

## Period 7: 1890–1945

An increasingly pluralistic United States faced profound domestic and global challenges, debated the proper degree of government activism, and sought to define its international role.

Key Concept

**PRIORITIZED BY COLLEGES FOR CREDIT**

**Key Concept 7.1:** Governmental, political, and social organizations struggled to address the effects of large-scale industrialization, economic uncertainty, and related social changes such as urbanization and mass migration.

I. The continued growth and consolidation of large corporations transformed American society and the nation's economy, promoting urbanization and economic growth, even as business cycle fluctuations became increasingly severe.

A) Large corporations came to dominate the U.S. economy as it increasingly focused on the production of consumer goods, driven by new technologies and manufacturing techniques.

B) The United States continued its transition from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrial one, offering new economic opportunities for women, internal migrants, and international migrants who continued to flock to the United States.

C) Even as economic growth continued, episodes of credit and market instability, most critically the Great Depression, led to calls for the creation of a stronger financial regulatory system.

**TEACHER-SELECTED**  
examples of individuals, groups, and movements to investigate the Key Concept

**TEACHER-SELECTED**  
primary and secondary sources for students to examine the Key Concept in depth

Focus of AP Exam questions:

**Thematic Learning Objectives**

**WOR-3:** Explain how the growing interconnection of the U.S. with worldwide economic, labor, and migration systems affected U.S. society since the late 19th century

**ID-7:** Analyze how changes in class identity and gender roles have related to economic, social, and cultural transformations since the late 19th century

**WXT-3:** Explain how changes in transportation, technology, and the integration of the U.S. economy into world markets have influenced U.S. society since the Gilded Age

**WXT-5:** Explain how and why different labor systems have developed, persisted, and changed since 1800 and how events such as the Civil War and industrialization shaped U.S. society and workers' lives

**POL-3:** Explain how activist groups and reform movements, such as antebellum reformers, civil rights activists, and social conservatives, have caused changes to state institutions and U.S. society

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II. Progressive reformers responded to economic instability, social inequality, and political corruption by calling for government intervention in the economy, expanded democracy, greater social justice, and conservation of natural resources.

A) In the late 1890s and the early years of the 20th century, journalists and Progressive reformers — largely urban and middle class, and often female — worked to reform existing social and political institutions at the local, state, and federal levels by creating new organizations aimed at addressing social problems associated with an industrial society.

B) Progressives promoted federal legislation to regulate abuses of the economy and the environment, and many sought to expand democracy.

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**Focus of AP Exam questions:**

**Thematic Learning Objectives**

**WXT-6:** Explain how arguments about market capitalism, the growth of corporate power, and government policies influenced economic policies from the late 18th century through the early 20th century

**WXT-7:** Compare the beliefs and strategies of movements advocating changes to the U.S. economic system since industrialization, particularly the organized labor, Populist, and Progressive movements

**WXT-8:** Explain how and why the role of the federal government in regulating economic life and the environment has changed since the end of the 19th century

**POL-3:** Explain how activist groups and reform movements, such as antebellum reformers, civil rights activists, and social conservatives, have caused changes to state institutions and U.S. society

**ENV-5:** Explain how and why debates about and policies concerning the use of natural resources and the environment more generally have changed since the late 19th century

**CUL-5:** Analyze ways that philosophical, moral, and scientific ideas were used to defend and challenge the dominant economic and social order in the 19th and 20th centuries

**Key Concept**

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III. National, state, and local reformers responded to economic upheavals, laissez-faire capitalism, and the Great Depression by transforming the U.S. into a limited welfare state.

A) The liberalism of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal drew on earlier progressive ideas and represented a multifaceted approach to both the causes and effects of the Great Depression, using government power to provide relief to the poor, stimulate recovery, and reform the American economy.

B) Radical, union, and populist movements pushed Roosevelt toward more extensive reforms, even as conservatives in Congress and the Supreme Court sought to limit the New Deal's scope.

C) Although the New Deal did not completely overcome the Depression, it left a legacy of reforms and agencies that endeavored to make society and individuals more secure, and it helped foster a long-term political realignment in which many ethnic groups, African Americans, and working-class communities identified with the Democratic Party.

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**Thematic Learning Objectives**

**WXT-8:** Explain how and why the role of the federal government in regulating economic life and the environment has changed since the end of the 19th century

**POL-2:** Explain how and why major party systems and political alignments arose and have changed from the early Republic through the end of the 20th century

**POL-4:** Analyze how and why the New Deal, the Great Society, and the modern conservative movement all sought to change the federal government's role in U.S. political, social, and economic life

**ID-3:** Analyze how U.S. involvement in international crises such as the Spanish American War, World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the Cold War influenced public debates about American national identity in the 20th century

**CUL-5:** Analyze ways that philosophical, moral, and scientific ideas were used to defend and challenge the dominant economic and social order in the 19th and 20th centuries

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Exam questions:

**Key Concept 7.2:** A revolution in communications and transportation technology helped to create a new mass culture and spread “modern” values and ideas, even as cultural conflicts between groups increased under the pressure of migration, world wars, and economic distress.

- I. New technologies led to social transformations that improved the standard of living for many, while contributing to increased political and cultural conflicts.
  - A) New technologies contributed to improved standards of living, greater personal mobility, and better communications systems.
  - B) Technological change, modernization, and changing demographics led to increased political and cultural conflict on several fronts: tradition versus innovation, urban versus rural, fundamentalist Christianity versus scientific modernism, management versus labor, native-born versus new immigrants, white versus black, and idealism versus disillusionment.

C) The rise of an urban, industrial society encouraged the development of a variety of cultural expressions for migrant, regional, and African American artists (expressed most notably in the Harlem Renaissance movement); it also contributed to national culture by making shared experiences more possible through art, cinema, and the mass media.

Thematic Learning Objectives

- ID-6:** Analyze how migration patterns to, and migration within, the United States have influenced the growth of racial and ethnic identities and conflicts over ethnic assimilation and distinctiveness
- ID-8:** Explain how civil rights activism in the 20th century affected the growth of African American and other identity-based political and social movements
- WXT-5:** Explain how and why different labor systems have developed, persisted, and changed since 1800 and how events such as the Civil War and industrialization shaped U.S. society and workers’ lives
- CUL-3:** Explain how cultural values and artistic expression changed in response to the Civil War and the postwar industrialization of the United States
- CUL-6:** Analyze the role of culture and the arts in 19th- and 20th-century movements for social and political change
- CUL-7:** Explain how and why “modern” cultural values and popular culture have grown since the early 20th century and how they have affected American politics and society

**Key Concept**

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II. The global ramifications of World War I and wartime patriotism and xenophobia, combined with social tensions created by increased international migration, resulted in legislation restricting immigration from Asia and from southern and eastern Europe.

A) World War I created a repressive atmosphere for civil liberties, resulting in official restrictions on freedom of speech.

B) As labor strikes and racial strife disrupted society, the immediate postwar period witnessed the first “Red Scare,” which legitimized attacks on radicals and immigrants.

C) Several acts of Congress established highly restrictive immigration quotas, while national policies continued to permit unrestricted immigration from nations in the Western Hemisphere, especially Mexico, in order to guarantee an inexpensive supply of labor.

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**Focus of AP Exam questions:**

**Thematic Learning Objectives**

**ID-6:** Analyze how migration patterns to, and migration within, the United States have influenced the growth of racial and ethnic identities and conflicts over ethnic assimilation and distinctiveness

**WOR-4:** Explain how the U.S. involvement in global conflicts in the 20th century set the stage for domestic social changes

**PEO-2:** Explain how changes in the numbers and sources of international migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries altered the ethnic and social makeup of the U.S. population

**PEO-6:** Analyze the role of both internal and international migration on changes to urban life, cultural developments, labor issues, and reform movements from the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century

**PEO-7:** Explain how and why debates over immigration to the United States have changed since the turn of the 20th century

**WXT-6:** Explain how arguments about market capitalism, the growth of corporate power, and government policies influenced economic policies from the late 18th century through the early 20th century

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III. Economic dislocations, social pressures, and the economic growth spurred by World Wars I and II led to a greater degree of migration within the United States, as well as migration to the United States from elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere.

A) Although most African Americans remained in the South despite legalized segregation and racial violence, some began a "Great Migration" out of the South to pursue new economic opportunities offered by World War I.

B) Many Americans migrated during the Great Depression, often driven by economic difficulties, and during World Wars I and II, as a result of the need for wartime production labor.

C) Many Mexicans, drawn to the U.S. by economic opportunities, faced ambivalent government policies in the 1930s and 1940s.

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**Thematic Learning Objectives**

**ID-6:** Analyze how migration patterns to, and migration within, the United States have influenced the growth of racial and ethnic identities and conflicts over ethnic assimilation and distinctiveness

**ID-8:** Explain how civil rights activism in the 20th century affected the growth of African American and other identity-based political and social movements

**PEO-3:** Analyze the causes and effects of major internal migration patterns such as urbanization, suburbanization, westward movement, and the Great Migration in the 19th and 20th centuries

**WOR-4:** Explain how the U.S. involvement in global conflicts in the 20th century set the stage for domestic social changes

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**Key Concept 7.3:** Global conflicts over resources, territories, and ideologies renewed debates over the nation's values and its role in the world, while simultaneously propelling the United States into a dominant international military, political, cultural, and economic position.

**Thematic Learning Objectives**

- WOR-6:** Analyze the major aspects of domestic debates over U.S. expansionism in the 19th century and the early 20th century
- WOR-7:** Analyze the goals of U.S. policymakers in major international conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, and explain how U.S. involvement in these conflicts has altered the U.S. role in world affairs
- ENV-5:** Explain how and why debates about and policies concerning the use of natural resources and the environment more generally have changed since the late 19th century
- POL-6:** Analyze how debates over political values (such as democracy, freedom, and citizenship) and the extension of American ideals abroad contributed to the ideological clashes and military conflicts of the 19th century and the early 20th century

1. Many Americans began to advocate overseas expansionism in the late 19th century, leading to new territorial ambitions and acquisitions in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific.

A) The perception in the 1890s that the western frontier was “closed,” economic motives, competition with other European imperialist ventures of the time, and racial theories all furthered arguments that Americans were destined to expand their culture and norms to others, especially the non-white nations of the globe.

B) The American victory in the Spanish-American War led to the U.S. acquisition of island territories, an expanded economic and military presence in the Caribbean and Latin America, engagement in a protracted insurrection in the Philippines, and increased involvement in Asia.

C) Questions about America's role in the world generated considerable debate, prompting the development of a wide variety of views and arguments between imperialists and anti-imperialists and, later, interventionists and isolationists.

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II. World War I and its aftermath intensified debates about the nation's role in the world and how best to achieve rational security and pursue American interests.

A) After initial neutrality in World War I the nation entered the conflict, departing from the U.S. foreign policy tradition of noninvolvement in European affairs in response to Woodrow Wilson's call for the defense of humanitarian and democratic principles.

B) Although the American Expeditionary Force played a relatively limited role in the war, Wilson was heavily involved in postwar negotiations, resulting in the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, both of which generated substantial debate within the United States.

C) In the years following World War I, the United States pursued a unilateral foreign policy that used international investment, peace treaties, and select military intervention to promote a vision of international order, even while maintaining U.S. isolationism, which continued to the late 1930s.

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**WOR-4:** Explain how the U.S. involvement in global conflicts in the 20th century set the stage for domestic social changes

**WOR-7:** Analyze the goals of U.S. policymakers in major international conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, and explain how U.S. involvement in these conflicts has altered the U.S. role in world affairs

**ID-3:** Analyze how U.S. involvement in international crises such as the Spanish American War, World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the Cold War influenced public debates about American national identity in the 20th century

**POL-6:** Analyze how debates over political values (such as democracy, freedom, and citizenship) and the extension of American ideals abroad contributed to the ideological clashes and military conflicts of the 19th century and the early 20th century

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III. The involvement of the United States in World War II, while opposed by most Americans prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, vaulted the United States into global political and military prominence, and transformed both American society and the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world.

A) The mass mobilization of American society to supply troops for the war effort and a workforce on the home front ended the Great Depression and provided opportunities for women and minorities to improve their socioeconomic positions.

B) Wartime experiences, such as the internment of Japanese Americans, challenges to civil liberties, debates over race and segregation, and the decision to drop the atomic bomb raised questions about American values.

C) The United States and its allies achieved victory over the Axis powers through a combination of factors, including allied political and military cooperation, industrial production, technological and scientific advances, and popular commitment to advancing democratic ideals.

D) The dominant American role in the Allied victory and postwar peace settlements, combined with the war-ravaged condition of Asia and Europe, allowed the United States to emerge from the war as the most powerful nation on earth.

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**WOR-4:** Explain how the U.S. involvement in global conflicts in the 20th century set the stage for domestic social changes

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**ID-3:** Analyze how U.S. involvement in international crises such as the Spanish American War, World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the Cold War influenced public debates about American national identity in the 20th century

**ID-6:** Analyze how migration patterns to, and migration within, the United States have influenced the growth of racial and ethnic identities and conflicts over ethnic assimilation and distinctiveness

**POL-5:** Analyze how arguments over the meaning and interpretation of the Constitution have affected U.S. politics since 1787