

A-Level History Paper 1- The making of a Superpower: USA 1865-1975

Part 1 – Key Vocabulary

Provide a glossary of the following key terms:

- Declaration of independence
- Northern states
- Southern states
- Federal government
- State government
- Congress
- House of Representatives
- Senator
- Governor
- Supreme Court
- The Union
- Secession
- The Confederacy
- Democrats
- Republicans
- Emancipation
- Manifest Destiny
- Isolationism
- Anti-imperialism

Part 2 – the origins of the United States of America

→ Read the information below and then answer the following review questions:

It was mostly northern Europeans who settled the land that would eventually become the United States. By the 18th century, the dominant force in the region was British. There were several reasons for the success of the British colonies in North America. There was plenty of space for production of cash crops. The institution of slavery made for even more profitable trade. The colonies also provided an attractive base for European, especially Scottish and English, dissidents. From their very earliest moments the colonies practised various forms of constitutional government based on political and religious liberty. By this they meant, roughly, that they proposed to create a political association of equals to govern their new land as part of the British Empire. America is a big land, and it was underpopulated. Towns and cities were a European idea, and they were for the most part confined to areas within easy access of the Atlantic coast.

A new country formed

Throughout the 18th century there were wars between Britain and France that spilled over into the Americas. In 1756 there began the conflict that would become known as the Seven Years' War in Europe and as the French and Indian War in America. The British sent a large force across the Atlantic and won a stunning victory in North America. Canada was theirs and France was forced out. Victory came at a price. The British, with far greater possessions now in America, embarked on a programme of reorganisation of their colonies, and decided that a frontier defence force was needed; it would have to be paid for by the colonists, and it would have to be a standing (permanent and professional) army. To the British this was all eminently sensible. For the colonists (who also saw themselves as British) it was a fundamental assault on their liberty. What the British saw as a necessary attempt to protect the colonies from further invasion became for the colonists a tyranny, and attitudes hardened on both sides of the Atlantic. All the colonies were affected by the new taxes and by the British reorganisation.

The Thirteen Colonies, as the British colonies in America came to be known, are shown in Figure 0.1. Eighteenth-century Massachusetts included the area known now as Maine. West Virginia would not split off from Virginia itself until the American Civil War.



Figure 0.1 The Thirteen Colonies.

The sense of grievance that the colonists felt fed into the 18th century thinking about liberty. Key ideas that emerged among them, and remain crucial in modern American political thought, were:

- That there should be no taxation without representation – this meant that if the British Parliament demanded taxes, it could only do so from areas that elected MPs, which the colonies and other parts of the British Empire did not.
- That government was oppressive and, if left unchecked, would become tyrannical. This was particularly true of a monarchy
- That power should be exerted locally and democratically, among an informed body of citizens with defined rights and responsibilities.

When conflict broke out in 1775, the Colonies raised an army for defence and put a general from Virginia in charge. His name was George Washington. Throughout 1775 it became clear that the British government would not deliver a version of liberty that the colonists were willing to accept; by 1776 it was evident that the ambitions of the colonial leaders could not be met while remaining within the British Empire. On 2 July 1776 the delegates to the colonial Congress declared independence; two days later they adopted a formal Declaration of Independence. This document was written chiefly by the Virginian Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration consists mostly of a list of grievances directed against the tyrannical British King George III; it also describes the inalienable rights of all men as being ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’.

The British found that they could not win a lengthy war on the other side of an ocean, in hostile territory - especially not once the French, seeking revenge for their humiliation 20 years earlier, became involved on the colonists’ side. The British capitulated in 1781.

- 1. Why was Britain able to establish colonies in America in the 17th century?**
- 2. Why were the colonists angered by the British reorganisation in the 18th century?**
- 3. What key ideas emerged that would shape the future United States of America?**
- 4. What was the declaration of independence?**

Part 3 – Contextual knowledge of the American Civil War

Research and answer the key questions below:

- What was the American Civil War?
- When was the American Civil War?
- Who fought in the American Civil War?
- What were some of the key battles of the American Civil War?
- Was there any foreign involvement in the American Civil War?
- What was the outcome of the American Civil War?
- Why is the American Civil War considered a turning point in U.S. history?

This task is important as our course begins at the end of the American Civil War. The end of the Civil War marked a new era and shaped the United States. We will be able to understand the legacy of the Civil War as we go through the course.

Part 4 – Causes of the U.S. Civil War

Read the following article on the **causes** of the American Civil War and complete the grid below. You will also need to do some additional research to complete the table.

[The American Civil War: A North-South Divide | History Today](#)

Economic differences:	Slavery:
The role of individuals:	Political conflict: - States' rights versus federal government - Political parties

Part 5 – Writing task

Using your research, write an initial 500-700 word response to:

'Economic factors were the main cause of the U.S. Civil War'.

Include:

- A balanced response
 - How economic factors could be argued to be the main cause of the U.S. Civil War
 - Another factor that caused the U.S. Civil War
 - Judgement
- Use evidence to support your arguments