the 1800's were completed, there would still be one more major conflict.

In 1898, the United States demanded that Spain surrender its control of Cuba. Spain was so outraged by the demand that it declared war. The United States responded by declaring war on Spain. The Spanish-American War had begun.

The entire conflict only lasted ten weeks. The war ended with both sides signing the Treaty of Paris. This settlement allowed the United States to temporarily control the entire island of Cuba. Spain also agreed to completely give up its ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine islands. These results were so favorable to America that the U.S. ambassador to England at the time cheerfully referred to it as "a splendid little war."

A few years later, in 1903, the United States entered into a treaty with Cuba that gave it permanent rights to lease the 45 square miles of land around Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. That treaty is still in force today. As a result, the U.S. Navy has continuously operated a Naval Base on this site in Cuba.

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

5. What was the last major war to be fought by the United States in the 1800s?
6. How long did the Spanish-American War last?

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Colonial women in North America, like women back in Europe, had few legal rights. This did not immediately change when the United States gained its independence. However, a movement demanding women's suffrage (which means the right of women to vote) was gaining strength in America even before the Civil War.

A key figure in this movement was Susan B. Anthony. She fought for women's rights—especially the right to vote—throughout her lifetime. In 1869, Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association to advance this cause.



Susan B. Anthony

The Fifteenth Amendment was ratified in 1870. It ensured the right to vote to all American men regardless of their race, color, or previous condition of servitude. However, this important Constitutional Amendment still did not allow for women's suffrage in this nation.

It took another fifty years, and the tireless efforts of women like Susan B. Anthony, to finally achieve voting equality for all U.S. citizens. Finally, in 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. It ensured the right to vote to all citizens regardless of sex.

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

7. What did Susan B. Anthony do?
8. What Constitutional amendment gave all citizens, regardless of gender, the right to vote in all elections throughout the United States?

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THE GREAT WAR

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America got involved in several extremely dramatic wars in the twentieth century. *The first major war of the 1900s was the conflict we now refer to as World War I.* At the time, *it was called The Great War.* Many people honestly believed this global conflict was so massive and devastating that it would be “the war to end all wars.” Sadly, that did not turn out to be the case.

World War I began in Europe in July of 1914. It pitted France, the Russian Empire, and the United Kingdom against Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most Americans thought the United States should not get involved in this European war, so President Woodrow Wilson adopted a policy of keeping our forces out of the conflict. This was so successful that Wilson won his reelection in 1916 on the slogan, “He kept us out of war.”

Shortly after his second inauguration, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany in order to “make the world safe for democracy.” Congress did so in April of 1917. A few months later, it also declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire. America was now fully committed to World War I.

The U.S. armed forces, under the command of General John Pershing, helped the allies to gain the advantage. “Through the Selective Service Act, conscription sent 10,000 freshly trained soldiers to France per day by the summer of 1918” (Wikipedia, 2017). The Germans were defeated and the war was concluded at 11:00 a.m. on November 11, 1918. (Today, the national holiday of Veterans’ Day is celebrated each year on November 11th.)

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

9. What was the first major war fought by the United States in the 1900s?
10. What was World War I called at the time it was being fought?
11. Who was the President of the United States during World War I?

PROHIBITION AND DEPRESSION

In 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment was ratified. It prohibited the production, transport, and sale of alcohol in the United States. The Amendment went into effect in January of 1920. This was the beginning of prohibition in America.

Prohibition was very unpopular throughout the country. This allowed bootleggers and smugglers to make a fortune supplying the nation with alcoholic beverages. The most famous of these criminals was Al Capone of Chicago, but there were many others as well. By 1933, prohibition had become so unpopular and difficult to enforce that the nation finally ratified the Twenty-First Amendment. This repealed the Eighteenth Amendment and ended prohibition in America.

Prohibition was not the only major issue of this era. The entire decade of the 1930s was a period of economic crisis known as the Great Depression. Unemployment rose to 25% in the U.S. (It was even worse in



many other countries.) Prices dropped and tax revenues dropped with them. On top of this, drought and soil erosion in western states led to an environmental crisis called the Dust Bowl. As a result, farmers defaulted on loans in record numbers. It was a time of tremendous misery and hardship.

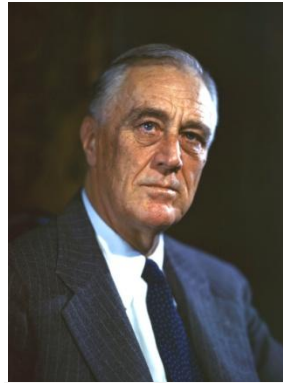
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> REVIEW QUESTIONS

12. What policy was enacted by the Eighteenth Amendment and then eliminated by the Twenty-First Amendment?
13. What was the period of economic hardship called during the 1930s?

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

Franklin D. Roosevelt, also known simply as FDR, is truly an extraordinary man in the history of our nation. His distant cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, was the 26th President of the United States. In 1933, Franklin would follow in his cousin's footsteps by becoming the 32nd President. Prohibition was repealed during the first year of his administration, but *the Great Depression would remain a challenge throughout much of his time as President.*



President
Franklin D. Roosevelt

President Roosevelt launched a number of federal programs during his first term to deal with the problems of the Great Depression. These programs were collectively called the New Deal. Social Security is just one New Deal program that is still with us today. Partially because of these programs, Roosevelt easily won reelection in the 1936 election.

During FDR's second term, the global situation was becoming increasingly worrisome. In Europe, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler signed a formal agreement with Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini. They called their arrangement the Axis because they predicted that the rest of Europe would soon rotate around the Berlin-Rome axis of power. Japan joined the Axis shortly thereafter. The Axis invasion of Poland in September of 1939 marked the beginning of World War II.

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Most Americans were opposed to getting involved in the war. President Roosevelt found non-military ways to support Britain, France, and China in their struggles against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan. However, the official position of the United States was one of neutrality.

In 1940, FDR decided to run for a third term of office. There was no law preventing this, but there was a strong tradition against it. In fact, no U.S. President had ever sought a third term. Nonetheless, with Roosevelt's successes in addressing the Great Depression and the very real dangers posed by massive war in both Europe and the Pacific, Americans reelected President Roosevelt to lead the nation for another four years.

Roosevelt continued his policy of neutrality until December 7, 1941. On that day, "the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan" (Roosevelt, 1941). The main target was the naval base at Pearl Harbor located in the U.S. territory (not yet a state) of Hawaii. With such an attack on its own territory, America had no choice: Congress quickly declared war on the Empire of Japan. In response, the other Axis nations declared war on America.

In 1944, it was time for another presidential election. Americans were uncomfortable with the idea of electing a new Commander-in-Chief in the midst of such a complex war, so they broke with tradition again by giving FDR a fourth term as President. *This allowed Roosevelt to lead the nation's entire World War II effort.*

President Roosevelt did not live to see the end of the war. He died of natural causes in April of 1945. World War II ended shortly thereafter in two events. First came VE (Victory in Europe) Day in May of 1945. A few months later came VJ (Victory over Japan) Day in September of the same year. War was over.

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

14. Who was President during both the Great Depression and World War II?
15. Who did the United States fight in World War II?
16. How many terms did Franklin D. Roosevelt serve as U.S. President?

THE COLD WAR

Almost as soon as World War II ended, the Cold War began. This was a prolonged conflict between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). *The main concern of the United States in the Cold War was Communism.* The struggle lasted for more than forty years.

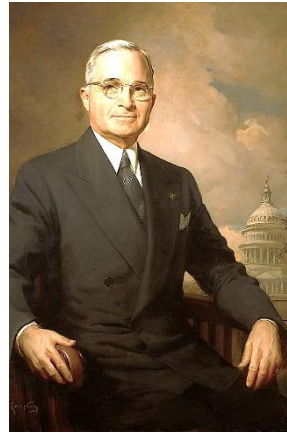
The Soviet Union was formed in 1922. Although it was centered in Russia, it also included several other republics in Europe and Asia. "The Soviet Union was a one-party federation, governed by the Communist Party with Moscow as its capital" (Wikipedia, 2017). The U.S.S.R. was finally dissolved in 1991.

During World War II, the Soviet Union was a key ally to the U.S., Great Britain, and France. Even so, the Soviets were always an awkward member of the alliance. Once the common threat of the Axis had been defeated, Soviet cooperation with the West came to an end.



A 1945 meeting between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, and General Secretary Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union.

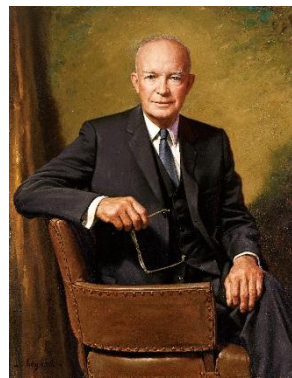
Several U.S. Presidents wrestled with the Cold War. The first of these was **Harry Truman (D)**, who assumed office after the death of FDR in 1945. He is best known for responding to the increasing threat of the Soviet Union with a policy called the Truman Doctrine. It was a policy of offering political, economic, and even military assistance to any democratic nation threatened by a totalitarian power such as the Soviet Union.



President
Harry S. Truman

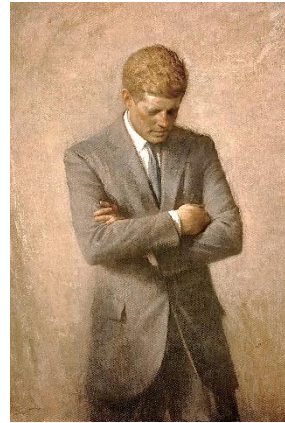
The first major armed conflict of the Cold War began on June 25, 1950. On that day, with support and encouragement from both the Soviet Union and Communist China, North Korea invaded South Korea. Our nation, guided by the Truman Doctrine, led a coalition to turn back the Communist invaders and defend our South Korean allies. *This struggle was called the Korean War*, even though there was no declaration of war by the U.S. Congress.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (R), who served as a five-star general during World War II, won the presidential election of 1952. He became the second President to deal with the Soviet threat. In Eisenhower's first year in office, the Korean War was concluded with a cease-fire agreement. This left both sides retaining control of approximately half of the Korean peninsula.



President
Dwight D. Eisenhower

John F. Kennedy (D) won the election of 1960. By this time, a Communist named Fidel Castro became the leader of the island nation of Cuba. *In 1961, Kennedy provided limited support to an invasion of Cuba.* Most of these invaders were Cuban exiles who came to the U.S. after Castro's take over. The enthusiastic force landed in Cuba in a place called the Bay of Pigs. Unfortunately, they were entirely defeated by the Cuban Armed Forces.



President
John F. Kennedy

After the Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy found his troubles with Communist Cuba were not over. In 1962, the Soviet Union agreed to place nuclear ballistic missiles in Cuba. When U.S. Air Force photographs showed construction of the Cuban missile facilities, President Kennedy told the Soviet leader that America absolutely could not tolerate nuclear missiles based less than 100 miles from the U.S. mainland.

This standoff between the two Cold War superpowers is known as *the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Most historians agree it was the one Cold War incident that came closest to starting a full-scale nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, in the end, President Kennedy was able to persuade the Soviets to remove the missiles from Cuba by agreeing to remove U.S. missiles based in Turkey. The most destructive war in the history of the planet had been avoided.

Lyndon B. Johnson (D) assumed the office of President of the United States after the assassination of President Kennedy in November of 1963. By this time, the conflict between Communists in North Vietnam and those favoring democracy in South Vietnam was rising. This struggle began shortly after France ended its colonial rule of Southeast Asia in 1954, and the United States had supported Vietnamese factions it viewed favorably as early as the Eisenhower administration. However, when Johnson assumed office, the situation in Vietnam had become far more critical.

In 1964, the U.S. Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Although it was not a declaration of war, it did give the President authority to conduct whatever military operations he thought were appropriate in Southeast Asia. From that day, and continuing for many years thereafter, the United States fought the Cold War primarily through its efforts in the Vietnam War.



President
Lyndon B. Johnson

So the United States was involved in two major armed conflicts occurred during the Cold War. These were the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Over 35,000 Americans died in the Korean War and about 58,000 died in the Vietnam War. There was no Congressional declaration of war for either conflict.

Richard Nixon (R) won the 1968 presidential election. Among other things, he promised to provide stronger leadership in the Vietnam War. Apparently, the American people thought he kept that promise. In 1972, Nixon won reelection with a spectacular landslide victory. By the first year of his second term, Nixon oversaw the end of American involvement in the Vietnam War and completely eliminated the military draft in America.

In spite of his successes, President Nixon left office in disgrace. Evidence came to light showing that he had known about unethical and even illegal activity carried out by members of his own staff. As a result, it appeared Congress planned to impeach the President and remove him from office. However, Nixon chose to resign before such proceedings could take place. On August 9, 1974, he became the only U.S. President to resign from office.

Even after Nixon's resignation, three more U.S. Presidents would confront the Soviet threat in the Cold War. These were Gerald Ford (R), Jimmy Carter (D), and Ronald Reagan (R). But in the end, the Soviet Union collapsed due to a combination of internal and external pressures. This happened in 1991. Most historians see this as the ultimate conclusion of the Cold War.

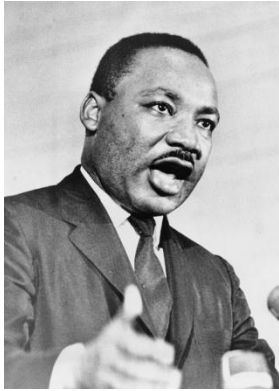
> REVIEW QUESTIONS

17. What was the main concern of the United States during the Cold War?
18. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
19. What was the name of the standoff between the U.S. and the Soviet Union that occurred during the Kennedy administration?
20. What two major armed conflicts occurred during the Cold War?

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The movement that tried to end racial discrimination in our country is known as the Civil Rights movement. In a sense, this movement began before the Civil War and continues right up to the present. However, what is commonly called “the civil rights era” happened in the midst of the Cold War years.

There were many men and women who made important contributions to the Civil Rights movement. Perhaps the best known and most celebrated was a Baptist preacher named *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* *He fought for civil rights* throughout his adult lifetime. His efforts were internationally recognized when he was awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. Rev. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee in 1968.



Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It was designed to end unequal voter registration requirements as well as racial segregation in the school or workplace. Undoubtedly, it was a key victory of the Civil Rights movement.

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

21. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?
22. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

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TERROISM HITS AMERICA

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When it arrived, the twenty-first century seemed like a time for optimism. The Cold War was over and the Civil Rights Act was the well accepted law of the land. In January of 2001, President Bill Clinton “left office with the highest end-of-office approval rating of any U.S. President since World War II” (Wikipedia, 2017). For many Americans, all seemed well.

Then, *on September 11, 2001, terrorists unexpectedly attacked the United States*. All the attackers were part of an Islamic extremist group called al-Qaeda. Nearly 3,000 people were killed in the four coordinated attacks of that day. The spectacular twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City were completely demolished as a result of these attacks. This was the beginning of America’s war on terrorism.

> REVIEW QUESTIONS

23. What historical event happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States?



INCOME TAXES

A tax on the income produced by Americans is the primary means of financing our federal government. However, many Americans do not realize that such federal taxes were not an original part of the U.S. economic or governmental systems. In fact, an 1895 ruling by the Supreme Court found most forms of income tax at a federal level to be unconstitutional.

To get around this ruling, a Constitutional Amendment was proposed that would give the U.S. Congress power “to lay and collect taxes on incomes . . . without apportionment among the States.” *This proposal was ratified in 1913 as the 16th Amendment to the Constitution. Since then, the United States government has collected federal income tax from its citizens.*

Americans must file their taxes each year. Different dates have been used as a deadline over the years, but since 1955, *the deadline for filing federal income tax forms has been April 15*. The official reason for this relatively late date is to distribute the work of the Internal Revenue Service.

IRS Form 1040 is the primary document used to file income tax.

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> REVIEW QUESTIONS

24. When did the United States government start collecting federal income tax?
25. What is the deadline for filing federal income tax forms?