United States History

Oak Meadow
Teacher Manual

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Introduction

Ancient Greek historian Herodotus, often called "the father of history," saw history as an inquiry into critical events. Eminent writer and social critic James Baldwin wrote the following about history:

> "For history, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally *present* in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations." ("Unnamable Objects, Unspeakable Crimes," 1966)

The history of the United States requires an active, dynamic, interpretive method of inquiry. This teacher manual is designed to help you support your student in sorting through, analyzing, and organizing the information in this course. In addition to factual answers to assignment questions, you will find tips on how to assess student responses, and suggestions for ways to guide your student's learning in order to encourage in your student a lively spirit of discovery and an open mind to the diverse perspectives of participants from both sides of every story.

This course contains all the instructions and assignments for a full year course in United States history. Throughout the course, students will be doing research and reading using additional sources such as non-fiction books, websites, films, textbooks, journals, novels, artwork, news archives, etc. While some lessons have a lot of research and reading, other lessons have no extra reading. This gives students a break from the research and allows them time to absorb and process what they have been learning.

This course is designed to be textbook-independent. This means your student can use ANY textbook or other research materials to learn about the lesson topics. Students are welcome to purchase a textbook to use as their primary reading material, or use any combination of materials, but there isn't one specific textbook attached to this course.

This course is intended to present history in an unbiased manner and to give students an objective view of the nation's journey. The assignments encourage critical thinking and integrate history with geography, art, literature, music, politics, biographies, culture, and technology.

The focus of this course is not on memorizing and reciting facts, but rather to learning how to analyze and think critically. Students will be expected to view events from various perspectives and to reconcile diverse bodies of information. Throughout this course, they will analyze literature, apply concepts, synthesize ideas, evaluate causes, and formulate their own opinions.

In this teacher manual, you will find the full text for all assignments and activities. Teacher manual answers are seen in color. If you are homeschooling independently, this teacher manual can serve as your support as you guide and evaluate your student's work. When a student gets a factual answer wrong, you can share the correct answer and address any underlying misconceptions. The focus should always be on the learning process rather than on a sense of judgement. Several incorrect answers related to a particular topic point to an area the student will benefit from revisiting.

For obvious reasons, it is best not to share this teacher manual with your student. Each student is expected to produce original work, and any incidence of plagiarism should be taken very seriously. If you notice a student's answers matching those of the teacher manual word for word, a discussion about plagiarism and the importance of doing original work is necessary. While students in high school are expected to be well aware of academic honesty, any discussion about it should be approached as a learning opportunity. Make sure your student is familiar with when and how to properly attribute sources.

We encourage you and your student to explore the topics introduced this year through dynamic exchanges of ideas, relevant field trips, viewing and discussing historical films, and in other active, experiential ways. We hope this course leads your student into a better understanding human culture and a new sense of place in the wider world.

Lesson 5 The Newly Formed United States (1776–1789)

Do you think governing a new nation would be fairly straightforward to organize? How would you deal with conflicting opinions and interests? What rules would you lay down at the founding of your new nation? Consider this:

> The United States has the oldest written national constitution still in effect. Compared to other written constitutions, it might be characterized as succinct. The average federal constitution contains about 26,500 words, while the U.S. Constitution with its 27 amendments has fewer than 7,500 words. (*The American Vision Teacher Wraparound Edition* 120)

Which governing principles would you consider to be the most significant in the formation of a new government? Ask one or two friends or family members what rules they would choose and compare your answers.

Lesson Objectives

- Reflect on a personal experience related to constitutional rights.
- Explain the checks and balances within the federal government.
- Compare the advantages and disadvantages of a weak or strong government.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Read about the newly formed United States.
- ☐ Read the Constitution of the United States.
- ☐ Answer comprehension and critical thinking questions.
- ☐ Respond to the essential question.
- ☐ Optional activities:
  - Activity A: Witnessing the Constitutional Convention
  - Activity B: Calculating the Odds of a Proposed Amendment
  - Activity C: Predicting Future Amendments

Lesson 5 Assignments

Reading

Read about the formative years of the new United States (1776–1789). In addition to exploring topics of special interest, learn about the following:

- Constitutional Convention (1787)
- United States Constitution
- Federalist Papers
- Bill of Rights (first ten amendments to the Constitution)
- separation of powers/checks and balances
- representative government

You can use the assignments and activities below to help guide your research efforts.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why was Shays's Rebellion so significant? Whose side would you have been on and why? Write at least one paragraph.

Students should be able to give a clear summary of the causes, consequences, and significance of Shays's Rebellion. They should choose one side and argue its validity.

Summary of Shays's Rebellion: Farmers in western Massachusetts went into debt during the recession in 1786 and found themselves in danger of losing their farms if they could not repay their loans. The Massachusetts government, also in debt, decided to raise taxes, further burdening the farmers. The farmers rebelled, forcing the closure of several courthouses to prevent farm foreclosures, and then went to the state Supreme Court. Led by farmer Daniel Shays, a former army captain, 1,200 farmers tried to seize weapons from an arsenal, but the militia successfully defended it, killing four farmers. With this act of rebellion against the government, people began to look seriously at the problems of the government and how to solve them.

2. Make a list of the three amendments to the constitution that are the most important to you and explain why.

Answers will vary. Students will cite specific amendments and explain how each is relevant to their lives.

3. Reflect on ways in which you or someone you know has been personally affected by the rights granted in the U.S. Constitution. Give specific examples. Always be sensitive to the privacy of others and do not reveal personal information without permission. It is acceptable to form your response without revealing another's identity.

Students will relate a personal experience highlighting civil rights, citing and supporting specific examples.

4. Explain the separation of powers within the federal government and how the distinct roles of each branch provide a system of checks and balances.

The federal government is divided into three branches: executive (enforces laws and negotiates treaties), judicial (interprets the Constitution), and legislative (makes laws, levies taxes, declares war). Students should be able to explain how each distinct role ensures no one person or group will have undue power or influence, and how each branch serves to oversee and monitor the actions of the others.

Essential Question

What do you think the role of government should be?

List at least three roles you believe the government should perform. Next, summarize the advantages and disadvantages of a strong national government, one with extensive scope and power. Then summarize the advantages and disadvantages of a weak national government, one with limited scope and power. Finally, state an opinion about which scenario you think would best serve your country (regardless of where you live or what type of government your country currently has) and briefly explain your reasoning.

Lesson 5

(continued)

Activities

To further expand your knowledge of the lesson topics, feel free to complete any of the following optional activities.

- Activity A: Witnessing the Constitutional Convention
- Activity B: Calculating the Odds of a Proposed Amendment
- Activity C: Predicting Future Amendments

Activity A: Witnessing the Constitutional Convention

Image you are present at the Constitutional Convention, witnessing the arguments on both sides. Write a journal entry or letter home describing what you hear and giving your opinion on the main issues. Make up an eyewitness account of the dialogue and actions of the representatives. Alternately, you can do a sketch of the proceedings.

Activity B: Calculating the Odds of a Proposed Amendment

More than 9,000 amendments to the Constitution have been proposed but only 27 have become part of the Constitution. Calculate the odds of a proposed amendment being approved and list the pros and cons of having such a difficult amendment process.

Activity C: Predicting Future Amendments

Make a chart or graph that shows how many amendments were made in each twenty-five year period since the Constitution was ratified. You can begin with 1800–1825 and include the 11th amendment in that time period (although it was adopted in 1795). Based on this information, project how many amendments are likely to be made between now and 2050. Make a prediction about the subject of any future amendments.

Lesson 6 Building Connections

This is the second lesson where you have a chance to reflect on the material you've just covered, and take some time to make connections of your own. As in lesson 3, you will first analyze informational graphics and then explore further a topic that has particular meaning for you.

In the project section, you will find some suggestions but you are strongly encouraged to come up with a project of your own design, either based on these ideas or on other topics from the previous lessons that you find intriguing. This is the chance for you to ask questions of your own, seek answers, and then share your knowledge in some way.

Refer back to lesson 3 for information on supporting your student and evaluating the work completed for each Building Connections lesson.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Analyze and synthesize informational graphics.
- ☐ Create a project based on the lesson material.

Lesson Objectives

- Analyze and synthesize informational graphics.
- Create a project that explores an aspect of the American Revolution.

Lesson 6 Assignments

Analysis and Synthesis

Choose two or more illustrations, photos, graphs, diagrams, maps, and/or tables found while conducting your research and reading. The graphics should be related in some way. Summarize the information conveyed by each graphic, and cite where each source was found.

Lesson 6

(continued)

Explain how the information in the graphics is related. Use specific details to provide evidence of your statements.

Project

You are encouraged to explore in greater detail any aspect of what you have studied in the previous lessons. Most projects will be completed in one to two weeks, but if you have a larger project in mind, discuss your ideas with your teacher.

You are welcome to come up with a project of your own design or choose one of the projects below.

First, review each of the project phases:

Design phase: Identify what you want to explore and how you will do it (this often starts with a question to help you focus in on what you'd like to learn more about).

Research phase: Next, learn more about your topic. Remember, people can be resources as well as films, so think broadly about where you might collect the information you need. Take notes and keep track of your sources.

Creating phase: Put together what you have learned in some form that allows you to share it with others. You are encouraged to try a different format in each Building Connections lesson. If you did a paper last time, consider constructing a model, or doing a public service announcement, or creating a visual montage or mural design based on your topic.

Remember, the goal of this project is for you to build connections between the ideas and information you have explored in recent lessons. Your project should have special meaning to you.

Or if you choose a project below, feel free to customize it in any way you'd like.

Project Idea 1: Propose a New Constitutional Amendment

Design a new constitutional amendment. Carefully consider who will be affected by it, keeping in mind that if the group who will benefit from it is too small, the amendment would stand little chance of passing.

Lesson 6

(continued)

Carefully word your proposed amendment to match the wording of previous amendments to the constitution. Aim for clarity and brevity (be clear and concise)! You may want to handwrite your amendment using calligraphy or present it in another visually appealing form.

Project Idea 2: Compare Federal Constitutions

Research the federal constitution of another country and compare it to the U.S. Constitution. Identify elements that are similar and those that are different, and briefly describe the strengths of each. This can be presented in chart form, or using a Venn diagram (overlapping circles) or other method of graphically organizing the information. (Hint: Most textbooks present information graphically in many different ways—find one you think is effective and use that.)

Notes

Lesson 7 The Early Years of the Republic

How does a state achieve its identity? How does a region form around a shared purpose, and what happens when this purpose is at odds with another region? Find a long-term resident of your state or region and discuss whether or not the region has a unique identity. As you'll read in this lesson, expansion and development of the new United States of America created new challenges. As industry and agriculture increasingly defined and influenced different regions of the country, political goals shifted.

Lesson Objectives

- Complete a research project using at least three academic sources.
- Use textual evidence to analyze the policies and legacies of American leaders.
- Identify key aspects of a successful government.

Lesson 7 Assignments

Reading

Read about the early years of the new republic, from the late 1700s through the early 1800s. Feel free to focus on areas of interest to you in addition to exploring the following topics:

- early presidents of the United States
- Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798
- Louisiana Purchase

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Read about the early years of the new republic.
- ☐ Answer comprehension and critical thinking questions.
- ☐ Discuss the essential question.
- ☐ Optional activities:
  - Activity A: Field Expedition Drawings
  - Activity B: Design an Early American Flag
  - Activity C: National Debt Comparisons

Lesson 7

(continued)

- The War of 1812
- Industrial Revolution
- cultural and economic differences between the North and the South
- Monroe Doctrine
- Missouri Compromise
- Indian Removal Act and Trail of Tears
- Nullification Crisis

There were many significant events during this time in U.S. History, so you will probably be doing a good deal of research and reading for this lesson. Remember, you can use the assignments and activities below to help you focus your research efforts and identify helpful sources of information.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Questions

1. Summarize the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, and explain whether or not you would have supported these acts and why. Be sure to indicate what supporters or detractors believed was at stake.

Students are asked to take a position and defend it, and to reveal the perspective of both sides of the argument in their one-page essay. Students may note that sections of the Alien and Sedition Acts deprived citizens of their right to criticize public officials, and that attacks on civil liberties have usually coincided with times of periods of turmoil and insecurity.

2. Research one of the following topics and write a four to five paragraph essay. Use clear topic sentences, salient details, and a clear conclusion.

Students should display sound reasoning, clear organization, and supported arguments for their ideas. Papers should show original thought rather than merely summarizing events. Look for evidence of revision, editing, and proofreading.

Lesson 7

(continued)

Choose one of these topics:

Topic 1: Learn more about the Indian Removal Act and the "Trail of Tears." Why did Andrew Jackson choose to push the Indian Removal Act through Congress in 1830? If you were an adult living at that time, knowing only what people of that time knew, would you have supported the Indian Removal Act? Why or why not? Write a well-organized essay that describes the political atmosphere and Jackson's justifications, and the results of the forced relocation. What might have you done differently if you had been in charge? Cite specific events and arguments that supported the views of the Cherokee Nation as well as the opposing views of Andrew Jackson. Use the five-paragraph essay format (see the appendix for details) and expand it as needed. Use at least three sources and include them at the end of your essay. Here is one recommended source:

"The Cherokee and the Trail of Tears" (UNC School of Education)
http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newnation/4548

The focus here is on what the student might have done differently, based on the political climate of the time. The essay should show clear organization and sound reasoning, be presented in a polished form, and demonstrate a thoughtful approach that takes into account various perspectives.

Topic 2: Write a comparative essay on the similarities and differences between the ideals of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Use either the block format or the alternating format for your comparative essay. (See the appendix for detailed instructions on these essay formats.)

Hamilton believed in a strong national government and a national bank; he sought the repayment of pre-war debts. Jefferson believed in limiting the rights of the government; he supported exploration and expansion.

Topic 3: Compare the legacies of two presidents, one from the early years of the nation and one from later years. Choose two and research the key historical events that happened during their

Lesson 7

(continued)

administrations and how their actions and decisions shaped history.

For this topic, this focus is on the comparison between the accomplishments of the two presidents chosen. Hopefully, both similarities and differences will be noted.

You may need to do additional research for your essay. Dig deep to uncover revealing details about the political views and influences of the time. Rather than just reporting facts, give your interpretation of the impact of the people or events related to your topic. Your essay should be well-organized and show a logical train of thought—you are encouraged to use an outline or graphic organizer while you are planning and researching your paper.

When doing research for this assignment, make sure to consult at least three academic sources of authority. Never settle on the first source to which an internet search takes you, and remember that Wikipedia is not permitted as a cited source in any course at Oak Meadow. You can, however, use Wikipedia to get an overview of your topic and then use the sources cited at the bottom of the page to lead you to other possible sources. See Writing a Research Paper in the appendix of this coursebook for more information on finding reputable sources. Keep track of your sources as you collect information and cite sources in MLA format. See the coursebook appendix for details and examples of citations (see Citing Your Source).

Essential Question

What makes a government successful? What makes a government fail?

Take some time to reflect on these questions. Discuss them with friends or family members. There are no right or wrong answers. See if your opinions and ideas shift after hearing what others have to say on the topic. This is a discussion-only assignment; you don't have to write or submit anything.

Activities

To further expand your knowledge of the lesson topics, feel free to complete any of the following optional activities.

- Activity A: Field Expedition Drawings
- Activity B: Design an Early American Flag
- Activity C: National Debt Comparisons

Activity A: Field Expedition Drawings

Accurate descriptions and drawings made Lewis and Clark's observations extremely valuable. Go outside and find at least one example of flora and one example of fauna to draw and describe. Create a journal entry in the style of the notebooks kept on Lewis and Clark's expeditions. Do an internet search for images by typing "Lewis and Clark journals" to get an idea of what a typical journal entry looked like.

Activity B: Design an Early American Flag

Design a new United States flag for the year 1800. Explain the significance of each element that you chose to include. Draw a full color illustration of the flag.

Activity C: National Debt Comparisons

Use the U.S. Treasury Department's website (see the link below) to research the national debt in 1800, 1900, and 2000. Since the value of the dollar has changed drastically in the last 200 years, you will want to adjust these numbers based on inflation (you can use the online conversion calculator listed below). Create a line graph showing the relative national debt over time. Label this graph and title it, and include a caption that gives a brief summary of your findings.

Treasury Direct (U.S. Department of the Treasury) (click on Public Debt Reports from the menu on the left)
http://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/pd/pd.htm

CPI Inflation Calculator (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)
http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

Echoes of the Past

"**. . . I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency . . . These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are . . . But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eyes laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.**"

excerpt from
"Self-Reliance," an 1841 essay
by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Notes