**U.S. History & Government Regents Review – Major Unit Themes**

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| **Unit** | **Major Themes** |
| 1. **Colonial Foundations** | * Europeans were pushed to move to the New World for religious freedom, economic opportunity, & to start a new life * European nations wanted colonies so they could grow their economies through mercantilism * Early settlements in the New World were dependent on geography – they settled near harbors and rivers for transportation; Appalachian Mountains formed a natural barrier for settlers * Conflicts arose between European settlers and Native Americans over land * Democratic ideas developed in the New World because the British colonies were ignored by Great Britain (salutary neglect) and began to want to govern themselves |
| 1. **Constitutional Foundations** | * The French & Indian War resulted in massive debts for Great Britain – to pay those debts, Great Britain taxed the colonists (Stamp Act, Townshend Act, Sugar Act, etc.) * The colonists, unhappy with new taxes and other laws being put in place, rebelled against Great Britain and won their independence * The new United States created a government based on consent of the governed (which followed John Locke and the Enlightenment’s idea of a social contract between the people and the government) * The U.S. Constitution replaced the weak Articles of Confederation and created a government with three separate branches to ensure no single branch would become too powerful * Federalists and anti-Federalists argued over the role of government, resulting in a Bill of Rights listing rights that couldn’t be taken away * The Constitution consisted of compromises like the Great Compromise and the 3/5 Compromise * Not all people benefitted from the new nation – African Americans were still enslaved, women could not vote, etc. |
| 1. **Expansion, Nationalism, & Sectionalism** | * The new United States created a national identity through events like the War of 1812 and westward expansion * Factors that pulled people west included gold and land (Homestead Act) * Manifest Destiny was the belief that the U.S. had the right to expand across the entire North American continent – this led to decimation of Native American populations * The debate over slavery caused sectionalism – the industrial north was relatively more opposed to slavery, while the agricultural south was in favor of it * There were various attempts to reduce tensions over slavery (Missouri Compromise, Compromise of 1850, Kansas-Nebraska Act), but the south ultimately formed the Confederacy and seceded from the U.S. after Abraham Lincoln’s election to the Presidency * The North would ultimately win the Civil War because of better manufacturing, better transportation (more railroads), and a more organized war effort |
| 1. **Post-Civil War** | * After the Civil War, the U.S. had to go through the difficult process of Reconstruction – putting the nation back together * Lincoln wanted to preserve the union and get the southern states back as quickly as possible * When Lincoln was assassinated, Andrew Johnson (a southerner) became President and wanted to pardon many Confederates * Radical Republicans in Congress wanted to punish the South and instituted a military occupation in the Southern states * The Reconstruction Amendments (13th, 14th, and 15th) abolished slavery, made African Americans citizens, and gave African Americans right to vote * Despite these Amendments, the South continued to limit the rights of African Americans through literacy tests, poll taxes, sharecropping, and the Ku Klux Klan * The Compromise of 1877 officially ended Reconstruction |
| 1. **Industrialization & Urbanization** | * The late 1800s/early 1900s became known as the Gilded Age because there were very wealthy business owners, but society was plagued by social issues at the same time * Figures like Andrew Carnegie (steel), and John Rockefeller (oil) created monopolies and became extremely wealthy – there is debate over whether they were “captains of industry” or “robber barons” * Labor unions emerged during the Gilded Age to try to protect the interests of workers against big business * The period became characterized by the fight between big business and workers * President Theodore Roosevelt ultimately tried to limit big business by instituting government regulations (he became known as the trust buster) * The muckrakers sought to fix the issues with society (Jacob Riis’ *How the Other Half Lives*, Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle,* the Temperance movement, etc.) * The Progressive Era sought to give people more control over the government (referendums, direct election of Senators, etc.) * The 18th Amendment banned the sale of alcohol (Prohibition) until the 21st Amendment repealed Prohibition * The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote |
| 1. **Rise of American Power** | * During the early 1900s, the U.S. began to establish itself as a global power * The Spanish American War was caused by Yellow Journalism, sympathy towards Cuban revolutionaries, and the sinking of the *USS Maine* and resulted in the United States gaining new territories and becoming a strong world power * Many in the U.S. were split between anti-imperialism (didn’t want the U.S. to expand overseas) and pro-imperialism (wanted the U.S. to expand) * WWI was caused by the MAIN causes in Europe * During WWI, the U.S. sought to remain neutral under President Woodrow Wilson until Germany’s unrestricted submarine warfare, the sinking of the *Lusitania,* and the Zimmermann Note forced the U.S. into the war * The Treaty of Versailles ended WWI and would became a major cause of WWII because it punished Germany for the war * President Wilson developed the 14 Points to try to find a peaceful resolution to the war and came up with the League of Nations, which failed because the U.S. refused to join it * The Supreme Court Case *Schenck v. U.S.* set the precedent that rights (like freedom of speech) could be limited to help protect national security |
| 1. **Prosperity & Depression** | * The 1920s saw a “return to normalcy” under three Republican Presidents – Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover * The decade became known as the “Roaring Twenties” because laissez-faire economic policies led to consumer spending and buying on credit * The 18th Amendment (Prohibition) banned alcohol, but organized crime and bootleggers produced and sold it anyway * Culture clashed during the 1920s as younger generations went against the more traditional values of their parents (flappers & dancing) (also consider the Scopes Monkey Trial) * Consumer spending, overproduction of farm goods, and the crash of the stock market led to the Great Depression in 1929 * The Great Depression saw immense unemployment and poverty * Franklin D. Roosevelt ran for President on a promise to fix the Depression with his New Deal * The New Deal worked to achieve relief, recovery, and reform from the Depression, but did NOT end the Depression * FDR was criticized for trying to take more powers for the executive branch |
| 1. **World War II** | * World War II was caused by the rise of totalitarian dictators in Europe – Hitler & the Nazis seized control in Germany in part because he promised to fight back against the punishments implemented by the Treaty of Versailles that ended WWI * The US wanted to remain neutral during WWII and passed Neutrality Acts claiming they would not get involved in the conflict * The US gradually began helping the Allies with the war against the Axis (Destroyers for Bases Deal, Lend-Lease Act) * After Pearl Harbor, the US entered WWII * WWII affected the US home front by boosting the economy via manufacturing of weapons and ammunition * Women went to work in factories to take over for the men who left * President Truman used the atomic bomb (developed by the Manhattan Project) to end the war with Japan * WWII ended with an Allied victory – The United Nations was founded to replace the League of Nations and to help keep international peace * Germany was divided between West (USA and Allied influence) and East (Soviet Union influence) |
| 1. **The Cold War** | * The Cold War was a political rivalry between the United States (capitalism & democracy) and the Soviet Union (communism) * Both wanted to be the strongest world power and both wanted to spread their own political & economic ideologies * An arms race between the two nations led to a buildup of nuclear weapons and mutually assured destruction * The USA formed NATO and implemented the Marshall Plan to help spread democracy and capitalism; the USSR formed the Warsaw Pact * US foreign policy during the period was dominated by CONTAINMENT * Fear of communism within the United States led to a Red Scare – Senator Joseph McCarthy accused anyone and everyone of being communist * The Cold War got hot in Korea and Vietnam – both wars were fought over containing communism; Korea remains divided to this day, Vietnam fell to Communism * The Cold War ended as tensions lessened between the US and USSR and the Berlin Wall fell |
| 1. **Domestic Social & Economic Change** | * President Lyndon Johnson developed the Great Society which was inspired by the New Deal and was focused on ending poverty through government programs * President Reagan developed supply-side economics/Reaganomics which lessened government interference in the economy and focused on laissez-faire economics * The second half of the 1900s was dominated by social movements – modern women’s movement, LGBT, environmental, Native American social movement, Chicano movement, etc. |
| 1. **U.S. in a Globalizing World** | * The US has had to deal with the growing threat of terrorism * After the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11/2001, the US passed the PATRIOT Act, which limits civil liberties in the name of national security |