Between 1890 and 1945, the United States became an international power, while at home issues surrounding industrialization, urbanization, and the demands of an increasingly diverse society came to the fore. As the U.S. economy became more dependent on large corporations and the production of consumer goods, people increasingly moved from rural areas to urban centers where jobs were available. Although these new jobs offered opportunities to many who had been underemployed, cycles of boom and bust created periodic instability. The Great Depression was the most dramatic of these economic downturns, leading to calls for more regulation of the national economy.

Progressive reformers began to call for government intervention in the economy to relieve suffering of the urban working classes, who faced the greatest hardships. These reformers, often urban middle class women, targeted reform of both social and political institutions. Other groups worked in the area of conservation of natural resources. National, state, and local leaders responded to this call for reform, particularly after the trauma of the Great Depression, and the result was the transformation of the Government into a limited welfare state.

Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal built on many of the ideas of earlier progressive reformers and created government programs to aid the poor and reshape the American economy. Roosevelt faced conservative opposition in Congress and from the Supreme Court, yet he was able to introduce reforms that made many feel more secure. His programs were identified with the Democratic Party and lead a number of racial and ethnic groups to switch loyalties from the Republicans.

The years from 1890 to 1945 saw the introduction of many new forms of technology and communication. Although these advances helped many improve their standard of living, others felt their traditional ways of life were being threatened. These years were a time of traumatic change for many, with economic instability, world wars, and the stresses associated with migration. Conflicts emerged on a number of fronts: social, political, economic, and religious.

The xenophobia caused by World War I lead the United States to enact a series of restrictive immigration laws in the 1920s. Fears of the spread of socialism and communism also inspired Congress to pass laws restricting citizens’ civil liberties, all in the name of national security. A rash of labor strikes fed the fear of a “red scare” (called this because red was associated with the new Soviet Union), leading to even stricter overseas immigration control. The nation opened borders within the Western Hemisphere, however, to allow in a steady supply of cheap labor. Although Mexicans were welcomed in the 1920s, they faced uncertain futures as migrant workers in the 1930s and 1940s.

African Americans also began to move out of the South in significant numbers to urban centers in the North, Midwest, and West Coast, seeking jobs and an escape from Jim Crow. This “Great Migration” had an impact throughout the country, particularly in New York City in the form of the Harlem Renaissance, the rich contribution to the national culture.

At the beginning of this time period, the United States took its first steps into the international arena. There was much disagreement within the United States as to whether such a move was in keeping with America’s traditional position as a defender of the colonized world. The War of 1898, or the Spanish-American War, left the country with island territories as well as military and economic interests to defend in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Debates over whether the United States should rightly be an imperialist power would continue for the rest of this century and beyond, although clearly the country was now an international presence.

World War I affectively ended the United States’ long-term position as a neutral and isolated power, though debates over the U.S. role in international affairs continued in the 1920s and 1930s. The American Expeditionary Force entered in the last years of the war, which allowed Woodrow Wilson to play a role at the post-war negotiations at Versailles. The resulting Treaty of Versailles and Wilson’s League of Nations proved unpopular in the United States, and the country spent the next two decades trying to follow a unilateral foreign policy and retreat back into isolationism, an ultimately unsuccessful effort.

World War II affectively ended U.S. isolationism overnight and launched the country into World War II and a position of international political and military prominence that could not change with the end of the war. The mass mobilization required for the war effort effectively ended what was left of the Great Depression. Women and minorities benefited from these jobs. American values came under scrutiny during the course of the war with the Japanese internment, the ongoing Civil Rights struggle, and the moral and ethical questions surrounding the decision to use atomic weapons on Japan. The United States and the Allies defeated the Axis powers through their combined military, economic, and technological strengths. The United States emerged from World War II as the most powerful nation on earth.
**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

*Instructions:* Please answer the following questions completely and in full sentences. Answers should be between 1 – 4 sentences.

(1890-1917)

1. What arguments were voiced by both black and white leaders about the rights and roles of African American in the years leading to World War I?

2. Why were women often in the forefront of Progressive reforms?

3. What new challenges did American cities face at the turn of the Century, and how did the Government address these problems?

4. Many scholars argue that progressivism was largely a middle-class movement. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?

5. In what ways were the policies and actions of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson similar? Which president better deserves to be called progressive?
6. What were the milestones in the struggle between American corporations and American workers in the years before World War I?

7. Progressive reforms that protected workers often turned out to be a double-edged sword. Why?

8. In what ways was the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire a watershed event in American history?

9. How did the realist and naturalist writers at the turn of the century portray life in America? What accounts for this change in focus from previous literary portrayals of America?

10. How did the new music of the turn of the century, ragtime and blues, both reflect and shape American culture?

11. What caused Americans to embrace imperialism in the late 19th Century, only to reject it in the early 20th Century and into the 1930s?
12. How did Theodore Roosevelt’s foreign policy reflect the assertion of masculinity that was so prevalent in American culture?

(1917-1929)

13. How was the United States able to mobilize for World War I so quickly?

14. Shortly after World War I ended, a journalist said, “The World War has accentuated all our differences.” In what ways was this true in post-war America?

15. In what ways were the presidencies of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover different from those of Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson? Account for the changes that occurred in the roles of the presidency in the years from 1900 to 1929.

16. How did the United States justify limitations placed on individual liberty during World War I?

17. Why did so many Americans oppose President Wilson’s plans for the post-war world?
18. What were the most important characteristics of the consumer culture that emerged in the 1920s? Account for the emergence of consumerism in the 1920s, and explain how it differed from the consumer culture of the late 19th Century.

19. What accounted for the burst of creativity we call the Harlem Renaissance?

20. To what extent were Wilson's Fourteen Points both idealistic and a reflection of global political and economic realities?

21. In what ways did World War I set the stage for the outbreak of war only two decades later, in 1939?

22. Wartime work for women “combined new opportunities with old constraints.” What new opportunities did the War bring for women, and in what ways were they still constrained?

23. In what ways did the Depression and the New Deal alter the structure and power of the Federal Government?
24. What groups joined the Roosevelt Coalition, and why did they feel that their interests were served by the Roosevelt presidency?

25. How effectively did Franklin Roosevelt and Congress address the crisis brought about by the Great Depression?

26. What were the characteristics of the American welfare state that was established during the 1930s, and why was this development so significant?

27. How did economic forces affect the American political landscape in the years between the two World Wars?

28. What impact did the development of the atomic bomb by the United States have on the American economy and on American culture in the decades following World War II?
29. How did beliefs held by many Americans before and during World War II influence policies for Jews in Europe and Japanese Americans in the United States?

30. In what ways were both World War I and World War II turning points in American history?

31. In what ways did World War II hasten “profound social change” and expand the scope and authority of the Federal Government?

32. How did actions taken during World War II lay the groundwork for the Cold War?

33. What efforts were made to help the poor as they became increasingly visible in American cities?

34. What demographic changes occurred in the United States as a result of American entry into each of the World Wars? How did these demographic shifts affect the economic, political, and social fabric of the nation?
35. What milestones in the environmental movement were due to the actions of Progressives?
Salvation is free, but it doesn’t appeal to him, by Udo J. Keppler (Puck Magazine – 1912)

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No More Scorched Earth! By, Theodor Geisel (PM Magazine – March 4, 1942)

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**ESSAY PRACTICE (SAQ/DBQ/LEQ)**

*Directions: For each of the following prompts you will provide contextualization, a thesis, and analysis. Some requirements will vary and be determined by the type of essay prompt you are responding to (SAQ, DBQ or LEQ). You will also identify whether the question is assessing causation, comparison, or continuity and change over time. Bullet points are sufficient.*

1. **Answer (a), (b), and (c) [SAQ]**
   - (a) Briefly explain ONE specific historical similarity between the causes of the Great Depression (1929-1939) and the causes of an earlier economic recession or depression in the United States.
     - ____________________________
     - ____________________________
     - ____________________________
     - ____________________________
     - ____________________________
2. **Answer (a), (b), and (c) [SAQ]**

- *(b)* Briefly explain ONE specific historical difference in the causes of the Great Depression (1929-1939) from the causes of an earlier economic recession or depression in the United States.

- *(c)* Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development demonstrates a change in the United States caused by the Great Depression (1929-1939).

2. **Answer (a), (b), and (c) [SAQ]**

- *(a)* Briefly explain why ONE of the following developments was the most significant factor contributing to military victory for the United States in the Second World War.
  - *Technological and scientific advances*
  - *Mass mobilization of American society*
  - *Allied cooperation*

- *(b)* Explain ONE specific historical example to support your argument (a).

- *(c)* Explain why ONE of the other options exerted a lesser influence leading to the United States’ victory.

3. **To what extent did the growth of modern technology in the period from 1900 to 1925 lead to greater national unity? [LEQ]**

- Identify what historical skill the prompt is assessing
4. Evaluate the role of the New Deal in shaping political alignments and party systems in the United States during the period from 1932 to 1940. [DBQ]

- Identify what historical skill the prompt is assessing
- Provide contextualization

- Provide a thesis

- Give at least 3 specific and historically accurate pieces of evidence
  - (a) 
  - (b) 
  - (c)
• Provide a thesis
  □ (1)
  □ (2)
  □ (3)
  □ (4)

• Source 4 documents *(H.A.P.P.Y.)*
  □ (1)
  □ (2)
  □ (3)
  □ (4)

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**Document 1**

Source: Electoral College Returns for the 1928 and 1932 Elections
Document 2

Source: Speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 1932

Although I understand that I am talking under the auspices of the Democratic National Committee, I do not want to limit myself to politics… The present condition of our national affairs is too serious to be viewed through partisan eyes for partisan purposes… [Our] objectives [include] restoring farmers' buying power, relief to the small banks and homeowners and a reconstructed tariff policy [as] a part of ten or a dozen vital factors. But they seem to be beyond the concern of a national administration which can think in terms only of the top of the social and economic structure… It is high time to admit with courage that we are in the midst of an emergency at least equal to that of war. Let us mobilize to meet it.
Document 3

Source: National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act), 1935

SEC. 7. Employees shall have the right of self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in concerted activities, for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

SEC. 8. It shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer-

(1) To interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in section 7…

(2) By discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment or any term or condition of employment to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization

Document 4

Source: Letter from Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work, 1935

My Dear Mr. Fechner:

I have your letter of September 24 in which you express doubt as to the advisability of appointing Negro supervisory personnel in Negro CCC camps. For my part, I am quite certain that Negroes can function in supervisory capacities just as efficiently as can white men and I do not think that they should be discriminated against merely on account of their color. I can see no menace to the program that you are so efficiently carrying out in giving just and proper recognition to members of the Negro race.

Document 5

Source: “Our Skipper,” Political Cartoon, 1934
I wonder whether the women in this country, and men too, realize just what the creation of the Women's Division in [the Works Progress Administration] signifies. It means the Administration is determined that women shall receive their fair share of work and that it has made special provision for the enforcement of that policy. When the President said that no able-bodied citizens were to be allowed to deteriorate on relief but must be given jobs, he meant women as well as men… We have learned to design projects which not only give women employment, but which increase their skill and keep them employable—so they will be ready to take advantage of the first opportunities for jobs in private industry.
The enthusiastic warm reception accorded President Roosevelt by the people of the west, from the state of Iowa to the state of Washington, would today be duplicated in any section through which the chief executive should chance to pass… And nowhere would it be more real than in the great agricultural community of the nation… For the American farmer is well aware that the agricultural program of Franklin D. Roosevelt, dating back to the early days of 1933, is the first and only broad-range programs designed to help the farmer which really worked… Every farmer… knows that the prosperity returned to America when the A.A.A. began to work, then and only then.

**DATES TO REMEMBER!**

**Quiz #1:** Monday, February 10th

**Quiz #2:** Friday, February 28th

**Project Workdays:** Thursday, February 20th & Friday, February 21st

**Project DUE:** Friday, February 28th

**AMSCO Notes DUE:** Wednesday, March 11th

**Unit Test - SBMC:** Wednesday, March 11th

**Unit Packet, DUE:** Thursday, March 12th

**Unit Test – SAQ:** Thursday, March 12th

**NOTE:** Dates are subject to change at the teacher’s discretion.