

# U.S. History II Course Overview



## Reconstruction — Today | 1865-early 2000s

Beable’s United States History II course covers topics from Reconstruction to 21st Century challenges. As each topic is explained in detail, the content also paints a picture of what life was like at the time. Not only do students learn the historical facts, but they also get a glimpse into the struggles during Reconstruction, life during the roaring 20s, the Cold War, and so much more.

Students explore United States History content through their online readings, lesson extensions, and lesson activities.

### U.S. History II Units

<b>Restoring the Union (1865-1877)</b>	<b>Conquering the West (1840-1900)</b>	<b>Life in Industrial America (1870-1900)</b>	<b>The Growing Pains of Urbanization (1870-1900)</b>	<b>The Progressive Movement (1890-1920)</b>	<b>American Empire (1890-1914)</b>
<b>The Great War (1914-1919)</b>	<b>The Roaring 20s (1919-1929)</b>	<b>The Great Depression (1929-1939)</b>	<b>Fighting the Good Fight (1941-1945)</b>	<b>The War and Society (1941-1942)</b>	<b>The American Dream for Some (1944-1950)</b>
<b>At Home and Abroad After the War (1946-1960)</b>	<b>The Cold War Heats Up (1960-1975)</b>	<b>A Time of Upheaval (1960-1975)</b>	<b>After the Storm (1976-1991)</b>	<b>Change and Tragedy (1992-2001)</b>	<b>Challenges of the 21st Century</b>

# U.S. History II

## Unit Summaries

### Unit 1

#### Restoring the Union (1865-1877)

##### Summary

This unit addresses the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction. What would be with the South's economy and society remained an open question. Students uncover how new laws brought new freedoms, but legal change met local resistance in the South. While Reconstruction policies did create a complex new political, economic, and social landscape in the South, African Americans living there were denied their newly granted civil rights. At the end of the unit, students learn how the election of 1876 was contested and about the compromise made by the two parties in power.

##### Lessons

- Reconstruction: A Roadmap for Peace
- Resistance to Reconstruction: Rights Promised and Taken Away
- Election Compromise Sends Reconstructionists Packing

### Unit 2

#### Conquering the West (1840-1900)

##### Summary

Students learn about Manifest Destiny and westward expansion. The American frontier drew settlers from all walks of life, who were eager to leave behind the cities of the East and South in search of new opportunities. Lessons in this unit discuss how the Transcontinental Railroad and the Homestead Act of 1862 enabled Americans to settle Western Territories. Homesteading families lived through hardships like drought, pestilence, and poverty, but new innovations helped them to settle the Great Plains. Students also discover how physical conflicts, the "Americanization" of indigenous cultures, and government policies profoundly affected the Great Plains tribes and their way of life.

##### Lessons

- I Will Go West!
- For Better or Worse: The Transcontinental Railroad
- The Homestead Act: Changing the Game for American Families and Farmers
- Painful Changes

### Unit 3

#### Life in Industrial America (1870-1900)

##### Summary

In this unit, students explore the impact of the Industrial Revolution. As America neared the end of the 19th century, new technologies and better methods for refining raw materials resulted in accelerated growth of new industry and wealth. As businesses grew after the Civil War, there were few rules limiting how they could operate. Students discover how businesses' growing size and influence—along with questionable or abusive practices—prompted new rules and restrictions. Additionally, students learn how American workers in the late 1800s began fighting back against dangerous working conditions and long hours by forming unions and starting labor strikes.

##### Lessons

- The Gilded Age: Now We're Rolling!
- Trust and Trustbusters
- Enough is Enough! Workers Team Up to Fight Back

## Unit 4

### The Growing Pains of Urbanization (1870-1900)

#### Lessons

- A New Wave of Immigration Brings Changes and Resistance
- Life in the City

#### Summary

This unit addresses the impact of rapid urbanization and immigration. Students learn about the large numbers of immigrants who entered the United States from the 1870s to the early 1900s. These immigrants came seeking opportunity and new freedoms but experienced many challenges as they integrated into society. Students also discover how the early 1900s marked a shift from rural living to city life for many Americans. As urban areas grew, city dwellers increasingly lived and worked in hazardous environments: crowded, unsanitary tenements and dangerous factories.

## Unit 5

### The Progressive Movement (1890-1920)

#### Lessons

- The Yellow Brick Road to Reform
- Time for a Change!
- Winning Some and Losing Some: Women's Fight for Change

#### Summary

This unit exposes students to the widespread societal changes that Americans pushed for during the Progressive Era. Government became more powerful. It worked harder to protect public health, and it became more democratic. Women's activism played a key role in the development of American society. Students discover how women fought not only for their own right to vote, but for the rights of all people, and how they eventually secured their right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

## Unit 6

### American Empire (1890-1914)

#### Lessons

- The United States Helps out a Neighbor—and Itself
- The United States Gets Attention in Asia and Latin America

#### Summary

In this unit, students analyze the motivation behind the Spanish-American War. They discover that while the U.S. wanted to support Cuba's independence, it also wanted to assert dominance as an imperialist power on the world stage.

## Unit 7

### The Great War (1914-1919)

#### Summary

This unit focuses on World War I. Students investigate how the U.S. maintained neutrality for three years before being pushed into the conflict. Women and men alike took on new roles and responsibilities at home and on the battlefield to help the war effort. U.S. forces helped end the war, but afterward, most of Woodrow Wilson's plan for peace was rejected by world leaders. The unit concludes by describing chaos in the country due to economic trouble, racial tensions, communist scares, and the flu.

#### Lessons

- Forced to Fight: The U.S. Reluctantly Joins World War I
- All for One, and One for All!
- Winning the War, Losing the Peace
- An Empty Victory

## Unit 8

### The Roaring 20s (1919-1929)

#### Summary

The Roaring 20s, as this unit addresses, was a time after World War I when Americans were ready to have some fun! People devoted more of their time to enjoying radio shows, movies, and sports. Women took on new jobs, fashions, and power. Cars were mass produced, making it easier for everyone to move around. Additionally, students learn about the Harlem Renaissance, a movement asserting pride in Black life and identity through visual art, literature, and music. On the international front, students discover the goal for many Americans to stay out of future international conflicts by making proposals to ensure peace.

#### Lessons

- America on the Move: The Roaring 20s
- Happy Days Are Here Again! Americans Flock to Cars, Movies, and Radios
- We're Americans, Too
- The Roaring Twenties: Not All Fun and Games
- In the Pursuit of Lasting Peace

## Unit 9

### The Great Depression (1929-1939)

#### Summary

The focus of this unit is the Great Depression, during which millions of Americans faced poverty and unemployment. President Franklin Roosevelt implemented the New Deal legislation and programs to help struggling Americans. Students learn how the New Deal's goal was to help Americans recover, but many programs ignored the needs of African Americans and women—and some programs even harmed them. Students also learn about many Americans who moved to new areas of the country to find work but often faced hostility.

#### Lessons

- Dark Clouds and Silver Linings
- From Hardship to Hope
- Roosevelt to the Rescue
- A New Deal—But Not a Good Deal for All
- Tough Times
- Roosevelt's Popularity Reaches New Heights—But Will It Last?

## Unit 10

### The War and Society (1941-1942)

#### Summary

The goal of this unit is for students to understand the causes and events of World War II. In the 1930s, Japan invaded China, Hitler rose to power in Germany, and the United States reverted to isolationism, which many Americans supported. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, however, changed that. The Allies liberated France and defeated the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany. After victory in Europe, the U.S. focused on war in the Pacific and eventually defeated Japan with the atomic bomb in August 1945. Along with discussing the war itself, students are also exposed to the brutalities of the Holocaust that took place in this time.

#### Lessons

- Everyone Enters the War: The American Economy and People Make Changes
- They Served, They Struggled, and They Sacrificed
- Girl Power to the Rescue!
- The Government Turns on Its Citizens

## Unit 11

### The War and Society (1941-1942)

#### Summary

This unit continues the topic of World War II, with a focus on the impact of the war on the American home front. Student discover how more than one million African Americans fought in World War II, but despite their sacrifices, they struggled to achieve equality after the war. The war changed life for women, as well. Before the war, most women didn't work outside the home, but suddenly women were needed to fill jobs traditionally belonging to men. The unit concludes with the U.S. imprisonment of Japanese Americans and immigrants in internment camps for the duration of World War II.

#### Lessons

- Everyone Enters the War: The American Economy and People Make Changes
- They Served, They Struggled, and They Sacrificed
- Girl Power to the Rescue!
- The Government Turns on Its Citizens

## Unit 12

### The American Dream for Some (1944-1950)

#### Summary

In this unit, students learn that after World War II ended, programs such as the G.I. Bill and the Fair Deal helped struggling Americans adjust to postwar life. Aided by government programs, many families moved to the suburbs after the war, but African Americans and other minorities were often excluded.

#### Lessons

- Homecoming—After the War
- Beneath the Surface of the American Dream

## Unit 13

### At Home and Abroad After the War (1946-1960)

#### Summary

The goal of this unit is for students to understand the causes and events of World War II. In the 1930s, Japan invaded China, Hitler rose to power in Germany, and the United States reverted to isolationism, which many Americans supported. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, however, changed that. The Allies liberated France and defeated the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany. After victory in Europe, the U.S. focused on war in the Pacific and eventually defeated Japan with the atomic bomb in August 1945. Along with discussing the war itself, students are also exposed to the brutalities of the Holocaust that took place in this time.

#### Lessons

- When Friends Become Enemies—The U.S. and the Soviet Union at Odds
- The Cold War Warms Up
- Fighting Communists—Read and Imagined
- Bomb Shelters and Sputnik but No Wars
- Trouble at School
- Fighting for Rights!

## Unit 14

### The Cold War Heats Up (1960-1975)

#### Summary

President John F. Kennedy promised Americans a "New Frontier." In this unit students learn how he boldly dealt with the Cuban missile crisis and launched the space race. Then they discover how President Lyndon Johnson enacted social and economic changes, supported new civil rights laws, and escalated American involvement in the Vietnam War. The fighting in Vietnam intensified under Presidents Johnson and Nixon, but ultimately, the U.S. withdrew and North Vietnam took over the Vietnamese nation.

#### Lessons

- Triumph and Tragedy: John F. Kennedy's New Frontier
- A Great Society and a New War
- Troubling Times: America and the Vietnam War

## Unit 15

### A Time of Upheaval (1960-1975)

#### Summary

This unit covers issues of civil rights, foreign relations, and political scandal. In the early 1960s, hopeful activists fought for the rights of Black Americans, but by the end of the decade, their joy gave way to despair with the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Inspired by the success of civil rights movement, American Indian, Hispanic, and women activists organized new movements to demand their rights. The unit goes on to present some of President Richard Nixon's important accomplishments, including the thawing of relations with China and the Soviet Union, as well as his major downfall as president, the Watergate scandal which led to his resignation.

#### Lessons

- From Hope to Despair: The Protests and Riots of the 1960s
- An Era of Activism
- President Nixon's Frenemies
- A Crisis of Public Trust in the 1970s

## Unit 16

### After the Storm (1976-1991)

#### Summary

In this unit, students learn about the years after the Vietnam War and Watergate. Topics include the Iran hostage crisis that took place during Jimmy Carter’s presidency; major social, political, and economic changes under the leadership of President Ronald Reagan; and challenges in the Middle East and Nicaragua. At the end of the unit, students analyze how the Cold War ended while a hot war in the Persian Gulf began.

#### Lessons

- A New Voice in American Politics
- Changing Times—America in the 1980s
- Upside, Downside, and Supply Side
- From Cold War to Gulf War

## Unit 17

### Change and Tragedy (1992-2001)

#### Summary

This unit wraps up students’ study of 20th century America. The Clinton years brought economic growth and new technology, but also political turmoil and even impeachment. The Clinton presidency ushered in an era of North American free trade, while an increasingly turbulent foreign policy foretold future events. During his presidential campaign, George W. Bush promised to steer away from conflicts in other countries, but attacks on U.S. soil altered that plan.

#### Lessons

- Youth and Change and a “New Democrat” for the 1990s
- The Clinton Presidency, Wild Terrorism, and Peculiar Election
- Acts of Terror, Acts of War

## Unit 18

### Challenges of the 21st Century

#### Summary

Under President George W. Bush, U.S. troops invaded Iraq, the government’s surveillance powers increased, and the economy began a severe decline.

#### Lessons

- The U.S. Goes Into Attack Mode—Against Terror and Economic Collapse