

SPECIFICATION FOR A LEVEL HISTORY – UNIT 1K: USA, 1865 – 1975

This option allows students to study in breadth issues of change, continuity, cause and consequence in this period through the following key questions:

- How did government, political authority and political parties change and develop?
- In what ways did the economy and society of the USA change and develop?
- How did the role of the USA in world affairs change?
- How important were ideas and ideology?
- How united was the USA during this period?
- How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

Part one: from Civil War to World War, 1865–1920

The Era of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1890

- The weaknesses of Federal Government: Johnson, Grant and the failure of Radical Reconstruction
- The politics of the Gilded Age and the era of weak presidents; political corruption
- Social, regional and ethnic divisions: divisions within and between North, South and West; the position of African-Americans
- Economic growth and the rise of corporations: railways; oil; developments in agriculture; urbanisation
- Laissez-faire dominance and consequences; the impact of the ending of the frontier
- The limits of foreign engagement and continuation of isolationism: the continuation of the Monroe Doctrine; territorial consolidation (Alaska) and tensions over Canada

Populism, progressivism and imperialism, 1890–1920

- Political tensions and divisions: the reaction against Big Business at national and state level
- The ideas and influence of Bryan, Roosevelt and Taft; Populism, Progressivism and Wilson's New Freedom
- Economic change and developments: the rise of US dominance as an economic and industrial power and the consequences of this
- Social developments: mass immigration and urbanisation and their consequences; the position of African-Americans

- Foreign affairs: imperialism; engagement in international affairs; Spain and the Philippines; the Panama Canal; the First World War, neutrality and entry
- The USA by 1920: economic power; social and ethnic divisions; political reaction and renewed isolationism

Part two: crises and the rise to World Power, 1920–1975 (A-level only)

Crisis of identity, 1920–1945 (A-level only)

- Domestic politics: Harding, Coolidge and Republican conservatism; Hoover and the Depression
- FD Roosevelt and the New Deals: conflict of ideas over the role of the Federal Government
- The economy: boom to bust and recovery; structural weaknesses and the impact of the New Deals and the Second World War on economic recovery
- Social and cultural developments: 'the Jazz Age' in the 1920s; new social values and the role of women; the failure of prohibition and its significance; social impact of the Depression and the Second World War
- Social, regional and ethnic divisions: countryside versus city; divisions between North, West and South; African-Americans and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan
- The USA and international relations: the extent of isolationism; FDR and the end of isolationism and the Second World War

The Superpower, 1945–1975 (A-level only)

- Domestic politics: Truman, Eisenhower and post-war reconstruction
- Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon; New Frontier; the Great Society; Nixon and Republican revival
- Economic change and developments: the rise of the consumer society and economic boom
- Ideological, social, regional and ethnic divisions: McCarthyism; civil rights; youth culture; protest and the mass media
- The USA and international relations: the Cold War and relations with the USSR and China; the Vietnam War
- The USA by 1975: its place as a Superpower; the limits of social cohesion; new cultural developments, including the role of women and the position of African-Americans