

## Thematic Essays

### 1. Constitutional Amendments

Throughout American history, amendments to the Constitution have been passed in response to a specific problem in American society or government.

Identify and describe THREE Constitutional Amendments that have been passed and for each discuss

- The historical context in which the amendment was passed
- The reasons for passage of the amendment and the particular problem or issue it addressed
- The impact of the amendment on American history.

You can choose any three amendments. Some suggestions are: 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment (1791), 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1865), 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1868), 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1913), 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1919), 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1920), 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment, 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

### 2. Essay: Supreme Court Decisions

Many decisions of the United States Supreme Court have expanded the rights of Americans while others have limited people's rights.

#### Task:

Identify THREE Supreme Court decisions that have either expanded or limited the rights of Americans and for each:

- Explain the background and facts of the case
- Discuss the constitutional right and section of the constitution involved (each case you select must deal with a different right)
- Explain the Supreme Court's decision.
- Discuss the significance of the decision.

### 3. Roles of the President

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The President performs many roles. Some are described in the constitution, while others have developed through tradition.

Explain THREE roles performed by the President and for each

- Explain a specific action or policy that shows a President performing that role
- Explain why the action was taken or the policy adopted.
- Explain the impact of the action or policy on the United States or another area of the world

You can choose any three roles of the President. Some suggestions are: Commander-in-Chief; Chief Executive; Chief Legislator; Head of State; Chief Diplomat.

#### 4. Reformers

Throughout American history, social reformers have taken actions in an effort to improve American Society.

Identify TWO social reformers who have taken action to improve American society. For each

- Explain the problem or issue the individual was addressing
- The actions taken by the person to address the issue or solve the problem
- The impact of the individuals actions on American society..

You can choose any two reformers. Some suggestions are: William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Booker T. Washington, Jane Addams, Margaret Sanger, Martin Luther King Jr., Betty Friedan

#### 5. Technology

Throughout American history, inventions and other technological developments have had a tremendous impact on American society, economy and government.

Identify and describe TWO important technological developments that have occurred in American history and for each

- Describe the invention or technological development
- Discuss TWO important social, economic or political effects of the invention or technological development

You can choose any two technological developments or inventions. Some suggestions are: the cotton gin; railroads; McCormick Reaper; Atomic Bomb; Television.

#### 6. AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY,

**Historical Background:** For more than 200 years, the United States has adopted different foreign policies to promote American interests. Some of those policies were successful while others failed.

**Task:** Select THREE foreign policies adopted by the United States during the period 1789 - present and for each do the following:

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- Explain the foreign policy
  - Explain the reasons why the policy was adopted
  - Discuss the extent to which the foreign policy was a success or failure.

You may discuss any foreign policy action taken by the United States during the time period 1789- today. Some suggestions include: Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality (1793), The Monroe Doctrine (1823), Announcement of the Roosevelt Corollary; Entry into World War I; Wilson's creation of the League of Nations; Neutrality Acts during the 1930s; Containment in Europe (1945-1949); Entry into the Korean War

## 7. Reform Movements

Throughout United States history, there have been times when movements or programs have developed in response to demands for political, economic, or social reform.

**Task:** From your study of United States history, identify two movements or programs which developed in response to demands for reform.

For each movement or program identified:

- State one problem that led to the movement or program
- Describe a specific reform advocated by the movement or program to deal with the problem.
- Describe the tactics or means used by supporters of the movement or program to achieve the specific reform.
- Discuss the extent to which the movement or program reform was successful in achieving the specific reform

### Suggestions

You may use any major reform movement or program from your study of United States History. Some suggestions you might wish to consider include: the abolitionist movement (1830-65); Reconstruction (1865-77); Women's Movement (1848-1920); Progressivism (1900-1920); New Deal (1933-45); Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968)

## 8. Geography — Development of the United States

Many important events in United States history have been influenced by geography. Geographic factors or conditions include location, size, climate, natural resources, and physical features. These events in turn have had political, social, and economic impacts on the development of the United States.

### Task:

Identify *two* important events in United States history and for *each*

- Describe how a geographic factor or condition influenced the event
  - Discuss the political, social, *and/or* economic impacts of this event on the development of the United States
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You may use any important event that was influenced by geographic factors or conditions. Some suggestions you might wish to consider include the Louisiana Purchase, the construction of the Erie Canal, migration to California in the late 1840s, the Civil War, the purchase of Alaska, the building of the transcontinental railroad, the acquisition of the Philippines, the building of the Panama Canal, the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and the construction of the interstate highway system.

**You are *not* limited to these suggestions.**

# Essay – Graphic Organizer

Topic:

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Task 1:			
Task 2:			
Task 3:			

THESIS:

## Foreign Policy

Policy – explain it	Historical Context – time period, what was happening, etc.	Reasons for policy	Impact of Policy
Washington – Neutrality (1793)			
Monroe Doctrine – (1823)			
Westward Expansion, Manifest Destiny (1830s and 40s)			
Imperialism, Overseas Expansion (Late 19 <sup>th</sup> c.)			

Policy – explain it	Historical Context – time period, what was happening, etc.	Reasons for policy	Impact of Policy
Roosevelt Big Stick Policy / Roosevelt Corollary (early 1900s)			
U.S. Entry into World War I (1914-18)			
Containment (1945-75)			
War on Terror (2001-Present)			

## Reform Periods in American History

Period	Historical Background	Important Reforms	Impact/Significance
RECONSTRUCTION (1865-1877)			
PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT (1900-1920)			

Period	Historical Background	Important Reforms	Impact/Significance
NEW DEAL (1933-1940)			
GREAT SOCIETY (1963-1969)			



## Supreme Court Cases

Case	Historical Background (if applicable)	Facts of the Case	Decision	Impact
Marbury v. Madison				
McCullough v. Maryland				
Dred Scott v. Sanford				
Plessy v. Ferguson				
Schenck v. United States				

Case	Historical Background (if applicable)	Facts of the Case	Decision	Impact
Korematsu v. U.S.				
Brown v. Board of Education				
Tinker v. Des Moines				
New York Times v. U.S.				
Nixon v. U.S.				

# Amendments

(suggestions – 1 (freedom of press or establishment clause), 14<sup>th</sup> (Citizenship and equal protection)  
18<sup>th</sup> (Prohibition), 19<sup>th</sup> (woman's suffrage), 22<sup>nd</sup> (Term Limits), 24<sup>th</sup> (Poll taxes), 26<sup>th</sup> (vote for 18 year  
olds)

Amendment (define)	Historical Context and Reasons for Passage	Impact?

## Roles of the President and Presidential Actions

Role and Action	Historical Context	Reason for Action	Impact
<p>Chief Diplomat – Wilson introduces 14 points and Participates in Versailles Conference</p>			
<p>Chief Legislator – FDR introduces his New Deal</p>			
<p>Chief Executive – President Eisenhower enforces desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas</p>			
<p>Commander-in-Chief Lyndon Johnson escalates the Vietnam War</p>			

## Geography

Geographic Feature	Action/development regarding feature	Impact of Action
United States separated from Europe/Asia by Oceans	Washington – Neutrality  1930s – Neutrality	
Mississippi River / New Orleans	Louisiana Purchase	
West Coast of the United States (Access to farmland/mining/trade with Asia)	Manifest Destiny  Texas  Oregon  Mexican War	
Proximity to Latin American	Monroe Doctrine  Acquisition and building of Panama Canal	

