

United States History Coursebook



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Introduction

Have you ever thought about how people are shaped by events in their lifetimes? To what extent do the actions of others determine your actions? How much can one person change the world?

Welcome to *United States History*!

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)

This course is about people. It’s about the *what, why, when, where, and how* things happened, but more importantly, it’s about *who* made them happen. Prepare yourself for a journey on an often bumpy road as we explore the stories of those arguments and the people who embodied them.

A note on terminology: While the term *American* may refer to any resident of the Americas (North America, Central America, or South America), it has been used for so long by people of the United States and by others around the world to refer to people of the United States, that this has become its generally accepted meaning. While we are aware that the United States doesn’t have sole claim to being American, we use the term with its generally accepted meaning in this coursebook.

This introduction contains some important and useful information that will help you be successful in this course. Please read it in full before you begin work on your first lesson.

Course Materials

This coursebook contains all the instructions and assignments for a full-year course in United States History. Throughout the course, you will be doing research and reading using a wide variety of sources such as nonfiction books, websites, films, textbooks, journals, novels, artwork, news archives, etc. **This course is designed to be textbook-independent.** This means that the course is driven by questions and inquiry that challenge you to become a researcher and a critical thinker. You can use *any* textbook (one

or more) or other research materials to learn about the lesson topics. You are welcome to purchase a textbook to use as your primary reading material, or use any combination of materials, but there isn't one specific textbook attached to this course. In fact, you should consider augmenting any textbook you use with additional print and online resources to help make your understanding of history more complex and vital.

As one of your resources, you may want to use this free online textbook: *The American Yawp: A Free and Online, Collaboratively Built American History Textbook*.

If you come upon an assignment that is related to a topic that was not included in the reading you completed, just do some extra research to learn about it. Keep in mind you are not learning about the topic just to be able to complete the assignment, but because it is an important element of United States history and will help give you a fuller picture of what happened and why.

While some lessons have a lot of research and reading, other lessons have no extra reading. This gives you a break from your research and allows you time to absorb and process what you have been learning.

You will be doing a great deal of writing in this course and will learn to express your views succinctly and persuasively. You may want to acquire a good style manual to help you polish your writing skills. (A *Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers is highly recommended.) In the appendix of this coursebook, you will find writing instructions regarding the different types of assignments you will find in this course.

This course makes good use of technology and the vast resources found online. You'll have plenty of opportunities to do online research, and you are encouraged to find videos, images, and articles about any of the topics you find interesting. The best way to learn is to follow your interests in any given subject. Of course, you'll also find valuable resources in print at your local library.

If you don't have internet service at home, you are encouraged to do the online activities at your local library. If you are unable to use the internet, please talk to your teacher about alternative assignments.

Tips for Using a Textbook-Independent Course

1. Look over the reading topics for each lesson. Identify ones that are the highest priority and focus on them first. Some topics may have been addressed in previous work, so a quick conversation or review will suffice. Sometimes a simple definition of a concept is enough and other times a concept will need to be understood in more detail. By reviewing the lesson objectives and assignments, you can determine which topics need to be examined in greater depth.
2. Begin with the Oak Meadow Curriculum Links for your course. This is a good place to start your research, and it may have enough information that you don't need to go any further. By clicking and scanning each article, you can determine how useful each might be, depending on your learning style.

3. Begin an online search by typing the topic into the search bar. Before clicking on the first search result, scan the top eight or ten results, paying attention to how relevant they seem for your purposes. Take a look at the origin (website) of each source before clicking on it. Begin with reputable names, such as National Geographic, NASA, or well-known institutions, news sources, or magazines. For instance, after typing “Global positioning system” into the search bar, the top results may include gps.gov, spaceplace.nasa.gov, oceanservice.noaa.gov, and nationalgeographic.org. All of these are credible sources worth investigating.
4. If the topic is completely unfamiliar, it can be useful to begin by reading the Wikipedia entry, if one is available. This gives a general overview that will help you absorb the more complex articles found in the search results. Often, you can find related links in the entry or works cited.
5. Search for the topic on YouTube as well. Seeing visual representations of the material can help cement the key concepts and make the information more memorable. Start with videos that are short. If you are interested in the topic, you can find longer videos if you want to learn more. When choosing a video from the search results, consider the origin (who posted it), how old it is, and how many views it has. For instance, a YouTube search for “Global positioning system” may come up with multiple videos with hundreds of thousands of views that are under five minutes. Videos can be a great way to give you an overview of the topic in a short period of time.
6. If you need extra support, the preliminary research can be done by an adult who can look for one or two articles that present the information in a clear way without too much jargon. Diagrams and other visuals can be particularly useful. Also, find one or two videos that seem relevant and engaging. An adult can usually do a quick review of the material without reading or watching every piece. This lets them develop a list of two to four recommended resources for the weekly reading in about ten minutes.
7. As you advance through the course, you can learn to take on the tasks of identifying relevant sources. This can be done together with an adult at first until you gain confidence and skill.

How to Read Research Materials

It can be challenging to absorb research materials, particularly if they are written for adults instead of teens. Here are some tips:

- Pay attention to the key concepts, section headings, and main ideas in any article or text you are reading. It is helpful to look over the entire piece to get an idea of what it covers before you begin reading it.
- The most important words to focus on are the ones you don’t understand. Take the time to look up words you don’t know so you can comprehend what you are reading.
- Pay special attention to the images! This cannot be emphasized enough. The diagrams, maps, charts, and illustrations are sometimes easier to understand than the text, and often provide information in a way that your brain can make sense of more readily.

- Learn how to take good notes. Find a method of note-taking that works for you, and use it to keep track of key ideas while you read.
- Use your notes! Taking notes is helpful in its own right, but referring to them when completing your assignments is even more helpful. Your notes may come in handy when you are preparing a project.

How the Course Is Set Up

In this course, there are 36 lessons divided equally into two semesters. Each lesson begins with a short introduction that often includes questions for you to ponder and discuss with your parents and friends. Use these prompts to put yourself in the middle of the issues that shaped history. By discussing issues, expressing your opinion, and listening to the opinions of others, you will come to a clearer and more in-depth understanding of the topics in each lesson.

When completing your assignments, try to be concise, yet answer the question completely using full sentences. If you are expected to write more than one or two sentences, it will be specified in the assignment. Make sure to address all the elements of an assignment—many pose multiple questions or require you to follow several steps.

In most lessons, you will be offered a choice of optional activities, some of which will be creative projects. Even if you don't think you're very creative, you are encouraged to try these occasionally. You will not be marked down for "bad" artwork or poetry. Working creatively with the material lets you express yourself while at the same time explore your awareness of significant historical events and your perception of how events are interrelated.

Three times each semester, you will find a lesson called Building Connections. The goal of these lessons is to reflect on what you have learned, and to spend time on a project of personal relevance to you. You will also be completing larger projects mid-semester and at the end of each semester. These projects are designed to help you get the most out of the course by diving into a topic of interest and making something meaningful based on your learning.

In each lesson, you will find sections to guide your studies and enhance your understanding of the material:

An **Assignment Checklist** is included at the beginning of each lesson so you can see at a glance what you'll be doing, and check off assignments as you complete each one. Assignments are fully explained in the lesson.

Learning Objectives outline the main goals of the lesson and give you an idea of what to expect.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Questions are designed to help you solidify key concepts and knowledge. They often encourage you to think deeper about the material, and make important connections by applying your knowledge and your reasoning skills.

Essential Questions prompt you to think about the deeper connections, issues, and concepts that are the foundation of what you are studying. There will often be more than one question—this is to help you approach the main idea from different directions. Take your time pondering the essential questions before responding to them. Discussing these questions with others will help clarify your own ideas and opinions.

Activities provide a wide range of hands-on ways to explore the topics you are studying. Each lesson gives you a choice of activities.

Echoes of the Past are excerpts from primary source material, letting you hear the voices of those who have shaped the history of the United States and the world.

Share Your Work sections at the end of each lesson provide reminders and information for students who are submitting work to their teacher.

The **appendix** contains important material that you will be expected to read and incorporate into your work throughout the year. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the resources in the appendix. You will find information about writing techniques and composition formats, how to avoid accidental plagiarism, and details on citing sources and images.

It is assumed that you will be working with an adult who assesses and supports your learning whether you are enrolled in Oak Meadow or are using this course independently. This teacher—who may be a parent, tutor, or Oak Meadow teacher—is the one to whom you should turn if you have questions about your assignments or how to get the most out of this course.

If you are an enrolled student in Oak Meadow’s distance learning program, be sure to look closely at the Google course doc your Oak Meadow teacher sends to you as they will likely have modified your course and your lesson requirements.

Key Twenty-First-Century Skills and Competencies

As culture and technology has modernized and globalized, key essential skills have emerged. Rather than the traditional emphasis on memorization and single-view answers, citizens today are encouraged to think broadly and flexibly. This applies to educational, political, and social realms. In this course, you will be engaging skills such as the following:

- Identify main ideas and supporting details
- Use contextual clues to make inferences
- Analyze cause and effect
- Compare and contrast
- Summarize data
- Draw conclusions

- Make predictions
- Analyze media content (images, political cartoons, ads, etc.)
- Analyze primary and secondary sources
- Consider divergent viewpoints
- Identify bias and differentiate between fact and opinion
- Organize data in a variety of ways
- Read maps, charts, graphs, and tables
- Pose informed questions
- Avoid plagiarism
- Evaluate the validity of a source
- Identify patterns and trends
- Synthesize information from a variety of sources
- Organize ideas in a logical way
- Support ideas with evidence
- Give an effective presentation
- Participate in a discussion
- State an opinion and defend it with supporting evidence
- Write an essay
- Take into account cultural influences

This list can help guide your studies as you strive to develop the skills necessary in today's world.

Project Tips

Throughout this course, you will have the opportunity to develop many projects of your own design, based on your interests and questions that are important to you. Here are some tips that will help you with designing and creating meaningful projects.

- Choose a topic that engages your curiosity and that you want to know more about, or consider tackling a topic or question that puzzles you. If you're having trouble finding a topic, talk to your teacher.
- Start early! Starting early also gives you time to revise your design as you learn more, change the focus, and prepare a presentation that means something to you.

- Set small goals for yourself within the project. For example, if you have one week in which to do a project, you may want to assign yourself daily goals. Small goals are easier to accomplish than one big project, and will help you track your progress.
- Don't believe everything you read, hear, or watch. Question the reliability of all of your sources, especially the news media outlets. Government agencies, professional associations, museums, or known scientific journals are generally reliable sources. It is important to confirm information by using a variety of sources.
- Keep track of your notes. Writing notes in your own words helps you retain information more easily. It is important to know which source your information comes from. Include citation information with your notes so you can go back to confirm data or gather more information as necessary.

Keep in mind that your project will be shared with others. Give some thought to the final form it will take, and try out different forms with each project. The goal is to convey your information or message in a way that others will understand or benefit from. Be clear about what information is factual and what is your opinion. Show how the evidence you gathered supports your conclusions. If you are using graphs or tables, make sure they are easy to read. When relevant, give details about how and where you got your information. Even if you are presenting your findings in a creative manner, you should be able to explain the facts behind your work.

Evaluating Internet Sources

You'll have plenty of opportunities to do online research, and you are encouraged to find videos, images, and articles about any of the topics you find interesting. The best way to learn is to follow your interests in any given subject. Be aware, however, that many online resources have no basis in fact (or, often, in reality) and even commonly used resources like Wikipedia are full of errors and half-truths. When doing research online, be sure to examine who is writing what you are reading. Consider their intent and inherent bias. Materials produced by colleges and universities and written by well-known scholars are your best bet for finding meaningful, relevant information to help you with your course.

When you do online research, avoid drawing conclusions before you've checked the information for reliability. Often, you can tell when a website contains bias or is opinion-based. Some sites look very convincing, but contain information that is not supported by scientific evidence or experimentation. When you are uncertain of a source's reliability, consider the following criteria before you decide to use the information in your research:

- The authors make their case based on adequate evidence.
- The authors interpret the data cautiously.
- The authors acknowledge and deal with opposing views or arguments.
- The authors give a list of current sources that support their claims.

Some characteristics of unreliable websites require practice to identify. One trick is to look at the sources that are linked in the article you want to verify. These links can give you some idea of reliability. If your source is linked to a number of questionable sites, it's probably not a good source.

Characteristics of unreliable websites:

- The authors make extraordinary claims with little supporting evidence.
- The authors relate evidence based on personal experience instead of referring to controlled studies.
- The author appeals to emotion rather than logic.
- The authors misrepresent or ignore opposing views.
- The arguments are biased to support a political or economic agenda.
- The site is linked to sites that support a particular political or economic agenda.

You will find a resource page for this course on the Oak Meadow website (www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links). This page will include a variety of print and online sources that you might find useful as you are studying U.S. history. These links are meant to help you in your research, not take the place of it—consider them a starting point.

Academic Expectations for Enrolled Students

If you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School, you will receive a Google course doc from your teacher that may modify the course in order to allow more customized engagement. Please make sure to examine this course doc closely so that you understand what is expected of you in terms of course content and individual assignments. After submitting work, continue working on your next lesson while you are waiting for your teacher to send lesson comments. You will receive a first-semester evaluation and grade mid-course, and a final evaluation and grade at the end. These grades will be recorded on your Oak Meadow High School transcript.

Please follow the assignments in order and, whenever possible, place your responses to the assignments in the Google Drive course doc provided by your teacher. Your teacher will give you feedback on your work in this shared Google doc, so the more work that can be put there, the better. Activities and projects that are completed by hand can often be photographed or scanned and linked to your course doc (detailed instructions on how to do this are provided in the appendix). This is the preferred method since all your work stays in one place, as do your teacher's comments.

If you prefer to submit your work through the postal mail, see your Oak Meadow Student Handbook for information. Whenever you find mention of the Google course doc in your lessons, you can disregard these instructions and submit the work in your preferred manner. If you have questions on how to work around any Google-related instructions, ask your teacher.

You are expected to meet your work with integrity and engagement. Your work should be original and give an authentic sense of your thoughts and opinions, rather than what you think the teacher

reviewing your work wants to hear. When you conduct your research, you are required to cite your sources accurately. Plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, is a serious matter. Please see the appendix of this coursebook for guidelines on recognizing and avoiding plagiarism. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand these academic expectations and abide by them.

Please remember to stay in touch with your Oak Meadow teacher and share your comments, ideas, questions, and challenges. Your teacher is eager to help you.

Connecting the Past and the Future

History is about *people*. It is the story of their interactions, goals, and dreams. It is the story of their motivations, faults, and greed. History is about how people shaped events of the past and how events of the past shape us today.

It is true that you can't change history but the way history is viewed is changing all the time. The future of the world is rooted in the past. The more we learn about history, the more we learn about humanity, and ultimately, ourselves and how our actions make a difference.

We wish you a challenging and insightful experience in this course!

Lesson

1

Cultural Roots in the Americas (Prehistoric Through Early 1700s)

We begin our study of United States history by looking at the cultures and people who populated North America before the arrival of European explorers. We'll look at how and why the first European settlers formed colonies, and explore factors that influenced the early formation of the United States.

Before you begin your assignments, take a few minutes to watch this video:

“US History Class Opener” (*YouTube*)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grK8s9qc_VM

How many different images do you recognize? Do you know the background surrounding each of these events? Ask your parents or friends to watch the video, too, and see what they recognize. In this course, you'll be learning about many of the people who helped shape American history.

Learning Objectives

- Research early inhabitants of the Americas.
- Identify how regional geography affects cultural development.
- Analyze the effects of European exploration and colonization of the Americas.

Before You Begin

Read all the assignments in each lesson before you begin your work. This will help you organize your time more effectively and know what to expect.

For the comprehension and critical thinking questions in each lesson, answer each in your own words, using complete sentences (unless you are writing a list or creating another type of graphic organizer). Read Elements of Good Writing and Varied Sentences, found in the appendix of this coursebook, and

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read about America's cultural roots.
- Answer comprehension and critical thinking questions.
- Respond to the essential question.
- Optional Activities:
 - Activity A: Life in Mesoamerica
 - Activity B: Map of the Inca Empire
 - Activity C: Pre-Columbian Artwork
 - Activity D: West African Kingdoms

put these writing tips into practice every time you write. In general, questions will be answered in one or a few sentences. Instructions will be given if you are expected to write more.

When quoting a source from a book or website directly, insert a parenthetical citation at the end indicating the page where you found the information.

Reading

Read about America's cultural roots, from prehistoric times through the early 1700s. This covers a great deal of time! Feel free to focus on areas of interest to you, but try to touch on the following topics:

- inhabitants of the Americas before the arrival of European settlers
- major cultural groups in North America in the 1600s
- European exploration and expansion in the Americas
- the arrival of West Africans in the Americas

You can use the assignments and activities in each lesson to help you focus your research efforts and identify helpful sources of information.

You will be doing a great deal of research and reading in this course. In order to help you manage the amount of reading successfully and retain information effectively, use these reading strategies:

- Pay attention to the main ideas in whatever text you are reading (textbook, primary sources, websites, news articles, etc.). Take notes as needed and after each section, ask yourself if you understand and can explain what you just read. If not, review the reading section until you understand the material.
- In particular, study all the maps, photos, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, and other graphics you might run across, and read all the captions. This will greatly expand your understanding of the material.
- Give yourself a quiet place to study when you are reading, and stop frequently to check your comprehension. Take breaks so you don't get overloaded.

Ask for help if you need it in order to locate or understand the resource material. Whether you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School or working on the course independently, reach out for help. Find people who can support your learning.

Please keep track of the sources you use when researching the reading topics in each lesson. Include a list of both print publications and online sources (including URL) when you submit your assignments.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Questions

1. List the main cultural groups in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans, and describe their cultural similarities and differences.
2. Compare the effects of European exploration on Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans. You can do this by writing a few sentences or by creating a chart or other graphic organizer.
3. Identify several environmental modifications made to North America by the European settlers, and describe their positive and negative effects.
4. Explain some of the ways that North American explorations and settlements were influenced by political, social, economic, and religious circumstances in Europe.

Essential Question

The “Essential Questions” below are designed to help you zero in on the underlying themes of what you are studying. Take your time pondering these questions and discussing them with others before forming your response.

How much did geography affect people’s lives long ago, and in what ways? How much does geography affect your life today? In what ways?

When answering these questions, consider the similarities and differences between how you have seen geography impact the historical people you have studied and how geography impacts where and how you live today. Write a response of at least two paragraphs.

Activities

Throughout the course, you will find a variety of optional activities. You are encouraged to read through each activity and select any one that interests you. These activities will help deepen your understanding of the lesson topics. None of the optional activities are required but all offer an opportunity to expand your knowledge and experience.

- Activity A: Life in Mesoamerica
- Activity B: Map of the Inca Empire
- Activity C: Pre-Columbian Artwork
- Activity D: West African Kingdoms

Activity A: Life in Mesoamerica

Take on the role of an artist 9,000 years ago. Draw a picture of life in a typical village in Mesoamerica. Consider what record you want to leave of your existence to future generations.

Activity B: Map of the Inca Empire

Create a map that illustrates the extent of the Inca Empire in 1500 including the cities of Cajamarca and Cuzco, as well as the present-day country borders of South America. The map should include appropriate labels, symbols, and map legend.

Activity C: Pre-Columbian Artwork

Research pre-Columbian artwork and create a visual presentation using a combination of photographs and illustrations. Annotate your presentation to identify each piece of art or style of artwork and the location and time period in which it was created. Keep track of your sources and list them at the end of your presentation.

Activity D: West African Kingdoms

Describe, using a combination of words and pictures, one or more of the ancient West African kingdoms. Here is some information you may want to include: the kingdom's source of wealth, trade goods, architecture, political structure, leaders, art, and culture.

Echoes of the Past

“Brother, our seats were once large, and yours were very small; you have now become a great people, and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets; you have got our country, but you are not satisfied; you want to force your religion upon us . . . Brother, you say there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit; if there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? . . . We are told that your religion was given to your forefathers, and has been handed down from father to son. We also have a religion, which was given to our forefathers, and has been handed down to us their children. We worship in that way. It teaches us to be thankful for all the favors we receive, to love each other, and to be united. We never quarrel about religion.”

excerpt from a speech in defense of religious freedom given in 1805 by Chief Red Jacket (also known as Sagoyeweha) (Daniel Drake, *Lives of Celebrated American Indians*)

SHARE YOUR WORK

If you have any questions about the assignments in this lesson, please contact your teacher. Oak Meadow students should consult their teacher's welcome letter and Google course doc for information on when and how to submit your work.

Lesson

2

British Colonies in the Americas (1600–1750)

Why do you think people move from one place to another? Imagine the many reasons that would lead someone to move far from everything familiar, toward an uncertain future. What might cause you to take such a drastic step? As you do your reading for this lesson, try to put yourself in the place of the early colonists.

Learning Objectives

- Identify a connection between slavery in the colonies and the transatlantic trade.
- Analyze elements of the Mayflower Compact.
- Design a self-sufficient colony.

Reading

Read about the British colonies in North America. You can use the assignments and activities below to help you focus your research efforts and identify helpful sources of information. Feel free to focus on areas of interest to you in addition to exploring the following topics:

- first British colonies in the South
- colonies in New England and the mid-Atlantic region
- immigration and slavery in the colonies
- economics and cultures in the colonies

Please keep track of the sources you use when researching the reading topics in each lesson. Include a list of both print publications and online sources (including URL) when you submit your assignments.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read about the early American colonies
- Answer comprehension and critical thinking questions.
- Respond to the essential question.
- Activity: Design a Colony

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Questions

1. Explain why there was such diversity in colonial society.
2. What did the Puritan John Winthrop mean by comparing the new colony he was about to establish in Massachusetts to “a city on the hill”?
3. Examine the relationship between slavery in the colonies and transatlantic trade. Study maps and graphs on the topic to identify a connection. When drawing a conclusion, reference specific details from what you have learned in your reading.
4. Describe, in your own words, the elements of the Mayflower Compact. Explain the significance of this agreement.

Essential Question

Why do people move? Consider both the reasons for moving *from* some place and moving *to* some place. Have you or your family ever moved? What were the reasons?

Compare this to why colonists moved into North America. Imagine you are newly arrived in the colonies. Using first-person perspective, write about one page describing the forces that caused you to move. This can be written in letter or journal form. As a first-person narrative, you can use your emotions when writing, describing how you feel, what concerns you have, and your hopes for the future.

Activities

Complete the following activity. This activity is an integral part of the lesson material (it is not an optional activity).

Activity: Design a Colony

Pretend you are in charge of establishing a new colony in North America in the 1600s. Before you leave Europe, it is up to you to design the structure, purpose, composition, and location of the colony, and to make provisions for its success until it can become self-sufficient. Draw up a plan that will address the following issues:

- easy access to natural resources
- geography that suits the colony’s goals and plans
- seasonal timing of the voyage
- supplies to carry on board the ship
- governance and rules
- town design

- necessary tradesmen/craftsmen
- projected economic growth

Present your plan in an appealing way so that others will want to join you. You can create a presentation that uses graphics as well as text.

SHARE YOUR WORK

When submitting work to your teacher, make sure everything is clearly labeled and organized. Link any scanned photos, illustrations, etc., to your course doc (if you are using one) or send copies to your teacher as an email attachment. If you are unsure about how to submit any of your projects or assignments, please contact your teacher.

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 a chance for you to ask questions of your own, seek answers, and then share your knowledge in some way.

Learning Objectives

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

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. 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.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

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

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.

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. 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.)

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed this lesson, share your work to your teacher. If you are unsure about how to submit a project, let your teacher know.

Lesson 17 / 18

First Semester Project

You are now halfway through the course—congratulations! In this lesson, you'll complete a comprehensive project about one of the topics covered so far.

Note for students enrolled in Oak Meadow School: all projects must be preapproved by your teacher. After you choose your topic and have a general idea of what you'll do, please let your teacher know so you can get initial feedback on your ideas before you begin.

Learning Objectives

- Create a comprehensive project based on historical events.

Project

Complete one of the following projects.

- Option 1: Monumental Honor
- Option 2: Wilderness Mapping
- Option 3: Speak for the Earth
- Option 4: Special Interest Project

Option 1: Monumental Honor

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt have their likenesses carved in stone on the giant Mt. Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota. If it had been up to you to decide who was included, which four people would you have chosen to honor? You can choose any influential American (other than the four represented now) that you have learned about this semester. Would you include one or more women? Would you include nonwhite Americans? Make your four choices and then write a persuasive one-page essay for each one, stating your case for conferring upon them this honor.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Choose one project to complete:

Option 1: Monumental Honor

Option 2: Wilderness Mapping

Option 3: Speak for the Earth

Option 4: Special Interest Project

Option 2: Wilderness Mapping

Lewis and Clark chronicled their journey through the Louisiana Territory and into the Pacific Northwest with beautifully detailed descriptions and drawings of the natural wonders they encountered. If you are able to take a trip, spend several days exploring a wilderness area that you have never visited before. Once you arrive at your starting point, you might travel by foot, canoe or kayak, horse, or any other nonmotorized method of travel.

Keep a journal of your adventures, taking time throughout the day to write about your experiences, describe your surroundings, and draw pictures, diagrams, and maps. Use colored pencils or pens to make your drawings more realistic. You may also want to take photographs and include them in your journal (you should still include some hand-drawn maps or pictures). Be as detailed in your observations as you can, but also include your own thoughts about your experience.

Option 3: Speak for the Earth

Imagine the Earth could speak to us in words. Now think about all the ways in which humans have influenced or changed the environment from when the first people inhabited North America to when the first European settlers arrived up until the 1920s. Put yourself in Earth's place and try to imagine all the ways in which these changes have supported or disrupted Earth's natural systems.

Make a list of at least ten significant events that negatively impacted the environment. Give a brief explanation of how each one changed the Earth and what problems it created.

Next, make a list of the positive influences humans have had on the environment (up until the 1920s). Think of as many as you can. Describe the ways in which these changes were helpful to the Earth's ecosystems.

Finally, write a one- to two-page personal essay expressing your thoughts about your two lists. Include any ideas you have about ways we can mend old wounds and be more conscientious stewards of the Earth.

Option 4: Special Interest Project

Choose a topic of special interest to you from American history up to 1920. Research your topic thoroughly and create a multimedia presentation or a four- to five-page paper. Search for a way to present your topic that goes beyond mere facts and dates and explores the significance behind the event, era, or idea. Use several ways to convey your information in addition to text, such as maps, charts, or images. Your paper should show clear organization and purpose. Include a list of your sources.

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed your semester project, submit it to your teacher along with any outstanding lessons. Notify your teacher when the work is ready for review.

Lesson

23 / 24

World War II (1931–1945)

Many people wonder how Adolf Hitler could have come into power and caused so much destruction and suffering. Author Todd Strasser addressed this issue in his book, *The Wave*, a shocking story of the powers of persuasion. Why do you think people might be susceptible or immune to the insidious nature of prejudice? Discuss your opinion with others and listen to what they have to say.

This lesson includes a lot of reading and many serious and disturbing events are explored. You have two weeks to complete the reading and assignments—this will give you time to absorb and process the material.

Learning Objectives

- Analyze a Supreme Court case regarding Japanese internment during World War II.
- Summarize the environmental impact of atomic warfare.
- Analyze the pros and cons of the controversial decision to use atomic weaponry.
- Research a minority group serving in the military during WWII.

Reading

Read about the causes, events, and consequences of World War II. Explore the following topics, plus any others you are interested in.

- dictatorships and totalitarianism
- Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, and Adolf Hitler
- anti-Semitism
- Axis and Allied Powers
- Lend-Lease Act (1941)

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read about World War II.
- Answer comprehension and critical thinking questions.
- Respond to the essential question.
- Choose one Activity:
 - Activity A: Drawing the Holocaust
 - Activity B: Survivor Stories

- attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
- key battles of World War II
- internment of Japanese Americans
- wartime jobs for women and African Americans
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- the Holocaust
- Nuremberg Trials
- United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why do you think so many people rushed to volunteer to fight in World War II? What sacrifices were they and their families willing to make, and why? If you know any active or retired military service members, discuss with them the sacrifices they and their families have made, and ask what motivated them to enlist. What kind of sacrifice would you be willing to make in the name of peace? Write one or two paragraphs on your thoughts and findings.
2. Learn about the Supreme Court case *Korematsu v. United States*. Give a brief summary of the case and then answer this question: Under what circumstances and in what ways (if any) do you think the government should be able to suspend civil liberties to specific groups of people in times of “emergency and peril”?
3. Describe the environmental impact of the atomic bombs dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The human deaths caused by these bombs were on a massive, unparalleled scale. In addition, the lingering radiation caused problems for people in multiple ways—not only because of the effects it had on their bodies, but also because of the effects it had on water, soil, and food sources. Do some research and summarize how the environment was affected in the weeks, months, and years following the atomic explosions.
4. Research the discussions and arguments leading up to the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Write a summary of the different viewpoints that were expressed before the decision was made (and by whom), and then give your own opinion. Should the United States have dropped the bombs? Why or why not?
5. Research and write a one-page report on one of the following groups.
 - Tuskegee Airmen
 - 442nd Regimental Combat Team
 - Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron
 - Navajo Code Talkers

Essential Question

How can war be avoided?

Describe what tactics can be used to de-escalate a conflict before it leads to war, or explain what attributes or elements need to be present for two or more groups of people to avoid an armed response to a disagreement. Are there instances in which you feel war is inevitable?

Activities

Complete one of the following activities. (This is an integral part of the lesson, not an optional assignment.)

- Activity A: Drawing the Holocaust
- Activity B: Survivor Stories

Activity A: Drawing the Holocaust

During the Holocaust, many children ended up in Nazi concentration camps like Terezin, located outside of Prague, where a woman named Friedl Dicker Brandeis secretly encouraged the children to draw and paint as a form of therapy. Many of their drawings were later used during the Nuremberg Trials. View some of these paintings (found at the website below) and give your impression of the children's experiences and the effectiveness of expressing themselves through art.

“The Kids Who Lived and Drew the Holocaust” (Kurioso)

<http://kurioso.es/english-2/the-kids-who-lived-and-drew-the-holocaust>

Activity B: Survivor Stories

When the war ended in 1945, hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children were liberated from concentration camps. Read the story of one (or more) Holocaust survivor, and in your own words, give your impression of this person's experience and how it may have changed them. You can find Holocaust survivor stories in many places; the link below is a good place to start.

“Behind Every Name a Story” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

<http://www.ushmm.org/remember/the-holocaust-survivors-and-victims-resource-center/benjamin-and-vladka-meed-registry-of-holocaust-survivors/behind-every-name-a-story>

Echoes of the Past

“I learned that just because you’re a woman and have never worked is no reason you can’t learn. The job really broadened me . . . I had always been in a shell; I’d always been protected. But at Boeing I found a freedom and an independence I had never known. After the war I could never go back to playing bridge again, being a club woman . . . when I knew there were things you could use your mind for. The war changed my life completely.”

excerpt from *The Homefront* (*The American Vision* 729)

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed this lesson, share your work with your teacher.



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