

Syllabus Development Guide: AP[®] United States History

The guide contains the following sections and information:

Curricular Requirements

The curricular requirements are the core elements of the course. Your syllabus must provide clear evidence that each requirement is fully addressed in your course.

Scoring Components

Some curricular requirements consist of complex, multipart statements. These particular requirements are broken down into their component parts and restated as “scoring components.” Reviewers will look for evidence that each scoring component is included in your course.

Evaluation Guideline(s)

These are the evaluation criteria that describe the level and type of evidence required to satisfy each scoring component.

Key Term(s)

These ensure that certain terms or expressions, within the curricular requirement or scoring component that may have multiple meanings, are clearly defined.

Samples of Evidence

For each scoring component, three separate samples of evidence are provided. These statements provide clear descriptions of what acceptable evidence should look like.



Syllabus Development Guide Contents

Curricular Requirements	i
Scoring Components	i
Curricular Requirement 1	1
Scoring Component 1a.....	1
Scoring Component 1b	2
Scoring Component 1c.....	3
Curricular Requirement 2	5
Curricular Requirement 3	6
Curricular Requirement 4	7
Curricular Requirement 5	10
Curricular Requirement 6	11
Curricular Requirement 7	13
Curricular Requirement 8	14
Curricular Requirement 9	15
Curricular Requirement 10	16
Curricular Requirement 11	17
Curricular Requirement 12	18



Curricular Requirement 1

The course includes a college-level U.S. history textbook, diverse primary sources, and multiple secondary sources written by historians or scholars interpreting the past.

Scoring Component 1a

The course includes a college-level U.S. history textbook.

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must cite the title, author, and publication date of a college-level U.S. history textbook.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. The syllabus includes the author, title, and publication date of a college-level textbook.
2. The syllabus cites a textbook from the AP United States History Example Textbook List.
3. The syllabus cites a recently published college-level textbook for a U.S. history course.



Curricular Requirement 1

The course includes a college-level U.S. history textbook, diverse primary sources, and multiple secondary sources written by historians or scholars interpreting the past.

Scoring Component 1b

The course includes diverse primary sources including written documents and images as well as maps and quantitative data (charts, graphs, tables).

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must cite specific examples of sources from each category: 1. Textual (documents), 2. Visual (images, artwork artifacts, films), 3. Maps, and 4. Quantitative (charts, tables, graphs).

Key Term(s)

Visual sources: could include artifacts, artwork, films, photographs, political cartoons, etc.

Textual sources: diaries, government reports, letters, newspapers, novels, etc.

Quantitative sources: charts, tables, or graphs made up of numerical or statistical data.

Samples of Evidence

1. The syllabus assignments regularly include analysis of specific written documents (e.g., Madison's Federalist No. 10), maps (e.g., map of 1968 presidential election results), quantitative evidence (e.g., a graph of unemployment during the Great Depression), and images (e.g., 1950s advertisements for consumer goods).
2. The course outline regularly assigns a wide variety of specific primary sources with titles and authors (e.g., Andrew Jackson's veto of the Second Bank of the United States), maps (e.g., map of antebellum territorial expansion), images (e.g., Andy Warhol paintings or Thomas Nast cartoons), and quantitative data (e.g., table of stock prices from 1927–1941).
3. The syllabus regularly references an anthology of primary sources and then cites specific sources from that anthology as well as specific sources for quantitative data, artifacts, and maps).



Curricular Requirement 1

The course includes a college-level U.S. history textbook, diverse primary sources, and multiple secondary sources written by historians or scholars interpreting the past.

Scoring Component 1c

The course includes multiple secondary sources written by historians or scholars interpreting the past.

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must include at least two secondary sources beyond the course textbook.

The syllabus must cite the title and author of each source.

Key Term(s)

Secondary source: an analytical account of the past, written after the event, and used to provide insight into the past.

Scholar: an interpreter of the past who is not necessarily a historian (e.g., art historians, economists, political scientists, and sociologists).

Samples of Evidence

1. The syllabus assigns books, excerpts, or articles by various historians such as Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006); Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990); Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); or John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2006).
2. The course outline assigns articles or book chapters by historians, such as Richard Hofstadter's *The American Political Tradition: And the Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage, 1999) or Bruce Schulman's *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006).



Samples of Evidence

(continued)

3. The syllabus assigns excerpts from two different historical interpretations of a historical event such as Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992) and Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1993).



Curricular Requirement 2

Each of the course historical periods receives explicit attention.

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must show explicit evidence of instruction in all nine periods extending from pre-Columbian North American history into the twenty-first century.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. The syllabus lists textbook chapter headings with corresponding content under each heading that cover the complete chronological scope of each period – including the pre-Columbian period as well as the first years of the twenty-first century.
2. Each syllabus unit includes a culminating activity or assignment that assesses student understanding of each of the nine periods as a whole.
3. The syllabus is organized by periods and clearly indicates readings and assignments that address each historical period, beginning with the pre-Columbian period and ending with a written analysis of the effects of the 9/11 attacks based on journal and magazine accounts.



Curricular Requirement 3

Students are provided opportunities to investigate key and supporting concepts through the in-depth study and application of specific historical evidence or examples.

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment or activity in which students explore or investigate specific examples of historical events or developments in depth in order to illustrate key concepts.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. Students give an oral presentation that explains how the actions of specific colonial leaders either expanded or reduced inequality after the American Revolution.
2. Students engage in a role-playing debate between different historical actors criticizing or justifying imperialism during the post-Civil War era.
3. Students write an essay explaining how and why the Tennessee Valley Authority demonstrated the goals of New Dealers in expanding the role of government and economic rights.



Curricular Requirement 4

Students are provided opportunities to apply learning objectives in each of the themes throughout the course.

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must include seven student assignments or activities, each of which is related to one of the seven themes.

Each assignment or activity must be labeled with a specific learning objective.

Key Term(s)

Learning objective: a description of what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course as articulated in the *AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description* and organized according to the seven course themes.

Samples of Evidence

1. The course outline describes specific activities related to each of the themes at relevant points in the course. For instance:

Theme 1 (NAT-1.0) — In lectures, the teacher shows students works of poetry and paintings made by American artists in the first half of the nineteenth century and asks students to evaluate each work for its expression of ideas of American national identity.

Theme 2 (POL-3.0) — After reading the work of historians Richard Hofstadter and Ronald G. Walters, students are asked to write an essay agreeing or disagreeing with Hofstadter’s arguments by referencing one reform movement from the antebellum or progressive eras.

Theme 3 (WXT-1.0) — Working in groups, students develop a class presentation that analyzes reasons for the development of different labor systems in any two of the following regions of British colonial settlement: New England, the Chesapeake, the southernmost Atlantic coast, and the British West Indies.

Theme 4 (CUL-2.0) — Students examine the writing and photographs of Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, and other Progressive Era writers and create a mock exposé of urban social conditions in the early twentieth century.

Samples of Evidence (continued)

Theme 5 (MIG-1.0) — Students use a graphic organizer to compare and contrast the causes, goals, and impact on immigration to the United States of the 1921, 1924, 1965, and 1990 Immigration Acts as described in excerpts.

Theme 6 (GEO-1.0) — Students are each assigned a specific Amerindian culture, such as the Iroquois, the Algonquian, the Cherokee, the Natchez, the Hopi, the Seminole, the Sioux, and the tribes of the Pacific Northwest. In small groups, they research and present findings to the class about the cultures and lifestyles of each people as related to their physical environment and natural resources available.

Theme 7 (WOR-2.0) — Students read the sources in a document-based question on the Mexican-American War and engage in a classroom debate on President Polk’s motives for entering the war.

2. Student assessments are connected explicitly to the seven AP U.S. History themes. For instance:
 - Theme 1 (NAT-3.0) — Students engage in a debate over the question, “Did the Revolution assert British rights or did it create an American national identity?”
 - Theme 2 (POL-2.0) — Students are given an assignment to research one antebellum reform movement and explain how it fits into broader patterns of antebellum reform.
 - Theme 3 (WXT-2.0) — Students compare and contrast the presentation of European colonization efforts as related to patterns of exchange, markets, and the actions and motives of private and governmental actors, in a U.S. History and a World History textbook, and debate the approach used by each discipline.
 - Theme 4 (CUL-2.0) — Students read a “living newspaper” produced under the auspices of the WPA and debate the extent to which its contents reflected the politics of the FDR Administration’s New Deal or dissenting viewpoints.
 - Theme 5 (MIG-2.0) — In a free response essay, students examine the economic, sociological, and political reasons for, and effects of, the “Great Migration” of African Americans from the South to the North in the early twentieth century.
 - Theme 6 (GEO-1.0) — Students write an essay that examines how the natural environment influenced the cultures of the Cherokee, Pueblo, and Chumash.

Samples of Evidence

(continued)

- Theme 7 (WOR-2.0) — Students read excerpts from the work of historians Reginald Horsman, Sean Wilentz, and Sam Haynes and write an essay using evidence to justify which perspective they believe to be the most convincing account of Manifest Destiny.
3. The syllabus specifically shows how student activities explore the themes at relevant points in the schedule. For instance:
- Theme 1 (NAT-2.0) — After reading the work of historian Gordon Wood, students write an essay analyzing the degree to which the Constitution reflected an emerging sense of American national identity.
 - Theme 2 (POL-2.0) — Students construct a time line of the civil rights movement from Reconstruction to the 1970s and annotate key turning points in the movement.
 - Theme 3 (WXT-2.0) — Students make a museum map tracing the impact of the Columbian Exchange with reference to specific commodities, then provide a curator’s comment explaining the importance of the commodities to both Old World and New.
 - Theme 4 (CUL-2.0) — Students write an essay debating the role of popular music in affecting public attitudes toward the Vietnam War.
 - Theme 5 (MIG-2.0) — Students examine a map of reported ancestry on the 2000 Census and engage in small-group research teams to report on the causes for the settlement patterns revealed in the map.
 - Theme 6 (GEO-1.0) — Students write an essay asking what role the acquisition of natural resources has played in U.S. foreign policy decisions since the late nineteenth century.
 - Theme 7 (WOR-2.0) — Students create a political cartoon arguing for or against annexation of Cuba after the Spanish-American War. They then write an editorial paragraph to accompany their cartoon.



Curricular Requirement 5

Students are provided opportunities to analyze primary sources and explain the significance of an author’s point of view, author’s purpose, audience, and historical context. — Analyzing Primary Sources

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment or activity in which students analyze a primary source for all of the following features: author’s point of view, author’s purpose, audience, and historical context.

The syllabus must cite or describe the primary source used for the assignment or activity. The source can be a text or visual.

Key Term(s)

Visual sources: could include artwork, artifacts, films, political cartoons, photographs, etc.

Samples of Evidence

1. Students analyze and contrast political cartoons found in major American publications (e.g., *The Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *National Review*) on the Vietnam War. Students will describe the historical context of each cartoon and the points of view of each cartoonist – specifically whether he/she was a “hawk” or a “dove” and the basis of each cartoonist’s view.
2. Using the SOAPStone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone) handout, students analyze and contrast oral histories from the Great Depression such as Studs Terkel’s *Hard Times* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) and the WPA slave narratives.
3. Students are asked to compare and analyze transcripts of speeches by Emma Goldman and Susan B. Anthony on the meaning of women’s suffrage. Students will turn in written briefs of their work based on the APPARTS (Author, Place & Time, Prior Knowledge, Audience, Reason, The Main Idea, Significance) strategy.

Curricular Requirement 6

Students are provided opportunities to analyze and evaluate diverse historical interpretations. —
Analyzing Secondary Sources

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must include at least one assignment or activity in which students analyze the interpretation of at least two secondary sources beyond the textbook. This must be accomplished in one comparative assignment or activity.

The syllabus must cite the sources used for the assignment or activity.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. Using *Major Problems in American History, Volume II: Since 1865*, edited by Elizabeth Cobbs, Edward J. Blum, and Jon Gjerde (Boston: Wadsworth Publishing, 2011), students complete a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts the historical interpretations in David Kennedy's essay "FDR: Advocate for the American People" and Burton Folsom's essay "FDR: Architect of Ineffectual Big Government" on the effectiveness of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies.
2. Students write an essay that shows the evolution of historical interpretations of the origins of the Constitution by comparing the arguments in Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004); Forrest McDonald's *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution* (Piscataway, NY: Transaction Publishers, 1991); Gordon Wood's article "Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution" in Beeman et al., *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987); and Jack Rakove's *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Vintage, 1997).



Samples of Evidence

(continued)

3. Students participate in a debate in which they analyze different interpretations of slave society in the South, drawing on Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1976); Stephanie McCurry's *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Cultures of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); and James Oakes's *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1998).



Curricular Requirement 7

Students are provided opportunities to compare historical developments across or within societies in various chronological and geographical contexts. — Comparison

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment or activity requiring students to compare related historical developments and processes across regions, periods, or societies (or within one society).

Key Term(s)

Societies: examples could include social groups such as women, Native Americans, African Americans, immigrants, etc.

Samples of Evidence

1. Students write a comparative essay within the unit concerning early colonization by the British, French, and Spanish, and colonists' interactions with Native American societies.
2. In an essay, students compare the goals, actions, and achievements of labor unions during the Progressive Era and the present era and must answer the question, "How have unions changed?"
3. Students engage in a group discussion over the degree to which debates over immigration in the early twentieth century are similar to, or different from, debates over immigration today.



Curricular Requirement 8

Students are provided opportunities to explain the relationship between historical events, developments, or processes and the broader regional, national, or global contexts in which they occurred. — Contextualization

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment or activity in which students situate historical events, developments, or processes within the broader regional, national, or global context in which they occurred.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. Students write an essay in which they evaluate the impact of the Columbian Exchange on Native Americans in North America during the sixteenth century.
2. Students engage in a class discussion that compares and contrasts imperialist views in the United States and in Europe between 1880 and 1914.
3. Students are asked to present their research on why the American Indian Movement emerged in the 1960s and not the 1930s.



Curricular Requirement 9

Students are provided opportunities to explain different causes and effects of historical events or processes, and to evaluate their relative significance. — Causation

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment or activity that explicitly addresses both cause and effect.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. After studying the Emancipation Proclamation, students respond to a free response question that asks them to analyze the causes that led to Abraham Lincoln’s issuance of the document and the effects it had on the Union’s war effort.
2. Students write an essay responding to the question: “In terms of causes and effects, what historical developments made the American Revolution inevitable?”
3. Throughout the course, in specific well-described assignments or activities, students are asked to identify multiple causes and consequences of major historical events such as Native American resistance to westward expansion, American imperialism, the post-war civil rights movement, or the Watergate scandal.



Curricular Requirement 10

Students are provided opportunities to identify and explain patterns of continuity and change over time, explaining why these patterns are historically significant. — Continuity and Change Over Time

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment or activity in which students identify historical patterns of continuity and change within one time period or across multiple time periods, relating these patterns to a larger historical process.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. Students write an essay in which they assess the impact of North American and overseas territorial expansion on popular beliefs about American national destiny throughout the nineteenth century.
2. Students participate in group work and complete a written assignment that examines slavery and work within the larger context of the black African diaspora over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, focusing on work and race as guiding concepts.
3. Students create a “before and after” cartoon illustrating the effects of the Second World War on the African-American Civil Rights Movement.



Curricular Requirement 11

Students are provided opportunities to articulate a historically defensible and evaluative claim (thesis). — Argument Development

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe an assignment or activity in which students focus on developing a historically defensible and evaluative claim (thesis) based on evidence.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. Students will use documents and their knowledge of the period from 1948 to 1961 to write a thesis statement that could be supported by historical evidence on the following prompt: “What were the Cold War fears of the American people in the aftermath of the Second World War? How successfully did the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower address these fears?”
2. In response to the following prompt, students will write an essay with a thesis statement supported by historical evidence that focuses on the economic, political, and social effects of the Revolution: “To what extent did the American Revolution fundamentally change American society from 1775 to 1800?”
3. Students will construct a historical argument with a thesis to be supported by historical evidence on the following prompt: “Were the policies of the New Deal merely an extension of Progressive Era policy goals, or did they represent new innovations from past economic and social policies?”



Curricular Requirement 12

Students are provided opportunities to develop and substantiate an argument using historical reasoning, considering ways diverse or alternative evidence could be used to support, qualify, or modify the argument. — Argument Development

Evaluation Guideline(s)

The syllabus must describe at least two essay assignments in which students develop and substantiate an argument using historical reasoning, considering ways evidence could be used to support, qualify, or modify the argument.

Key Term(s)

None at this time.

Samples of Evidence

1. Using evidence from chapters by Edmund Morgan and Gary Nash, the class textbook, and the writings of Abigail Adams, students write an essay that includes a thesis statement arguing for or against the revolutionary nature of the new republic.

Students use both primary and secondary sources to construct an argument, which includes a thesis statement, about the changes in U.S. politics and society as a result of World War II.

2. Students write an essay, which includes a thesis statement, arguing for or against the idea that the Civil War was an inevitable outcome of the American Revolution.

Students write an essay, which includes a thesis statement, comparing and contrasting the strategies and outcomes of African-American civil rights efforts in the 1860s-70s and the 1950s-60s.

3. Students write an essay, which includes a thesis statement, assessing the degree to which innovations in markets, transportation, and technology affected the economy and the different regions of North America from the colonial period through the end of the Civil War.

Students write an essay, which includes a thesis statement, assessing how changes in transportation,



Samples of Evidence

technology, and the integration of the U.S. economy into world markets have influenced U.S. society since the Gilded Age.

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