Unit 1: Getting Oriented

By 1673, when this map was drawn, European nations had established colonies in North America. They wanted colonies to increase their wealth and power. The people who crossed the Atlantic Ocean to settle the English colonies came for a wide range of reasons—religious freedom, escape from debt, the opportunity to own land, the chance to start a new life. Some , however, did not come by choice (slaves).

Unit 2: A Nation and Ideals Emerge

After defeating the French in North America in 1763, the British started tightening control over their colonies. The colonists believed these actions violated their rights. For example, Great Britain raised taxes, limited trade, and forced colonists to house British soldiers in their homes. In 1770, a crowd began taunting some of these soldiers with snowballs. The soldiers fired on the mob and killed five colonists. Know as the Boston Massacre, this event helped fuel the resistance to British rule that led to the American Revolution.

Unit 3: Growth of and Challenges to American Ideals

Less than a century after winning independence from Great Britain, the U.S. almost split in two. The Civil War divided the nation because of questions about states’ rights and equality. In the battle shown here, black Union soldiers, of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment attack Confederate troops at Fort Wagner, South Carolina, in 1863.

Four months after this battle, President Abraham Lincoln dedicated the military cemetery at Gettysburg with a renewed commitment to American ideas.

*Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal……That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

--Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1863

Unit 4: Growing Pains and Gains

After the Civil War, tens of thousands of people streamed westward to settle the vast American heartland. Many believed it was America’s “manifest destiny” to occupy North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific. John Gast painted *American Progress*  in 1872, capturing that spirit. Trains, wagons, farmers, miners, the telegraph—all moved west in the late 19th century. What was progress to these pioneers, however, meant the end of the Native American way of life.

Unit 5: The Progressive Era

In the late 19th century, American cities expanded rapidly with the growth of industry. Needing more and more workers, factories hired immigrants, and even children, at low wages. Child labor was one of the problems caused by industrialization. Many people were outraged by these problems and called for reform. This photo shows two girls at work in a textile mill early in the 20th century. Lewis Hine, the social reformer who took this photo, urged American industry to change.

*Perhaps you are weary of child labor pictures. Well, so are the rest of us, but we propose to make you and the whole country so sick and tired of the whole business that when the time for action comes, child labor pictures will be records of the past.*

Lewis Hine, 1911

Unit 6: Building an Empire

In this cartoon, Uncle Sam is being fitted for a new suit of clothing. He has grown very large and is getting larger—a reference to the new territories the U.S. was acquiring in the late 19th century. Some Americans believed the U.S. should acquire the new territories. Others disagreed. The tailor is President William McKinley, who generally supported expansion abroad. The figures on the left want Uncle Sam to go on diet medicine. They think Uncle Sam is too large already. They are opposed to US expansion.

Unit 7: World War I

In 1914, Germany invaded neutral Belgium and attacked France. The allied nations of Europe fought back in what would become World War I. The U.S. entered the war in 1917 to support its allies. This recruiting poster echoes President Woodrow Wilson’s stirring appeal to American ideals when he exclaimed why the U.S. chose to fight:

*The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve…..We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind.*

Woodrow Wilson

Declaration of War address to Congress, 1917

Unit 8: The 1920s

The 1920s are often referred to as the Roaring Twenties because of the economic growth, social changes, and cultural events that took place during this decade. New styles of literature, music, dance, and clothing swept the country. The 1920s also witnessed a flowering of black culture call the Harlem Renaissance. **Bessie Smith**, shown here in the stylish dress of 1923, was the most famous blues singer of the decade. She was also the highest paid black entertainer of her time.

Unit 9: The Great Depression and the New Deal

This woman and her children were impoverished by the Great Depression, an economic collapse in the 1930s. This photo called “Migrant Mother,” was taken by Dorothea Lange. Unfortunately, the woman pictured here was not alone. Millions of Americans suffered through years of poverty during the 1930s.

Unit 10: World War II

The US entered WWII in 1941 to help defeat the dictatorships of German, Italy, and Japan. The entire nation came together to fight the war—any smaller effort might have meant the end of the American way of life. As part of this effort, American industry was converted to manufacturing weapons, supplies, ships, tanks, and aircraft.

Unit 11: The Early Cold War

This photo shows an American transport plane carrying food and supplies to the war-torn city of Berlin, Germany, in 1948. After WWII, the communist armies of the Soviet Union attempted to take control of the city through a blockade. American planes supplied Berlin’s citizens with supplies for more than a year and broke the blockade. The Berlin Airlift was one of the first incidents in the decades-long Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union (USSR). President Harry Truman stated the reasons why the US should fight the Cold War:

*I believe that it must be the policy of the US to support the free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation (takeover) by armed minorities or by outside pressures.*

*I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.*

*Harry Truman*

*Truman Doctrine*

*March 12, 1947*

Unit 12: The 1950s

The growth of suburbs like this one symbolized the economic boom that the US experienced after WWII. During the war, Americans had saved more than $100 billion. In the 1950s, they spent that money on new homes, cars and televisions. The boom created jobs and opportunity for millions.

Unit 13: The Civil Rights Movement

This photo was taken in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, at the height of the African American civil rights movement for equal rights. Images like this one alerted the nation to racial injustice in the United States. Civil rights leader Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was jailed in Birmingham for nonviolent protest. Below is an excerpt from a letter he wrote while in jail:

*Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests (shows) itself and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom and something without has reminded him that it can be gained.*

*Martin Luther King*

*Letter from a Birmingham Jail, 1963*

Unit 14: The 1960s

During the 1960s, a free-spirited attitude infected some American youth. These young people expressed their disappointment in the traditional ways of life in their clothing, music, food, and even transportation, such as the painted bus shown here.

Unit 15: The Vietnam War

Etched on the polished black granite of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., are the names of the more than 58,000 Americans who died or went missing during the war. The Vietnam War divided the nation more than any war since the Civil War. Some Americans believed the US had to block the spread of communism in South Vietnam. Others believed the US was propping up an undemocratic government to protect its own power and reputation. Lyndon Johnson, one of six presidents to deal with armed conflict in Vietnam, explained why he was committed to the war:

*We fight because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny. And only in such a world will our own freedom be finally secure.*

*Lyndon Johnson, 1965*

Unit 16: The 1970s

The Fourth of July had special meaning in 1976. Not only was it the bicentennial (200th anniversary) of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, it was also the time to celebrate the wisdom of the Founding Fathers in building a democratic government that could withstand the massive challenges the nation endured in the 1970s—political scandal, military defeat, and an energy crisis. In this photo, a float of patriotic symbols takes part in the Bicentennial Parade in Washington, D.C.

In the Bicentennial Address, President Gerald Ford explained the importance of that day:

*It is fitting that we ask ourselves hard questions even on a glorious day like today. Are the institutions under which we live working the way they should? Are the foundations laid in 1776 (Revolutionary War) and 1789 (Constitution) still strong enough and sound enough to resist the tremors of our times? Are our God-given rights secure, our hard-won liberties protected?*

*Gerald Ford*

*Independence Hall, Philadelphia, July 4, 1976*

Unit 17: The Reagan Revolution

Ronald Reagan became president in 1981 and set out to make government smaller by cutting taxes and encouraging individual responsibility. A former actor, President Reagan was an inspiring speaker as this quote demonstrates.

*History is a ribbon, always unfurling….Now we hear…the echoes of our past: a general falls to his knees in the hard snow of Valley Forge (George Washington), a lonely president paces the darkened halls and ponders his struggle to preserve the Union (Abraham Lincoln), the men of the Alamo call out encouragement to each other, a settler pushed west and sings a song, and the song echoes out forever and fills the unknowing air.*

*It is the American sound. It is hopeful, big-hearted, idealistic, daring, decent, and fair. That’s our heritage, that is our song.*

*Ronald Reagan*

*Second Inaugural Address, 1985*

Unit 18: Framing the Present:

1992 to Today

This view of the New York skyline includes the Statue of Liberty and two bright pillars of light representing the World Trade Center buildings, which terrorists destroyed in 2001. On the day of the attack, President George W. Bush spoke to the nation:

*Terrorist attacks can shake the foundation of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America.*

*America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.*

*George W. Bush*

*Address to the Nation, September 11, 2001*

*19 The Gettysburg Address*

The Civil War lasted four years and cost 620,000 lives. It was by far the most destructive conflict ever waged on American soil. More than 51,000 men in the two armies at Gettysburg were killed, wounded, or captured. It was the largest battle ever fought in America. In his dedication of a cemetery for the men who died in the Battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln reminded the Union that it was fighting to preserve a nation “conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”