

U.S. History I Course Overview



Exploration — U.S. Civil War 1450-1865

Beable’s United States History courses cover topics from Exploration to the end of the Civil War. 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 of the colonists to establish a new country, the hardships of life on the frontier, the experiences during the Civil War, and so much more.

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

U.S. History I Units

Exploration (1450-1550)	Colonization and Settlement (1550-1680)	Life in the Colonies (1680-1760)	Path to Revolution (1760-1775)
The Revolutionary War and Independence (1775-1783)	A New Nation (1784-1824)	Expansion and Growth (1824-1860)	Civil War (1861-1865)

U.S. History I

Unit Summaries

Unit 1

Exploration (1450-1550)

Summary

This unit takes students through the first encounters between explorers and indigenous populations in the Americas. Students learn about the motivations behind Christopher Columbus's voyages, the conquistadors and their relationships with the native peoples, and Henry Hudson's expeditions into Canada. The goal is for students to understand the historical importance of the explorers, as well as the effect they had on the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

Lessons

- The Spice Trade, the Silk Road, and the Search for New Routes to Asia
- The Civilization of Cahokia in North America
- Before GPS: Technology in the Age of Exploration
- The Columbian Exchange Had a Lasting Impact
- Conquistadors Leave Their Mark in the Americas
- Late Arrivals: The French and English in North America

Unit 2

Colonization and Settlement (1550-1680)

Summary

To start the unit, students learn how European nations ruled the colonies with an economic system called mercantilism. Then the unit continues with lessons on early Spanish, French, and Dutch colonies. Students then follow the story of the first permanent colony at Jamestown and the colonists' disastrous first year in the swamplands of coastal Virginia. The unit continues with lessons about the Pilgrims seeking religious freedom in Plymouth and their historical relationship with the native populations of New England.

Lessons

- Getting a Bigger Slice: Mercantilism, Colonialism, and Economics
- Lost Cities of Gold and the Fountain of Youth
- New World Colonies, Old World Names: Dutch and French Colonies
- From Trade to Towns: The English and French Create Colonies
- Jamestown: The First Permanent English Settlement in North America
- Pilgrims and Puritans Seek Religious Freedom
- Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Religious Freedom

Unit 3

Life in the Colonies (1680-1760)

Summary

This unit teaches students about the opportunities and obstacles faced by settlers in North America. Students will learn about the new frontier lifestyle, as well as the freedoms people enjoyed so far away from their governments in Europe. Students learn about the fertile farmland of the middle colonies and the African people brought to the Americas as enslaved laborers to help produce the new cash crops of the colonies. Additionally, students are introduced the unique identities of and blooming relationships between the individual colonies.

Lessons

- New Arrivals and Rivalries: The New England Colonies
- Middling and Extraordinary: The Middle Colonies
- King Tobacco and Queen Rice
- Indigenous People in Precolonial North America
- Colonial Women: An Essential Part of Society
- Slavery: The Real Cost of Colonization
- A Patchwork of Colonial Cooperation

Unit 4

Path to Revolution (1760-1775)

Summary

Starting with the French and Indian War, this unit focuses by setting up the reasons and causes that eventually lead the American independence movement. Heavily burdened with debt from the war and facing political pressure from citizens in England, Britain's parliament and its king began tightening their governance of the American colonies and enacting new taxes intended to force the colonists to help pay off the crushing war debt. As the American colonists pushed back against these new measures and public protests spread throughout the colonies, the desire for independence from England grew and the road to war began. After occupying and blockading Boston Harbor, the English found that the American colonists were ready to fight.

Lessons

- Picking Sides and Predicting Trouble: The French and Indian War
- The Iroquois Confederacy: Inspiration for a New Union
- The Treaty of Paris: France Forced to Move Out
- Road to Revolution: Citizenship, Rights, and Taxes
- Spilling the Tea (On Purpose): The Boston Tea Party and Massacre
- We Just Can't Take It Anymore: The Intolerable Acts

Unit 5

The Revolutionary War and Independence (1775-1783)

Summary

This unit focuses on the events after the Second Continental Congress and its Declaration of Independence. Newly appointed General George Washington's early failures nearly lead to losing the war, but a series of momentous victories began as Washington crossed the frozen Delaware River on Christmas of 1776. Students learn about the years of open warfare throughout the American colonies, as well as iconic names like Benedict Arnold, Ethan Allen, and Daniel Morgan who organized a powerful army of patriots. The unit concludes with Washington's winter of despair at Valley Forge, after which his troops emerged with new training and confidence that eventually led them and their French Allies to victory at the final Battle of Yorktown.

Lessons

- A Quiet Morning in Massachusetts: The Battles of Lexington and Concord
- Too Late to Make Peace: The Revolutionary War Begins
- Patriot Leaders Put It All on the Line
- Taking Advantage: The English Send Muscle to America
- Crossing the Delaware: Continental Army Struggles and Triumphs
- The Enlightenment's Influence on the United States
- Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness (but Not for Everyone)
- Starving, Freezing, and Sick Army Makes a Comeback
- America's First Constitution (Beta Version)
- Washington and France Bring Home the Win

Unit 6

A New Nation (1784-1824)

Lessons

- The War Is Over, but the Crisis Isn't: The Northwest Ordinance
- Broken Promises Lead to Broken Trust
- System (of Government) Update Required: Confederation Breakdown
- Contention and Compromise: The Constitutional Convention
- Founders Create Blueprints for Success: The U.S. Constitution
- There's a First Time for Everything: George Washington's Presidency
- John Adams: Stuck in George Washington's Long Shadow
- Jefferson Steers America's Ship in a Different Direction
- The Louisiana Purchase
- British Revenge: The War of 1812
- All Together Now: The Era of Good Feelings

Summary

America was out of the fog of war, but along with independence came an economic depression and a failed first attempt at creating a constitution. In this unit, students learn about the difficulties faced by the newly independent United States and its increasingly unhappy population of farmers, workers, and merchants. Once the Constitutional Convention was held in Philadelphia in 1787, America's founders grappled with difficult moral questions about slavery, citizens' rights, and the best system of government. In its first several years, the new nation experienced political divisions, as well as great expansion and growth.

Unit 7

Expansion and Growth (1824-1860)

Lessons

- Common Man Expands Democracy: Andrew Jackson
- The United States Experiences Growing Pains
- The American Industrial Revolution
- The Second Great Awakening
- Women at the Cutting Edge of Social Change
- Canals, Railroads, and Movement
- The Trail of Tears
- Compromises, Texas, and the Mexican-American War

Summary

Students follow the country's expansion into the American southwest as settlers spread into the frontier and displaced the native populations from their ancestral lands. New crises over the spread of slavery into new western territories brought the country to the brink of war multiple times, and the U.S. declared war on Mexico after a border dispute in the new state of Texas. This unit ends by teaching students about the growing regional tensions between the North and South and their differences over slavery, economics, and vastly different regional cultures.

Unit 8

Civil War (1861-1865)

Lessons

- Factories and Finance Fuel Northern Successes
- Plantations Cultivate the Rise of a Gentry Class
- Westward Expansion: A Nation Further Split on the Slavery Question
- Resistance and Rebellion: A Fight Both Bold and Quiet Before the War
- The Election of 1860 and Secession
- Americans Fight Fellow Americans in Total War
- Exploring America's Promise
- Bloody Battles Lead to Peace
- Healing and Reforming a Mourning Nation

Summary

Newly elected President Abraham Lincoln began his tumultuous period in office as several southern states seceded from the Union and the U.S. entered the Civil War. In this unit, students learn about the Confederacy and its attempts to maintain its economy on the backs of enslaved people, Lincoln's military order freeing enslaved people from bondage, and Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address. In addition to the bloody battles and new technologies of the Civil War, the unit covers how women and enslaved people took on new roles as nurses and soldiers in the fight to reunite the country. The unit ends with the Union victory at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia and the tragic assassination of Lincoln only a week later, just as the U.S. was beginning the process of building lasting peace at home.