

# U.S. History

"American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it." - James Baldwin

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "AMERICAN"? WHAT DOES "AMERICA" STAND FOR?

In this course, you will use primary source documents, oral histories, literature, art and secondary sources to explore modern United States history from multiple perspectives. You will build historical thinking, research, and communication skills, as you ask new questions, develop original interpretations of the past, and make connections to the present.

*Introduction: What "America" Stands For*

- What was the gap between "American" ideals and reality in the first 100 years of the US?
- Was the US "reconstructed"?

*Who Built America? Industrialization, Immigration, and Imperialism at the Turn of the Century*

- What does it mean to be "American"?
- Can everybody achieve the "American dream"?
- What is the best way to strengthen the US economy?

*Uncovering the Past: The US Between the Wars*

- Were the Twenties really "roaring"?
- Were the Thirties really "depressing"?
- How can you uncover the true history of the US?

*"The Good War" at Home and Abroad*

- Was WWII a "Good War" for the United States?
- Was WWII a "double victory" for civilians in the US and around the world?

*Policing the World: The Cold War and Vietnam*

- Did the US stand for freedom during the Cold War?
- Which is more important: individual rights or national security?

*Struggles for Change: Civil Rights and Liberation Movements of the 50s, 60s, and 70s*

- Should Americans use nonviolence or "any means necessary" to address injustice?
- How have Bay Area youth changed their communities in the past and present?

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME IN THIS CLASS?

You have been in school for a long time. You know what's appropriate behavior for a classroom. I'm going to ask you to hold yourself responsible for that behavior, following these principles:

**RESPECT** - Respect yourself, your peers, your teacher, our classroom, and the learning process. Build our community by being kind to yourself and other people. Remember that everyone has something to teach you. Show self-respect by defending your right to learn, to feel safe, and to ; show respect for others by recognizing their rights as well.

**RISKS** - You can't learn if you always play it safe. Push yourself. Try new ideas. Ask hard questions. Be willing to change your mind and see things from new points of view. Take on an assignment that's hard for you. If you usually talk in class, try to listen. If you usually listen, push yourself to share your ideas in public.

**RESPONSIBILITY** - Take responsibility for your own education and the education of others. Make decisions that will help you learn, such as coming to class on time, contributing positively to our learning community, doing all the assigned work, and asking for help you need it. If you don't get it right the first time, take responsibility for cleaning up any mistakes you made.

#### WHAT CAN I EXPECT OF MS. FREIDUS?

I will do my very best to help you succeed. I will let you know how you're doing by giving you progress reports at least once a month. I will be available for extra help if you ask for it. I will communicate ideas and assignments as clearly as I can. I will welcome your questions, comments, and points of view. I will be as honest, straightforward, and respectful with each of you as I ask you to be with each other and with me.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO CLASS?

Most of our readings will come from *The Americans* by Winthrop T. Jordan and our course reader. I will tell you ahead of time if you need to bring these materials to class. You will also receive many additional readings in class. **It is important to keep all handouts and articles in a safe place.** You will need them for essays and tests. If you need extra help with getting organized, *ask me*.

#### **Materials you will need EVERY day include:**

- **Spiral-bound notebook or thin (1 or 1.5-inch) binder** *just for this class*
- **Folder or 3-ring binder section** *just for this class* to store readings and handouts
- **Pen or pencil**
- At least **one colored pen** and **one highlighter** for marking readings
- **A USB flash drive** (available for \$10 or less at Walgreen's or most office supply stores)

#### HOW WILL I BE GRADED?

I expect you to work as hard as you can to produce *your best work*. Homework assignments will be graded primarily on the effort you've demonstrated. If you get home and realize you don't know how to do an assignment, call me - or write down a list of detailed questions that show me you tried. Tests, essays, presentations, and other unit projects will be graded according to rubrics you will receive ahead of time. I will occasionally give pop quizzes on the material we are studying.

It makes me really sad to write this, but I want to be clear from the beginning. If I see that you have cheated in any way, you will not receive ANY credit for that work. I will also notify your family and take additional measures if necessary. **If two students turn in the same work, neither student will receive credit for it.** Period.

**You will be evaluated on your performance in the following areas:**  
**Tests and Projects (40 percent):** Quizzes, tests, essays, presentations, and end-of-unit projects.  
**Participation (25 percent):** You will earn 5 points each day for showing respect, taking risks and acting responsible. **To get full credit, come to class on time and prepared, contribute thoughtful questions or ideas in large- and small-group discussions, focus on your work, and demonstrate respect for our learning community.** If you have an unexcused absence, you will receive 0 out of 5 points. Excused absences earn 4 out of 5 points.  
**Notebook (25 percent):** Class notes, journal writing, and homework assignments. collected twice each quarter.

*The grading scale for all assignments is as follows:*

97-100%	A+
93-96%	A
90-92%	A-
86-89%	B+
82-85%	B
79-81%	B-
76-78%	C+
72-75%	C
68-71%	C-
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WHAT HAPPENS IF I TURN WORK IN LATE?

All assignments, including homework, essays, and major projects, will be checked at the beginning of the period on the due date. Each assignment you complete is based on what you've done before. If you fall behind, it is very difficult to make sense of the next one. **Keep ALL homework assignments in your notebook, in the order of your table of contents, unless otherwise instructed.** Your notebook will be collected approximately once a month for evaluation.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M LATE OR ABSENT?

Class-time is short and precious. I will mark you tardy if you are not in your seat, ready to work, when the bell rings. Each tardy impacts your class participation points. If you are not present while I check homework, I will not stamp or collect it.

**If an absence is not excused, you may not make up any work, tests, or quizzes you miss that day.**

If you are not in class for a valid reason, be sure to excuse your absence through the attendance office and show me your clearance slip so you don't lose daily points. You are responsible for making up all assignments missed during excused absences. Notebook assignments should be completed by the day after you get back so I can stamp them. Talk to me about other assignments as soon as you get back to school. It is your responsibility to schedule make-up quizzes or tests.

WHAT IF I WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- Ask me for book recommendations about a topic, era, or person that interests you.

- Explore the music, art, or (if appropriate) film or television programming of the era we are studying.
- Use conversations or online research to compare what you are learning about a historical era with what others (especially people in other places or from other generations) have learned about the same thing.
- Read the newspaper and watch the news. Make connections between what we're learning in class and current events.
- Document what you've learned by writing or illustrating your ideas in a notebook "Time Out".

#### WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

Really, it all comes down to respect for yourself, for other students, for me, and for our learning community. I'm not about to make a bunch of little rules because if you have respect, you won't need them. For example, if your phone rings, it is distracting and disrespectful to our learning community. Listening to headphones while I'm talking is disrespectful of me. You get the idea.

One more note. I think people should be able to eat when they're hungry. You may eat during class. However, food during class can cause problems, so here are the "no's":

- No mess. I should not be able to tell you were eating at your desk once you're done.
  - No sharing food. It causes side conversations.
  - No gum. It always ends up under desks.
  - No drinks other than water. They inevitably spill and make a sticky mess.
  - No candy. It's just not good for you, plus the wrappers make a mess.
- Please respect these rules and our classroom environment. If you break them, you will not be allowed to eat in class. It's that simple.

#### HOW CAN I REACH YOU?

I am always open to your questions, ideas, and constructive criticisms about our class. I like to talk with you about the rest of your life, too. If you want to talk, please let me know after class or after school.

*If you need to call me, please do so: 415-312-0069.*

*If I don't answer, leave me a message (don't just hang up) and I'll call back as soon as I can.*

*Or write me an email: [afreidus@berkeley.k12.ca.us](mailto:afreidus@berkeley.k12.ca.us).*

**Don't forget to check the CPA website for class updates: [www.bhscpa.org](http://www.bhscpa.org)**

*Students: Please take this syllabus home and review it carefully with your family. Then complete and sign the last page along with your parents or guardians and return it for credit by Tuesday, September 4. Keep the rest of your syllabus in your folder/binder for reference.*

## **Your US History Notebook**

**It's essential that you bring your notebook to class every day.** It will become one of your most important tools for learning and becoming a creative, independent thinker, writer, and historian. Your notebook should demonstrate the ideas you have, the questions you've asked, and your pride in your work. Think of it as a book that you are writing about US history - and how you fit into it.

***Your notebook should be an 8 1/2 by 11-inch, spiral-bound, college-ruled notebook or skinny (1 or 1.5-inch) binder with at least 100 pages. Leave at least 3 pages blank at the beginning of your notebook for your Table of Contents.***

### **Evaluation**

Before you hand in your notebook, you will be asked to complete a self-evaluation. If your self-evaluation is not *accurately* completed at the beginning of the period on the day your notebook is due, your notebook will be considered late. You will evaluate yourself on the following criteria:

#### ***Content (70 points): The ideas and information your notebook contains***

- All in-class and homework assignments are complete (*even for days you were absent*).
- Writing is **specific, thorough, and thoughtful**. Assignments show your understanding of and reflection on the ideas and information we're studying. You go beyond the minimum.
- Journal responses include questions, connections, new ideas, and reflections on your personal responses. These assignments show **critical and creative thought**.
- Class notes are complete, neat, and organized.
- "Time Out" activities show the connections you make between class and the rest of the world.

#### ***Deadlines (20 points): The stamps you've earned for doing your work on time***

If you arrive at class after I've stamped homework assignments, you won't get those points.

#### ***Organization and Appearance (10 points): How you illustrate your learning***

- Make the notebook your own by putting a creative touch on each page, using graphs, charts, timelines, flow charts, maps, drawings, etc. to represent ideas.
- Keep your table of contents updated and accurate at all times.
- Keep pages neat and not crowded. Highlight or underline key ideas and information.
- Each assignment should have a clear number, title, and date.
- Each unit begins with an illustrated "title page" that represents your learning about the unit.

### **"Time Out" Activities**

The only way to earn an "A+" on a notebook is to show independent learning. "Time Out" assignments document the thinking you do on your own, outside of class. These are not regular notebook assignments and I usually won't assign

them. There's no length requirement; what matters is that you make connections between yourself, the world, and our class. Here are some ideas:

- Find a newspaper or magazine article, picture, or cartoon related to our studies. Paste the item into your notebook and write a response to it. Why do you find it interesting? Do you agree or disagree? Why? What questions do you have? What connections can you make to class?
- Write a personal response to just about anything class-related: a discussion, a reading, a video, a field trip, etc. What questions did you have? Did you strongly agree or disagree? What surprised you? What new ideas do you have?
- Add original drawings, maps, graphs, or charts to illustrate ideas or information we've studied.
- Listen to the music or watch a movie from the era we are studying. Write - or draw - about what your response.
- Interview your family members or other adults to find out what they know about this history.

### **“Quality Checks”**

Occasionally, I will give you a choice of two assignments to be spot-checked. If you don't have either of the assignments I request, you won't get any credit. These quality checks have two purposes:

1. To give me information about what you're learning, any questions or misunderstandings you might have, and how I can improve my teaching.
2. To encourage you to give you feedback on your work so that you can know how you're doing before a big notebook check.