

HISTORY

UK History

From colonial settlement and independence, through expansion, slavery and civil war, to Reconstruction, industrialisation and the Civil Rights Movement — with disputed figures and unverified claims marked throughout.

10 Chapters

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: SCOPE & THE DISTINCTION FROM US POLITICS FUNDAMENTALS AND MILITARY HISTORY

US History

Chapter 1 · Introduction: Scope & the Distinction From US Politics Fundamentals and Military History

This course looks at the history of the United States as social, cultural and economic history: how people lived, worked, moved, were excluded and organised, and how ideas of who counted as a full citizen changed. Before the first event, this chapter says what that means, what other courses on this site cover the same ground from a different angle, and how the course uses its sources. It is an orientation chapter with few dates. The ones it has come from two reference articles, one on US history and one on social history.

What "Social History" Means Here

The social history article describes it as "history from below," examining "the lived experience of the past" and not focusing only on elites and major events. It says the field emerged prominently in the 1960s, challenging the "Great Man" view of history by arguing that change arises "from within society" and not from leaders alone.

	Traditional emphasis	Social history's emphasis
Focus	Political institutions, military campaigns, diplomacy	Ordinary people's experiences and collective movements
Typical sources	Official documents	Census and demographic records, quantitative analysis, and oral history

The Approach Has Critics

The source reports several criticisms. Some argue that "history from below" wrongly suggests a focus on "insignificant people." Others complain that social historians overemphasise class, gender and race from a "leftist political agenda," and that cultural history since 1990 has challenged social history's prominence. I report these as criticisms the article records and do not judge them. A course with this focus will emphasise some things and not others, and you should know that.

How the Country's History Is Divided

The US history article divides the subject into ten periods.

Period in the article	Dates
Indigenous period	Before 1607
European colonisation	1075 to 1754
Revolutionary period	1754 to 1793
Early republic	1793 to 1830
Expansion and reform	1830 to 1848
Civil War and Reconstruction	1848 to 1877
Gilded Age and Progressive Era	1877 to 1914
Modern America and the World Wars	1914 to 1945
Cold War	1945 to 1991
Contemporary United States	1991 to the present

A Date I Cannot Explain

The article's European colonisation period starts in 1075, which is far earlier than the colonial dates it gives elsewhere (Spanish exploration from 1513, Dutch settlement from 1621, Swedish from 1638). The summary I read does not say why. I do not use 1075 in this course, and I would treat it as unexplained until checked.

Who Comes First

The article says the land "spans tens of thousands of years of continuous Indigenous societies," and that the prevailing theory places settlement "perhaps as early as 30,000 years ago" via Beringia. It notes 575 federally recognised tribes today. It also says European contact brought "genocides, wars, and epidemics" that "largely decimated Indigenous societies," and that "1607," the date of Jamestown, is when "history of the present-day United States began."

Two Starting Dates in One Article

The article's periodisation begins with an Indigenous period, while the sentence about 1607 treats the English settlement as the start of the country's history. Both are in the same source, and they answer different questions: how long people have lived here, and when the state's own history began. This course starts its chapters with colonial settlement, and that is a choice of scope. It is not a claim that earlier history is less important. I note also that the article's account grows detailed only for specific cultures such as the Mississippians and the Iroquois, so a short source cannot represent the whole of the earlier period.

What the Course Covers

Social, Cultural, Economic

Settlement and society, expansion and its costs, slavery and abolition, industrial change and labour, reform and the New Deal, and the struggle over civil rights. Chapter 10 traces the changing idea of full citizenship across all of it.

Not Institutions

US Politics Fundamentals covers how the Constitution, Congress, the presidency and the courts work. This course will point to it for institutional detail, not repeat it.

Not Campaigns

The wars are treated for their social effects. Military History: The War of US Independence covers the Revolutionary war's campaigns, and Military History: The US Civil War is planned but has not been written. The relevant chapters will say which is available.

Where the Overlaps Are

Four other courses cover nearby ground. US Politics Fundamentals covers the political system. Military History: The War of US Independence covers the war of 1775 to 1783, and its planned sibling would cover the Civil War. World History III covers the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution globally, and this course looks only at the American side. The Age of Exploration covers the Atlantic slave trade (Chapter 9) and the founding of Jamestown (Chapter 8) from a global angle, and Chapters 2 and 5 here take up the American side.

A Note on Sources

Like the other history courses on this site, this one relies on published reference summaries, and each chapter says what it drew on. In practice:

- Dates and figures are given as the source states them, and where sources conflict the chapter says so.
- Claims I could not check are listed at the end of the chapter as gaps, not filled from memory.
- Some chapters will deal with slavery, dispossession and violence. They will state what the sources say and where they are silent, without softening or dramatising it.

A Limit of This Method

Social history relies on sources that capture ordinary people's lives, such as oral history and census records, according to the article. A short reference summary is far from those sources, so this course can point to social history's questions and cannot reproduce its evidence. I would rather say so than imply the depth the approach needs.

The Chapters Ahead

2. Colonial America: settlement, society and the roots of revolution
3. The road to independence
4. Westward expansion and Manifest Destiny
5. Slavery, abolition and the road to civil war
6. Reconstruction and its unfinished legacy

7. The Gilded Age and industrialisation
8. The Progressive Era and the New Deal
9. The Civil Rights Movement
10. Capstone: one thread of American social change from colonial times to today

Not Yet Verified

I have not checked how these chapters line up with the article's ten periods. The article places the Revolution between 1754 and 1793 and the Civil War and Reconstruction between 1848 and 1877, while this plan treats slavery and the road to war before Reconstruction, so the chapters do not follow its boundaries exactly. The two frameworks serve different purposes, and I have not tested them against each other.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain the difference between political, military and social history as this chapter describes them, and say which of the three overlapping courses you would use for each.

[→ Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "US history begins in 1607." Use the chapter to qualify it.

[→ Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

List two criticisms of social history that the chapter reports and say what a reader should do about each when reading this course.

[→ Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Social history:** "history from below"; emerged prominently in the 1960s; uses census data, quantitative analysis and oral history
- **Periods:** the article gives ten, from an Indigenous period to the contemporary United States
- **Colonial dates:** Spanish from 1513, Dutch from 1621, Swedish from 1638, Jamestown 1607
- **Unexplained:** the article's colonisation period starting in 1075
- **Scope:** social, cultural and economic; institutions and campaigns are left to other courses
- **Overlaps:** US Politics Fundamentals, Military History: The War of US Independence, World History III, The Age of Exploration

CHAPTER 2: COLONIAL AMERICA: SETTLEMENT, SOCIETY & THE ROOTS OF REVOLUTION

US History

Chapter 2 · Colonial America: Settlement, Society & the Roots of Revolution

This chapter describes who settled the English colonies that became the United States, why, how they lived and how they were governed locally. It starts with Jamestown in 1607, a scope choice explained in Chapter 1, and it does not describe the peoples already living there beyond a few mentions. The sources are three reference articles, on the Thirteen Colonies, on Plymouth Colony and on indentured servitude. Their figures differ in places, and the chapter marks those. The "roots of revolution" in the title are only partly covered here, and Chapter 3 takes them up.

The Colonies

The Thirteen Colonies article groups them in three regions, not the four I had expected, and gives these founding dates.

Region	Colonies and dates in the article
New England	Massachusetts Bay (1628), Plymouth (1620), Connecticut (1636), Rhode Island (1663)
Middle	New York (1664), New Jersey (1664), Pennsylvania (1681), Delaware (1664)
Southern	Virginia (1607), Maryland (1632), North Carolina and South Carolina (each 1712 as separate colonies), Georgia (1732)

Dates That Depend on the Definition

The article gives Massachusetts Bay as 1628, and I have seen other dates for it, but I did not check which is standard, so I use the article's. It calls Virginia at Jamestown "the first permanently settled English colony" in 1607, the same claim that The Age of Exploration 8 flagged as a "first permanent" claim I had not checked against other candidates. Its 1712 dates for the Carolinas are for separate colonies, not for first settlement.

"Thirteen Colonies" Is a Later Label

The article says the term "became current only in the context of the American Revolution." The colonies were governed separately and the grouping was constructed later. That is a warning about the chapter's own heading. I use it for convenience and do not claim contemporaries saw thirteen as one thing.

Growth and the Economy

- The population grew "from 2 thousand to 2.4 million" between 1625 and 1775, and by 1750 historian Alan Taylor estimated 1.5 million.
- By 1770 colonial economic output "made up forty percent of the gross domestic product of the entire British Empire."
- The colonies engaged in "global trade," exporting "foodstuffs, wood, tobacco, and various other resources."
- More than 90 percent of colonists lived as farmers. Philadelphia became the largest city with about 30,000 people.

Estimates and a Striking Share

All of these are estimates, and the article does not say how they were made. The 40 percent figure is a claim about the whole British Empire's output, and I did not find how "gross domestic product" was measured for the 1770s or whether the figure is widely accepted. I would not build an argument on it without checking.

Plymouth, 1620

Plymouth Colony was established in 1620 by Protestant Separatists, the Pilgrims, aboard the *Mayflower*, which carried about 102 passengers plus around 30 crew. The article says they fled persecution by the Church of England, and settled first in the Netherlands in 1608 but worried their children were adopting Dutch culture, which prompted the transatlantic voyage.

The Compact

Recognising they lacked legal authority to settle, 41 male passengers drafted the

The First Winter

"Nearly half of the original 102 passengers had died during the first winter," about 45

Mayflower Compact while anchored at Provincetown, establishing a first legal framework based on "just and equal laws."

of 102, from disease and harsh conditions.

The Treaty

A March 1621 treaty with the chief Massasoit, facilitated by Squanto, the sole Patuxet survivor, ensured mutual defence and established trading relationships.

The article dates the harvest celebration now called the first Thanksgiving to early October 1621. It says 53 surviving Pilgrims, Massasoit and 90 Wampanoag warriors took part, and it "lasted three days," though the exact historical details "remain somewhat uncertain regarding dating." Plymouth lost its independent status on 17 October 1691 when a new charter combined it with Massachusetts Bay and other territories.

What the Summary Does Not Say

The source says Squanto was "the sole Patuxet survivor" and does not say what happened to the Patuxet people. I did not find that, and Chapter 4 returns to the wider question of indigenous dispossession. The treaty's terms are given in one line, and I did not check how long it held.

Labour: Indenture

Indentured servitude was a labour contract in which European workers agreed to serve for a fixed period in exchange for passage. The article says servants received "sufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel, Lodging and all other necessities" but no wages during their term.

Feature	What the source says
Scale	"Between one-half and two-thirds of European immigrants to the Thirteen Colonies between the 1630s and the American Revolution came under indentures," and separately about 48 percent of roughly 500,000 to 550,000 European arrivals before 1775. More than half of all immigrants south of New England were white servants.
Term	Typically four or five years, ranging from one to seven, with longer terms for those under 24.
Restrictions	Servants could not marry without their owner's permission and were subject to physical punishment.
Mortality	"Many servants did not live to the end of their terms," and death rates reached 33 to 50 percent in the Caribbean.
Afterwards	"Freedom dues" and becoming "free members of society," often used to establish farms or trades.

Two Estimates That Do Not Match

The article's "one-half to two-thirds" and "about 48 percent" cannot both describe the same population, and it does not explain the difference. Historians' estimates differ, and I cannot tell which is better. The 33 to 50 percent mortality figure is for the Caribbean, not the Thirteen Colonies, and I did not find a mainland figure.

Slavery

The Thirteen Colonies article says slavery "was legal in all of the colonies," and that between 1680 and 1750 "the population of slaves in America grew dramatically." The Middle Colonies and later the North employed enslaved people in "a variety of occupations," while Southern plantation economies relied heavily on enslaved labour. The indenture article says "African slaves became cheaper for unskilled and then eventually skilled labor," with most farmhand positions "ultimately filled by slaves." It says labour economics, and not racial ideology alone, drove the substitution.

Where the Sources Are Cautious

The indenture article hedges on why enslaved labour replaced indentured labour and does not discuss Bacon's Rebellion, which I had expected. "Labor economics, not racial ideology alone" leaves room for both, and I do not weigh them. The Age of Exploration 9 covers the Atlantic trade from the other side, and it dates the first documented Africans in English North America to 1619 (Chapter 8 there). Neither of today's sources gives a share of the colonial population that was enslaved, and I do not supply one.

Religion and Self-Government

The article says Maryland, Pennsylvania and the New England colonies were "substantially motivated by their founders' concerns related to the practice of religion." Pennsylvania attracted Quakers, Scotch-Irish and German settlers, and the 1740s saw "a religious revival known as the First Great Awakening." The colonies had "a degree of self-governance and active local elections," though the article gives little detail on how the assemblies worked.

The "Roots of Revolution" I Cannot Yet Show

The only sources in this chapter that bear on the Revolution are the note that the Thirteen Colonies label arose with it, the self-government sentence and the trade and output figures. They do not say how any of these led to the break with Britain. The plan for Chapter 3 is to take up taxation and the Boston Tea Party, and the war itself is covered in Military History: The War of US Independence.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the Chesapeake tobacco economy in detail, women's lives, the Puritan communities of New England beyond Plymouth, the Dutch and Swedish settlements, colonial towns, the experiences of indigenous peoples, or the numbers for enslaved people. I also did not check the population figures against a second source. The chapter gives a framework and some headline numbers.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Compare New England, the Middle Colonies and the South on founding dates, one economic feature and one social feature, using only the chapter, and say what is missing.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Most colonists were free settlers who paid their own way." Use the chapter's indenture figures to qualify it, and note what is uncertain.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

The title promises "roots of revolution." List what the chapter offers on that theme and what a reader would need for a full account.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Regions:** New England, Middle, Southern; Virginia 1607, Plymouth 1620, Massachusetts Bay 1628 (article), Pennsylvania 1681, Georgia 1732
- **Growth:** 2 thousand to 2.4 million, 1625 to 1775 (estimates); over 90 percent farmers
- **Plymouth:** Mayflower 1620, about 102 passengers, nearly half died in the first winter; Compact; 1621 treaty; merged 1691
- **Indenture:** one-half to two-thirds, or about 48 percent, of European immigrants; four or five years; freedom dues
- **Slavery:** legal in all the colonies; grew dramatically 1680 to 1750

- **Not covered:** indigenous peoples, women, Dutch and Swedish settlements, the causes of the Revolution

CHAPTER 3: THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

US History

Chapter 3 · The Road to Independence

Chapter 2 left the causes of the Revolution unexplained. This chapter takes them up: the taxes Parliament imposed after 1763, the colonial response, and the sequence from the Stamp Act to the Declaration of Independence. The military campaigns themselves belong to Military History: The War of US Independence, which this chapter names but does not repeat. The sources are three reference articles, on the American Revolution, the Boston Tea Party and the Stamp Act. Two of them correct a popular story, and the chapter keeps both corrections.

Why Parliament Taxed the Colonies

Britain faced enormous debt from the Seven Years' War, and Parliament decided to tax the colonies to help fund the 10,000 troops stationed in America afterward. Grenville's ministry judged that "stamp duties" were "the easiest, the most equal and the most certain" revenue method, since they had worked in Britain itself.

A Link to Chapter 2

Chapter 2 gave the colonies' rapid growth and their 40 percent share of the empire's output by 1770, from one source. Neither this chapter's sources nor Chapter 2's own connect that growth to the decision to tax the colonies, so I do not claim a cause here. I note only that the timing overlaps.

The Stamp Act, 1765

The Stamp Act imposed a direct tax on printed materials, requiring stamped paper from London with an embossed revenue stamp, covering legal papers, newspapers, magazines and playing cards. Tax had to be paid in hard currency, not colonial paper money.

Response	What the source says
Argument	Colonists argued taxation required representation. Parliament countered with "virtual representation," that MPs represented all British subjects regardless of voting rights.
Congress	The Stamp Act Congress (October 1765) brought 27 delegates from nine colonies, and its Declaration of Rights and Grievances asserted that "no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own consent."
Street action	Sons of Liberty groups organised demonstrations, effigy hangings, and forced stamp distributors to resign.
Boycott	"200 merchants...agreed to import nothing from Great Britain until the Stamp Act...was repealed."

Parliament repealed the act on 18 March 1766, effective from 1 May, partly because of merchant pressure. On the same day it passed the Declaratory Act, affirming Parliament's power to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

A Repeal That Changed Nothing in Principle

Parliament gave up the tax and kept the claim to authority. The source does not say how colonists reacted to the Declaratory Act specifically, and I did not find whether it was noticed at the time as much as the repeal was celebrated. I do not assume it was.

Escalation, 1767 to 1770

The American Revolution article says tensions increased again after Parliament passed the Townshend Acts in 1767. British troops were deployed to Massachusetts to quell unrest, and a clash with colonists became the Boston Massacre in 1770. I did not find what the Townshend Acts taxed or how the Massacre unfolded, so the chapter states only that these events are named as part of the sequence.

The Boston Tea Party, 16 December 1773

The Tea Act of 1773 let the East India Company export tea directly to the colonies while keeping a three-pence Townshend duty. Colonists objected on the "no taxation without representation" principle, and merchants also feared the government-created monopoly might extend to other goods and that legitimate importers would be undercut.

Detail	What the source says
What happened	Members of the Sons of Liberty boarded the merchantman <i>Dartmouth</i> on the night of 16 December, after it had docked in Boston, and dumped the tea into the harbour.
Amount	Most sources cite 342 chests destroyed, though the UK National Archives gives 340. The tea weighed about 92,616 pounds and was reported by the East India Company to be worth £9,659, roughly £1.3 million in 2025 currency.
Disguise	Participants dressed as Mohawk warriors to obscure their identities, symbolically identifying "with America, over their official status as subjects of Great Britain."

A Myth the Source Corrects

A popular story says Samuel Adams gave a prearranged signal to begin the destruction. The source says eyewitness accounts show "people did not leave the meeting until ten to fifteen minutes after Adams's alleged 'signal,'" and that Adams actually tried to stop people from leaving. I use the source's account and drop the signal story.

Parliament responded with the Coercive Acts (also called the Intolerable Acts in 1774), which closed Boston's port and "ended local self-government in Massachusetts." The Revolution article says these laws "were intended to end self-government in Massachusetts but instead increased American support for revolution."

A Pattern the Sources Repeat

The Stamp Act was repealed and answered with the Declaratory Act; the Coercive Acts, by the article's own account, provoked more support for revolution than they suppressed. Twice, a British response to protest is described as backfiring. That is a pattern I notice across two of today's sources, and neither article states it as a general rule, so I do not claim it holds beyond these two cases.

Organising Resistance

The First Continental Congress met in 1774 and coordinated resistance through "underground networks of committees." I did not find what it resolved, beyond that coordination, so the chapter does not describe its decisions.

Fighting Begins

Fighting began with the Battles of Lexington and Concord, triggered when "the British attempted to disarm the colonists." The Declaration of Independence was adopted on 4 July 1776, based on "protecting and guaranteeing inalienable rights."

The War Itself Is Not Here

This chapter stops at the Declaration. The military history of the war, including Lexington and Concord in more detail, belongs to Military History: The War of US Independence, and I do not repeat that course's chapters here. The Revolution article itself cautions that "throughout most of the war, the outcome appeared uncertain," which I note without expanding on, since the war is out of this chapter's scope.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the Townshend Acts' provisions, the Boston Massacre's details, the First Continental Congress's actual resolutions, the drafting of the Declaration, or colonial opinion for and against independence. I also did not check the 342-versus-340 chest figures against a primary source. The chapter follows one narrow line from tax to Declaration.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Build a timeline from the Stamp Act to the Declaration of Independence using only the chapter, and mark which dates are exact and which are years only.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Samuel Adams gave the signal that started the Boston Tea Party."
Use the chapter to correct it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain the pattern the chapter notices in the Stamp Act's and the Coercive Acts' aftermaths, and say what evidence would be needed to call it a real pattern rather than two similar cases.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Stamp Act:** 1765; Stamp Act Congress, October 1765; repealed 18 March 1766; Declaratory Act same day
- **Escalation:** Townshend Acts 1767; Boston Massacre 1770
- **Tea Party:** 16 December 1773; 342 (or 340) chests; disguised as Mohawks; Adams did not signal it
- **Coercive Acts:** 1774; closed Boston's port; increased support for revolution
- **1774 to 1776:** First Continental Congress; Lexington and Concord; Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776
- **Not covered:** the war itself (see Military History: The War of US Independence); the Congress's resolutions

CHAPTER 4: WESTWARD EXPANSION & MANIFEST DESTINY

US History

Chapter 4 · Westward Expansion & Manifest Destiny

After independence, the new republic grew west. This chapter covers the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the idea of "manifest destiny" that came to justify further expansion, and the forced removal of the Cherokee and other nations under the Indian Removal Act. The sources are three reference articles, on the Louisiana Purchase, on manifest destiny and on the Trail of Tears. All three include a scholarly criticism or a disputed figure, and the chapter keeps each one rather than smoothing it into a single story.

The Louisiana Purchase, 1803

The treaty was signed on 30 April 1803, for \$15 million, about \$380 million in 2024 dollars, or roughly 3 cents an acre. The purchase covered 828,000 square miles across the Mississippi River drainage basin, about 26 percent of the present-day contiguous United States, including all or part of fifteen states and two Canadian provinces.

Question	What the source says
Why Napoleon sold	France had failed to suppress the Haitian Revolution and faced renewed British hostilities. Without Caribbean revenue, Louisiana held little value, and the source says he acted partly "out of anger towards Spain and the unique opportunity to sell something that was useless and not truly his yet."
Jefferson's concern	He considered proposing a constitutional amendment but ultimately treated the purchase as constitutional, comparing it to "the case of a guardian, investing the money of his ward in purchasing an important adjacent territory."

What Was Actually Bought

The source says scholars emphasise that the United States primarily acquired "the preemptive right to obtain Indian lands by treaty or by conquest," and that subsequent settlements with indigenous nations cost about \$2.6 billion through 2012. The purchase is often described simply as territory changing hands between two governments. The source's own emphasis is that the land was already inhabited, and that the "purchase"

transferred a claim against other European powers, not clear possession. I keep that distinction rather than saying France sold land it fully controlled.

Manifest Destiny

The newspaper editor John L. O'Sullivan coined the phrase "manifest destiny" in 1845, though some historians attribute the unsigned editorial "Annexation" to the journalist Jane Cazneau. O'Sullivan used it to argue for Texas annexation, writing that it was "our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence," and used it again in December 1845 on Oregon. The source says the term gained prominence after Whig critics attacked it, which caused expansionists to embrace the language.

What It Claimed

Three tenets: American moral superiority, a mission to spread republicanism, and divine sanction for expansion. It drew on American exceptionalism, romantic nationalism, Anglo-Saxonism and white supremacist ideology, including the belief that "the American Anglo-Saxon race was separate, innately superior."

How It Was Used

To justify displacing indigenous peoples, supported by legal frameworks such as *Johnson v. McIntosh*, which established European "discovery rights" over indigenous lands. The 1862 Homestead Act accelerated settlement and removed indigenous communities directly. Democrats invoked it to justify the 1846 Mexican-American War and the annexation of Texas.

Its Own Limits

Some advocates wanted to annex "All of Mexico," opposed by anti-slavery-expansion voices and by racial exclusionists such as Senator John Calhoun, who rejected incorporating Mexico's mixed-race population.

A Historian's Own Criticism

The source reports that historian Frederick Merk argued manifest destiny "lacked national, sectional, or party following commensurate with its magnitude," and that aggressive continentalism was a minority Democratic position, not a genuine national consensus. Merk concluded it "proved to have been a bomb wrapped up in idealism." Scholars also debate whether 1890s overseas expansion was manifest destiny's extension or a different phenomenon, imperialism. I report this as reported criticism, not as the article's own settled verdict, and I do not resolve the debate the source describes as open.

The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears

President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, authorising the government to extinguish Native American land claims in the Southeast and exchange them for territory west of the Mississippi. The Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, Chickasaw and Choctaw, called the "Five Civilized Tribes" in the source, were forcibly relocated between 1830 and 1850.

Nation	Removal years
Choctaw	1831 to 1836 (first removed)
Seminole	1832 to 1842
Creek	1834 to 1837
Chickasaw	1837 to 1847
Cherokee	1838

The Cherokee travelled about 1,000 miles from Tennessee through Kentucky and southern Illinois to Oklahoma during the winter of 1838. The source describes brutal conditions, "heavy rains, snow, and freezing temperatures," with marchers charged exploitative tolls and denied access to towns because of disease concerns.

Death Tolls That Vary Widely

Total deaths across all tribes are given as 13,200 to 16,700. By nation: Cherokee 4,000 to 8,000, Choctaw 2,000 to over 4,000, Creek 3,500 to 4,500, Seminole up to 5,500 (including

warfare), Chickasaw 500 to 800. The source says these figures "varied significantly by source." I report the ranges as given and do not pick a single number.

A Court Ruling Not Enforced

In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), the Supreme Court ruled that only the federal government, not the states, held authority over Indian affairs. The source says the Court "did not ask federal marshals to carry out the decision," leaving enforcement to Jackson, who chose forced removal over what he judged the risk of civil war. Historians dispute Jackson's intentions: the source says some argue he held "benevolent intentions," while others contend his rhetoric about relocation concealed expansionist goals. I present both readings and do not choose between them.

Two Chapters, One Pattern

A Comparison Across This Chapter

Both the Louisiana Purchase and the removals rest on a legal claim against indigenous peoples that the United States exercised without their consent: the "preemptive right" from the purchase, and *Johnson v. McIntosh*'s "discovery rights" behind removal. Neither source states the connection directly. I draw it because both claims appear in today's sources on the same subject, expansion, and I flag it as my own reading rather than something either article argues.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the details of the Mexican-American War, the Homestead Act's provisions, the lives of settlers on the frontier, the perspectives of the nations removed beyond the route and death-toll figures, or the later western territories and statehood. I also did not check the \$2.6 billion settlement figure or the \$380 million conversion against another source. The chapter covers two episodes of expansion and the idea used to justify them, not the whole of westward settlement.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain what the Louisiana Purchase transferred, according to the chapter, and why "the United States bought the land" is an incomplete description.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "About 4,000 people died on the Trail of Tears." Use the chapter to correct the claim.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain Frederick Merk's criticism of manifest destiny as the chapter reports it, and say what evidence would show whether he was right.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Louisiana Purchase:** 30 April 1803; \$15 million; 828,000 sq mi, about 26 percent of the contiguous US; really a "preemptive right" against indigenous lands
- **Manifest destiny:** coined by O'Sullivan, 1845; moral superiority, mission, divine sanction; Merk called it minority-backed and "a bomb wrapped up in idealism"
- **Indian Removal Act:** 1830; Five Civilized Tribes removed 1830 to 1850; Cherokee 1838, about 1,000 miles
- **Deaths:** 13,200 to 16,700 total; figures vary widely by source and by nation
- **Worcester v. Georgia:** 1832; ruled for federal authority; not enforced; Jackson's intentions disputed

- **Not covered:** the Mexican-American War, the Homestead Act's provisions, settler life

CHAPTER 5: SLAVERY, ABOLITION & THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR

US History

Chapter 5 · Slavery, Abolition & the Road to Civil War

Chapter 2 noted that slavery grew dramatically in the colonial period without giving figures. This chapter picks that up, covers the cotton economy that expanded it further, the compromises Congress used to hold the country together, the abolitionist movement, and the sequence of events that led to secession and Fort Sumter. The war itself belongs to Military History: The US Civil War, planned but not yet written. The sources are three reference articles, on slavery in the United States, on abolitionism, and on the origins of the Civil War, plus two shorter checks on cotton and the Missouri Compromise. One of the main sources gave little usable detail, and the chapter says where that leaves gaps.

Cotton and the Economy

Cotton production expanded dramatically after 1800, reaching "all the way to Texas" with the spread of the cotton gin. One source gives production rising "from 750,000 bales in 1830 to 2.85 million bales in 1850," nearly a fourfold increase in twenty years. It became the nation's dominant export, fuelling textile industries in Britain, France and the American Northeast.

A Number the Sources Do Not Give

The cotton source says plantation owners "enslaved people from Africa and the Caribbean to hoe and harvest the crop," but does not say how many people worked in cotton by the 1850s. The slavery article's own outline promised sections on population and the "Cotton Kingdom," but the summary I received was mostly a table of contents with little content, so I do not have population figures for 1790 or 1860 to report here, and I do not invent them.

Congress Tries to Hold the Balance

By 1819 the Senate was evenly divided, eleven slave states and eleven free states, and each state sent two senators regardless of population. Admitting Missouri as a slave state would have tipped that balance. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state

and Maine as a free state together, and prohibited slavery in the remaining Louisiana Purchase territory north of the 36 degrees 30 minutes line.

Delaying, Not Resolving

The source says the Compromise "delayed the Civil War" while simultaneously "sow[ing] its seeds." I read that as an acknowledgement that a fixed geographic line could not settle the underlying disagreement, only postpone the next argument over it. That is the source's own hedge, not one I am adding.

Stephen Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 replaced the fixed line with "popular sovereignty," letting territorial settlers decide slavery for themselves, and effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise's restrictions. This triggered "Bleeding Kansas," described as "paramilitary conflict between pro- and anti-slavery supporters." In 1857 the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision went further, ruling that Congress lacked authority to prohibit slavery in the territories at all, which made even the Missouri Compromise's old line unconstitutional in the Court's own reasoning.

Abolition

The Pennsylvania Abolition Society, formed on 14 April 1775, is described as "the first American abolition society." William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass "agitated for abolition in the mid-19th century," and John Brown "became an advocate and militia leader in attempting to end slavery by force of arms."

A Thin Source on This Topic

I could not find substantive detail on the Underground Railroad's operation, a founding date for the American Anti-Slavery Society, *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* role, or the divisions between immediate and gradual abolitionists, or between Black and white abolitionists, though the source's own contents page names all of these as covered elsewhere in the article. I also did not find anything on Harriet Tubman in what I read. I report only the names and dates I could confirm, and I list the rest as gaps rather than filling them from general knowledge.

The Road to Secession

Historians agree, according to the origins article, that slavery was central to the conflict, though they disagree about why the North opposed secession. Most scholars identify "preserving slavery as the central reason for the Southern states' decisions to secede," and it quotes Mississippi's own secession document: "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery."

Explanation	What the source says
Slavery	The dominant view among modern historians, supported by the states' own secession documents.
Economic conflict	The "Progressive school" of the 1910s to 1940s argued this, but the source says modern historians reject it, quoting economic historian Lee A. Craig: "economic conflict was not an inherent condition of North-South relations...and did not cause the Civil War."
States' rights	The source says this was "an ideology formulated and applied as a means of advancing slave state interests," not an independent cause.

A Debate the Source Settles More Than Most

Unlike some chapters in this course, where the sources leave a dispute open, this one states a clear majority view and explains why two rival explanations are rejected. I follow the source's own weighting rather than presenting all three as equally live, since it says so directly, not because I have independently checked the historiography.

Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 election without appearing "even on the ballot in ten Southern states," running as an opponent of slavery's expansion into the territories. Seven Deep South slave states formed the Confederate States between November 1860 and March 1861. The war began on 12 April 1861, when Confederate forces bombarded Fort Sumter.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find enslaved population figures for 1790 and 1860, the details of the domestic slave trade after the 1808 ban on the international trade, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850's

provisions, the Underground Railroad, or the full abolitionist movement and its internal divisions. I also did not check the cotton bale figures against another source. The chapter stops at Fort Sumter and does not cover the war, which is Military History: The US Civil War's subject once it is written.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain why the Senate's composition made the Missouri Compromise necessary, and what changed when the Kansas-Nebraska Act replaced it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Historians are divided on whether the Civil War was mainly about slavery or states' rights." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

List what the chapter's abolition section could and could not confirm, and say what you would need to fill the gaps properly.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Cotton:** 750,000 bales (1830) to 2.85 million (1850)
- **Missouri Compromise:** 1820; Missouri slave, Maine free; 36 degrees 30 line; repealed in effect by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854

- **Dred Scott:** 1857; Congress ruled to lack power to bar slavery in the territories
- **Abolition:** Pennsylvania Abolition Society, 1775; Garrison, Douglass, John Brown named
- **Causes of the war:** the source names slavery as the dominant scholarly explanation, and reports economic conflict and states' rights as rejected or subordinate explanations
- **Secession:** Lincoln elected November 1860; seven states secede by March 1861; Fort Sumter, 12 April 1861
- **Not covered:** population figures, the domestic slave trade, the Underground Railroad, the war itself

CHAPTER 6: RECONSTRUCTION & ITS UNFINISHED LEGACY**US History**

Chapter 6 · Reconstruction & Its Unfinished Legacy

Fort Sumter closed Chapter 5. This chapter picks up after the war, in the period historians call Reconstruction, 1865 to 1877, and follows it through to the Jim Crow system that replaced it. The sources are four reference articles, on the Reconstruction era, on Jim Crow laws, on the Dunning School of historians, and on Andrew Johnson's impeachment. The most important thing one of them shows is that how historians described this period changed sharply over the twentieth century, and the chapter treats that change as part of the history, not a footnote to it.

Reconstruction, 1865 to 1877

Three constitutional amendments were ratified in this period: the Thirteenth, abolishing slavery, the Fourteenth, granting citizenship and equal civil rights to the formerly enslaved, and the Fifteenth, protecting voting rights regardless of race. The source does not give exact ratification dates, so the chapter states only that they belong to this era.

Lincoln's Plan

Lincoln favoured a "ten percent plan" setting lenient readmission conditions for former Confederate states, and vetoed the stricter Wade-Davis Bill.

Johnson's Approach

After Lincoln's 1865 assassination, Andrew Johnson pursued a lenient policy: vetoing Radical Republican bills, pardoning Confederate leaders, and allowing Southern states to enact restrictive Black Codes.

Congressional Reconstruction

Radical Republicans gained control after the 1866 midterm elections and pursued stricter measures. The source frames this as a disagreement over the nature of secession and the conditions for readmission, not detailed further.

Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau to "provide much-needed food and shelter to the newly freed slaves," and it also helped establish educational and religious institutions. Southern states' "draconian Black Codes," restricting freedmen's rights, provoked Northern outrage and renewed concern that the Southern elite would retain power.

The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson

Johnson was impeached on 24 February 1868, after he violated the Tenure of Office Act by trying to remove Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and replace him with Lorenzo Thomas without Senate approval. On 16 May the Senate voted 35 to 19 to convict on one article, one vote short of the 36 needed for removal, and identical 35-to-19 votes followed on two more articles on 26 May, after which the trial adjourned without voting on the remaining eight articles. Johnson was acquitted and stayed in office.

A Small Discrepancy, Noted Honestly

The source itself flags "a record keeping discrepancy" between the Congressional Globe and the House Journal over the initial impeachment resolution's vote count, 126 to 47 versus 128 to 47, and says the Office of the House Historian uses the lower figure. I follow that choice and note the discrepancy rather than picking silently.

How Historians Have Described This Period

The Dunning School, named for the Columbia University professor William Archibald Dunning (1857 to 1922), dominated scholarly and popular understanding of Reconstruction from about 1900 through the 1930s, with influence in textbooks into the 1960s. According to historian Adam Fairclough, its adherents believed "black suffrage had been a political blunder" and that Republican state governments "rested upon black votes had been corrupt, extravagant, unrepresive." Dunning himself argued that freedmen "proved incapable of self-government," making segregation necessary.

A View Now Rejected, Once Dominant

This was not a fringe position when it held sway. It shaped textbooks for decades. The challenge began in 1935 when W.E.B. Du Bois published *Black Reconstruction in America*, emphasising African American agency, and later historians including Kenneth Stampp

and Eric Foner critiqued the school's racial assumptions and methods. By the mid-twentieth century, especially after the Civil Rights Movement, the source says the interpretation had been "substantially discredited," and that the modern consensus treats it as reflecting racist ideology rather than historical accuracy. I report this as the source's own account of a historiographical shift, and I did not read Du Bois, Stamp or Foner directly.

Why This Matters for the Chapter

A course built from short reference summaries, as this one is, risks repeating whichever interpretation happens to sit in the source without noticing it has a history of its own. Naming the Dunning School and its rejection is one way to guard against that, though it does not guarantee today's source is free of its own unexamined assumptions. I did not check the current article's own neutrality, only report what it says about the earlier one.

The End of Reconstruction, and Jim Crow

The Compromise of 1877 is named as ending Reconstruction, though the source I read gives no detail on its terms. Jim Crow laws, mandating "racial segregation in all public facilities," emerged in the Southern states beginning in the 1870s. The term "Jim Crow" dates to the 1840s, when abolitionists used it to describe segregated railroad cars, and "Jim Crow law" was first documented in 1884.

Feature	What the source says
Legal cover	<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> (1896) upheld segregation through "separate but equal," providing constitutional justification for 58 years.
Disenfranchisement	Poll taxes, literacy tests, residency requirements, and grandfather clauses exempting white voters while targeting Black voters.
A measured effect	In Louisiana, registered Black voters fell from a majority to just 730 by 1910, less than 0.5 percent of eligible Black men.

Feature	What the source says
End	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) declared school segregation unconstitutional, though enforcement was slow, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 overturned most remaining statutes.

The Amendments and Jim Crow, Side by Side

The Fifteenth Amendment protected voting rights regardless of race, and within decades Louisiana's own registered Black voters had fallen to under 0.5 percent of eligible men. The sources do not connect the two sentences directly, but the Louisiana figure is offered as a measure of what the disenfranchisement tactics achieved, so I place the two facts together deliberately. Chapter 9 returns to this thread with the Civil Rights Movement.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the ratification dates for the three amendments, the terms of the Compromise of 1877, the details of Radical Reconstruction's own legislation, the experience of freedpeople day to day, or Jim Crow's operation outside voting (housing, employment, public accommodation) beyond the segregation doctrine stated above. I also did not read Du Bois, Stamp or Foner, only a summary naming them. The chapter covers the political sequence and the historiography, not the lived experience.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out Lincoln's, Johnson's and the Radical Republicans' approaches to Reconstruction as the chapter gives them, and say what each disagreement was about.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Historians have always agreed that Reconstruction failed because freedmen were unfit to govern." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain what the Louisiana voter figure shows about Jim Crow's real effect, and say what the chapter cannot tell you about how it felt to live under these laws.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Reconstruction:** 1865 to 1877; 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments; Freedmen's Bureau; Black Codes
- **Johnson impeached:** 24 February 1868; acquitted 35 to 19, one vote short, 16 and 26 May
- **Dunning School:** dominant about 1900 to the 1930s, in textbooks into the 1960s; discredited after Du Bois (1935), Stamp and Foner
- **Jim Crow:** from the 1870s; *Plessy v. Ferguson* 1896, "separate but equal" for 58 years; Louisiana registered Black voters fell to 730 by 1910
- **End:** *Brown v. Board* 1954; Civil Rights Act 1964; Voting Rights Act 1965
- **Not covered:** the amendments' ratification dates, the Compromise of 1877's terms, lived experience

CHAPTER 7: THE GILDED AGE & INDUSTRIALISATION

US History

Chapter 7 · The Gilded Age & Industrialisation

Chapter 6 ended in the 1870s, with Reconstruction giving way to Jim Crow. This chapter runs alongside that period and into the 1890s, covering the industrial growth, the wealth it concentrated, and the labour movement's early, often violent, struggles. The sources are three reference articles, on the Gilded Age, on the Haymarket affair and on Standard Oil. One event, Haymarket, has a genuinely disputed detail at its centre, and the chapter keeps it open.

The Gilded Age

The period runs from the late 1870s to the late 1890s, between Reconstruction and the Progressive Era. The name comes from Mark Twain's 1873 novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, though 1920s historians coined the period label itself. The source describes the book's own satire as showing "an era of serious problems masked by a thin gold gilding of economic expansion."

Industry	What the source says
Railroads	Track mileage tripled between 1860 and 1880, then doubled again by 1920.
Steel	Production surpassed Britain, Germany and France combined.
Oil	The industry dominated globally through the 1950s.

Concentrated Wealth

The wealthiest 2 percent owned over a third of national wealth between 1860 and 1900, and the top 10 percent owned roughly three-quarters. The bottom 40 percent owned no wealth. Real wages rose 60 percent between 1860 and 1890, though workers typically earned under \$800 a year.

Two Facts That Both Hold

Wages rose and wealth concentrated at the same time. The source states both, and I do not treat one as cancelling the other. Rising wages and a very unequal distribution of the country's total wealth are separate measurements, and the chapter reports them as such rather than resolving them into a single verdict on whether workers were better or worse off.

Named industrialists, called "robber barons" or "captains of industry" depending on the source's own framing, include John D. Rockefeller (Standard Oil), Andrew Carnegie (steel, who "donated 90% of wealth"), Cornelius Vanderbilt and J.P. Morgan (finance and railroads). Millions of European immigrants arrived and settled in industrial centres, and the source says many initially planned to return to Europe.

Standard Oil

Standard Oil was incorporated in Ohio on 2 January 1870 by John D. Rockefeller and partners, including his brother William, Henry Flagler and Samuel Andrews.

Year	Market share
1880	Peak of 90 percent of refining capacity, per the source's own note.
1904	91 percent of production and 85 percent of final sales.
1906	About 70 percent.
1911	About 64 percent, the year of the breakup.

In *Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey v. United States* (1911), the Supreme Court found the company guilty of anticompetitive practices and ordered it broken up into 39 separate companies with different boards of directors. The severed assets represented \$375 million, 57 percent of Jersey Standard's value.

A Declining Monopoly, Still Broken Up

The source notes that "some economic historians argue the company was already losing dominance at breakup," its share falling from a 1880 peak of 90 percent to about 64 percent by 1911, partly from competitors expanding into new oil regions. That the Court

still ordered a breakup at 64 percent, not 90, is worth keeping in mind against any account that treats 1911 as the moment Standard Oil was stopped at its peak. I report the decline as the source's own hedge, not as a claim that the breakup was unjustified.

The Haymarket Affair, 4 May 1886

Workers organised a general strike for the eight-hour workday, with estimates of 300,000 to 500,000 striking across the United States. On 3 May, Chicago police fired on demonstrators at a McCormick plant, killing at least two workers. Outraged anarchists called a rally the next day.

The Bomb

As police moved to disperse the peaceful gathering around 10:30 pm, an unknown person threw a dynamite bomb, killing Officer Mathias Degan and wounding others.

The Gunfire

Gunfire followed. Historians dispute who fired first, though most sources suggest police initiated the shooting. Seven police officers and at least four civilians died.

The Trial

Eight anarchists were tried for conspiracy to murder, though evidence showed none threw the bomb and only two were present at Haymarket. Police conducted warrantless raids, and the prosecution relied partly on controversial testimony from informants such as Balthazar Rau.

Who Threw the Bomb Is Unknown

The source says an "unknown person" threw the bomb, and that none of the eight tried did so. The trial convicted people for a conspiracy without proof any of them committed the act at its centre. That is a genuinely unresolved question, not a gap I can fill, and it is separate from the disputed question of who fired first afterward.

Seven defendants received death sentences, and Oscar Neebe received 15 years. Governor Richard Oglesby commuted two sentences to life imprisonment. Louis Lingg died by suicide before his execution. Four were hanged on 11 November 1887. In 1893, Governor John Peter Altgeld pardoned the remaining defendants and "criticized the trial." The affair became the origin of International Workers' Day, 1 May.

A Case Against Unnamed People

A governor later pardoned the surviving defendants and criticised the trial itself, which the source treats as a real correction rather than a routine act of clemency. Four men were already dead by then. I note this without drawing a wider lesson about labour trials generally, since the source covers only this one case.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the details of union organisations such as the Knights of Labor or the American Federation of Labor, the Pullman Strike, child labour, immigration numbers by country or year, or the political response to concentrated wealth (antitrust law before 1911). The chapter covers two named cases, Standard Oil and Haymarket, and a set of headline economic figures, not the labour movement as a whole.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Using the chapter's figures, explain how rising real wages and concentrated wealth can both be true of the same period.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "The Haymarket bombers were caught and executed." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain why Standard Oil's declining market share complicates a simple story of the 1911 breakup, without concluding the breakup was wrong.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Gilded Age:** late 1870s to late 1890s; named for Twain's 1873 novel; top 2 percent owned over a third of wealth
- **Standard Oil:** incorporated 1870; 91 percent of production in 1904, down to about 64 percent by 1911; broken into 39 companies
- **Haymarket:** 4 May 1886; bomb thrower unknown; 7 officers and at least 4 civilians died; 4 hanged 11 November 1887; remaining defendants pardoned 1893
- **Origin:** International Workers' Day, 1 May
- **Not covered:** the Knights of Labor, the AFL, the Pullman Strike, immigration numbers

CHAPTER 8: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA & THE NEW DEAL

US History

Chapter 8 · The Progressive Era & the New Deal

Chapter 7 covered the Gilded Age's growth and its concentrated wealth. This chapter covers the reform movement that answered it, the Progressive Era, then jumps forward through the 1920s to the Great Depression and the New Deal. The two periods sit decades apart, and the chapter does not claim a continuous line between them beyond both being responses to economic upheaval. The sources are three reference articles, on the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, and the Nineteenth Amendment.

The Progressive Era, 1890s to 1920s

Progressives targeted rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, political corruption, monopolies and concentrated wealth, seeking improvement through scientific methods, professionalism and government regulation, according to the source.

Trust-Busting

Antitrust regulation to promote fair competition. Chapter 7's Standard Oil breakup, decided in 1911, sits inside this period.

Suffrage and Prohibition

Women's suffrage was promoted as advancing democracy, and the era also pursued prohibition of alcoholic beverages.

Regulation

Pure food, drugs and water regulation, labour policy and working-condition improvements, and conservation of natural resources.

Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Robert M. La Follette are named as key figures, without further detail on what each did. Investigative journalists, "muckrakers," exposed "social and political sins and shortcomings" in popular magazines, whose cover prices had dropped to

about 10 cents, expanding readership. Ida Tarbell's exposé of Rockefeller and Standard Oil in *McClure's*, at Christmas 1903, is the source's named example.

Journalism Before the Court Case

Tarbell's exposé appeared in 1903, eight years before the 1911 Standard Oil ruling covered in Chapter 7. The source does not say the article caused the case, and I do not claim that. I note only that the muckraking and the legal outcome both concerned the same company, years apart.

Amendments Not Detailed

I expected the article to give the Sixteenth through Nineteenth Amendments together, but it named only the Seventeenth, on direct election of senators, without a date. I did not find dates or content for the Sixteenth (income tax) or Eighteenth (prohibition) in what I read, so the chapter does not state them. The Nineteenth is covered below from its own source.

The Nineteenth Amendment

The amendment prohibited the United States and the states from denying voting rights "on account of sex," and "enfranchised 26 million American women" before the 1920 presidential election. It was ratified on 18 August 1920, when Tennessee became the decisive 36th state, and certified by the federal government on 26 August 1920.

The Movement Behind It

The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention is marked as the formal beginning, adopting the Declaration of Sentiments. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton led early efforts, attempting legal challenges through the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, all rejected by the Supreme Court. By the early 1900s, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns pursued more militant tactics, organising a 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, and during the First World War Paul's National Woman's Party staged picketing and protests, the "Silent Sentinels," while Carrie Chapman Catt's National American Woman Suffrage Association pursued a "Winning Plan" combining state and federal approaches.

A Right That Was Not Universal

The source says the amendment fell short of universal enfranchisement: African-American women faced poll taxes, literacy tests and intimidation, and "three million women south of the Mason-Dixon line remained disfranchised" through discriminatory enforcement. Native Americans, Asian Americans and Latina women faced legal obstacles lasting decades beyond 1920. Chapter 6's Louisiana voter figure, from 1910, describes the same mechanisms applied to Black men before this amendment; the source here shows they applied to Black women after it as well. I place these together deliberately, since both describe formal rights blocked by the same kinds of tactics.

The Great Depression

The Depression began with the Wall Street crash of October 1929 and reached its worst point between 1931 and 1933. Unemployment estimates vary: Stanley Lebergott calculated 24.9 percent at the worst point in 1933, while Michael Darby's 1976 estimate peaked at 22.5 percent in 1932.

Proposed cause	What the source says
Monetary failure	Monetarists Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz argued the Federal Reserve failed to manage the monetary system, letting banking panics devastate the economy.
Debt and lending	Others emphasise high consumer debt and poorly regulated markets permitting excessive lending.
The gold standard	Its constraints prevented an expansionary monetary policy response.

Two Estimates, Not One

Unlike Chapter 5's clear scholarly majority on the causes of the Civil War, this source presents genuinely competing economic explanations without naming a consensus view, and gives two different unemployment peaks, 24.9 percent and 22.5 percent, from two named economists using different methods. I report both rather than choosing.

The New Deal

Herbert Hoover lost the 1932 election decisively. Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented the New Deal beginning in 1933, introducing "unprecedented programs for relief, recovery and reform." The source says these programmes built infrastructure but had "mixed effectiveness in spurring private sector recovery."

No Programme Names or Dates

The summary I read named the New Deal as a whole but did not name individual programmes such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Social Security or the Works Progress Administration, or give their dates. I did not find them, so the chapter does not list them. A reader wanting the individual measures should consult a fuller source.

How the Depression Ended

Recovery began around 1940. The source says "the war brought a restoration of prosperity and hopeful expectations for the future across the nation," with war mobilisation from summer 1940 and full wartime production guaranteeing employment and revitalising urban economies.

A War, Not the New Deal, Ends It

The source's own account credits wartime mobilisation with restoring prosperity, not the New Deal programmes of the 1930s, whose effectiveness it calls mixed. I state this as the source's own weighting and not a broader judgement on the New Deal's other effects, which this source does not evaluate beyond the recovery question.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Amendments, the individual New Deal agencies and their dates, the details of Theodore Roosevelt's or Wilson's reforms, the labour movement in this period beyond what Chapter 7 covered, or the Depression's effects outside unemployment figures. The chapter covers headline dates and the disputed causes, not the full policy record.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

List the Progressive Era's reform areas as the chapter gives them, and say which one connects directly to Chapter 7.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "The Nineteenth Amendment gave all American women the vote in 1920." Use the chapter to qualify it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain what the chapter says actually ended the Great Depression, and how that differs from crediting the New Deal.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Progressive Era:** 1890s to 1920s; trust-busting, suffrage, prohibition, food and drug regulation; Roosevelt, Wilson, La Follette
- **Muckraking:** Ida Tarbell's Standard Oil exposé, *McClure's*, Christmas 1903
- **19th Amendment:** ratified 18 August 1920; enfranchised 26 million women; Black, Native American, Asian American and Latina women still faced barriers
- **Depression:** began October 1929; unemployment 22.5 to 24.9 percent (1932/1933); causes disputed among economists
- **New Deal:** from 1933; "mixed effectiveness"; recovery credited to wartime mobilisation from 1940

- **Not covered:** the 16th and 18th Amendments, individual New Deal programmes

CHAPTER 9: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

US History

Chapter 9 · The Civil Rights Movement

Chapter 6 traced Jim Crow's rise; this chapter traces its formal dismantling. It covers Brown v. Board, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the March on Washington, the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act, and the movement's own internal disagreements. The sources are three reference articles, on the civil rights movement, on the Montgomery Bus Boycott specifically, and on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. One of them corrects a popular story about Rosa Parks, and the chapter keeps the correction rather than the story.

Brown v. Board of Education, 1954

The Supreme Court ruled school segregation unconstitutional, overturning the "separate but equal" doctrine from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which Chapter 6 covered. Implementation faced "massive resistance" in the South, and some areas closed public schools entirely rather than integrate.

A Direct Line Back to Chapter 6

Plessy gave "separate but equal" constitutional cover for 58 years, per Chapter 6's own source. *Brown* is the ruling that ended that cover. The two chapters use different reference articles, and both name the same case at each end of the doctrine, so I treat this as a confirmed link, not an inference of mine.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

Rosa Parks was arrested on 1 December 1955 for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. The boycott began on 5 December 1955 and lasted 382 days, ending on 20 December 1956.

Not Simply Tired

A popular story says Parks refused to move because she was tired after a long day. The source says this needs nuance: she had completed a "Race Relations" course emphasising nonviolent civil disobedience, and she "realized that she was again on a bus driven by Blake," the same driver who had ejected her twelve years earlier. Her refusal appears calculated rather than spontaneous exhaustion. I use the source's account and drop the tiredness explanation.

The federal district court ruled on 5 June 1956 that Alabama's bus segregation laws were unconstitutional in *Browder v. Gayle*, and the Supreme Court upheld this on 13 November 1956, ending the boycott's legal basis for continuing.

Who Actually Organised It

The source says E.D. Nixon, not King, orchestrated the initial organising and selected King as leader specifically because he was "new to Montgomery" and had not yet been intimidated by city officials. King delivered speeches that mobilised the boycott and became a national figure through it, but the source's own hedge is careful: the boycott "stimulated activism" and "gave King national attention as a rising leader," rather than saying he initiated the movement. I keep that distinction rather than crediting King with starting it.

The March on Washington, 1963

About 250,000 people took part in the march. President Kennedy subsequently requested congressional civil rights legislation. I did not find further detail on King's speech at the march in the summary I read, so the chapter does not describe it beyond naming the event and its scale.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act on 2 July 1964. It outlawed discrimination based on "race, color, religion, sex, and national origin," banning unequal voter registration practices, racial segregation in schools and public facilities, and employment discrimination.

Feature	What the source says
The filibuster	Southern Democrats and one Republican conducted a 72-day filibuster. After 54 days, senators crafted a compromise bill. Cloture passed 71 to 29 on 10 June 1964, a historic first for civil rights legislation.
Johnson's role	After Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, Johnson prioritised the stalled bill, telling Congress that passing it would honour Kennedy's memory. He ensured it bypassed the hostile Senate Judiciary Committee, and signed it immediately after House passage.
The vote	The Act passed with bipartisan support overall, but Southern representatives overwhelmingly opposed it: only 8 of 102 Southern House members voted yes.

"Bipartisan" Needs the Regional Breakdown

Calling the Act "bipartisan" is accurate at the national level and misleading without the regional figure. 8 of 102 Southern House members voting yes shows the opposition was concentrated, not evenly spread across parties or regions. I keep both the overall description and the regional number together.

The source says the Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discriminatory voting practices and authorised federal oversight of elections in areas with documented histories of voter suppression, though I did not find its own passage date in what I read.

An Internal Disagreement

In the mid-1960s, the Black Power movement emerged, influenced by Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party, offering a more militant alternative that criticised civil rights leaders for "moderate, incremental tendencies."

One Line for a Real Disagreement

The source gives this strand of the movement one sentence, naming a criticism without describing Malcolm X's own views, the Black Panther Party's programme, or how King and others responded to the criticism. I do not fill this in from general knowledge.

Readers wanting Malcolm X's own account or the Panthers' platform should look elsewhere.

King's Assassination

King was assassinated on 11 April 1968, which the source marks as the movement's official endpoint. Civil unrest peaked in 1967 and again after his death, and the source says this weakened white moderate support for the movement.

An "Endpoint" That Is a Framing Choice

Marking 1968 as an endpoint is the source's own periodisation, not a claim that racial inequality or organising stopped there. The Voting Rights Act's own later legal history, including Jim Crow-era tactics resurfacing in new forms, is outside what this chapter's sources describe, and I do not extend the story past what they say.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find King's speech at the March on Washington, the Voting Rights Act's own passage date and provisions in detail, the Freedom Rides, the Selma marches, Malcolm X's biography, or the Black Panther Party's programme. I also did not check the 250,000 march figure against another source. The chapter follows a narrow legal and organisational line from Brown to 1968.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

A student writes "Rosa Parks refused to move because she was tired." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain who organised the Montgomery Bus Boycott and what role King actually played, according to the chapter.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain why calling the Civil Rights Act of 1964 "bipartisan" needs the regional vote breakdown to be accurate, using the chapter's figures.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Brown v. Board:** 1954; overturned *Plessy's* "separate but equal"
- **Montgomery:** Parks arrested 1 December 1955; boycott 5 December 1955 to 20 December 1956 (382 days); *Browder v. Gayle*; organised by E.D. Nixon, King selected as leader
- **March on Washington:** 1963; about 250,000 people
- **Civil Rights Act:** signed 2 July 1964; cloture 71 to 29 on 10 June 1964; only 8 of 102 Southern House members voted yes
- **Voting Rights Act:** 1965; outlawed discriminatory voting practices
- **1968:** King assassinated 11 April, marked as the movement's endpoint in this source's own periodisation
- **Not covered:** King's speech, the Freedom Rides, Selma, Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party

CHAPTER 10: CAPSTONE: TRACING ONE THREAD OF AMERICAN SOCIAL CHANGE FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO TODAY

US History

Chapter 10 · Capstone: Tracing One Thread of American Social Change From Colonial Times to Today

This capstone introduces no new sources. It follows one question through the nine prior chapters: who counted as a full citizen, and how that changed. Chapter 1 named this as the social-history question the course would ask. Every claim below repeats a chapter already written, and the chapter number is given each time so it can be checked against the original.

Following the Thread

Step	What the chapters recorded	Chapter
1. Two unfree statuses	Indentured servants served four or five years, without wages, then received "freedom dues" and became free members of society. Enslaved people had no such term and no such end.	2
2. A claim against indigenous land	The Louisiana Purchase transferred "the preemptive right to obtain Indian lands by treaty or by conquest," not full possession of inhabited territory. The Indian Removal Act then forced five nations west, with deaths estimated at 13,200 to 16,700.	4
3. A war over slavery	Most historians identify slavery as the central cause of secession, supported by the states' own secession documents, against states' rights and economic explanations the source treats as rejected or subordinate.	5
4. Citizenship granted	The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments abolished slavery and granted citizenship and voting rights regardless of race.	6
5. Citizenship blocked in practice	Poll taxes, literacy tests and grandfather clauses cut Louisiana's registered Black voters to 730, under 0.5 percent of eligible men, by 1910, under the Plessy doctrine's cover.	6
6. A second exclusion by sex	The Nineteenth Amendment enfranchised 26 million women in 1920, but three million women south of the Mason-Dixon line remained disfranchised through the same tactics used against Black men.	8

Step	What the chapters recorded	Chapter
7. Formal exclusion dismantled	Brown v. Board overturned "separate but equal" in 1954. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed the remaining discrimination in public life and at the polls.	9

A Chain Made of My Links

Each row is documented in its own chapter. No source states that step 2 caused step 5, or that step 5 caused step 6. Placing them in one table is my own organising choice, made to answer the question Chapter 1 set for the whole course. Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 already named the recurring pattern in steps 5 and 6 directly, in their own finding-boxes, so that part of the thread is not new to this chapter, only assembled here.

What Repeats, and What Does Not

Three chapters, working from three different reference sources, each found the same shape: a formal right granted, and the same family of tactics, poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, used to block it in practice. Chapter 6 documented this for Black men after the Fifteenth Amendment. Chapter 8 documented it for Black women after the Nineteenth. Neither source cites the other, and the pattern held across two rights, sixty years apart, granted to two different groups.

Why This Is Worth Naming as a Pattern

Two independent cases sharing the same mechanism is stronger evidence of a real pattern than one case alone, though it is still only two. A genuinely rigorous claim would need more cases, drawn from a source that studies disenfranchisement as its own subject rather than two summaries that happened to describe it in passing. I state the pattern because two chapters' own sources independently support it, and I do not claim more than that.

Not every group's story followed this shape. The Louisiana Purchase and the Indian Removal Act (Chapter 4) did not proceed through a granted right later blocked; they proceeded through a legal claim to land exercised without indigenous consent from the start, and no chapter in

this course records a right granted to those nations comparable to the Fifteenth or Nineteenth Amendments. Indentured servants (Chapter 2) had a real, if harsh, legal exit that enslaved people did not. The thread is not one story told four times; it is several different stories, and the capstone's own value is showing where they resemble each other and where they genuinely do not.

What the Course Leaves Open

Chapter 9 ended in 1968, which its own source calls the movement's "official endpoint," a framing choice rather than a claim that the underlying question was settled. This course does not follow the thread past that point. It does not cover the Civil Rights Act's or Voting Rights Act's own later legal history, the experiences of Latino, Asian American or LGBTQ Americans in the fight over citizenship, disability rights, or the twenty-first century.

What This Course Did Not Cover

It rested on one to four short reference articles per chapter. It did not cover the colonial period beyond Plymouth and indenture, the American Revolution's war (left to Military History: The War of US Independence), the Civil War itself (left to a planned Military History course), the details of most named legislation, or the lived experience behind any of the figures it reports. Individual chapters' own "What I Did Not Verify" boxes list further gaps. The course is an outline built from reference summaries, not a substitute for the sources those summaries draw on.

The Course in One Table

Chapter	Subject	Its main caution
1	Scope	Social history has its own critics, and this course inherits its blind spots.
2	Colonial settlement	Two indenture estimates for the same population did not match.

Chapter	Subject	Its main caution
3	The road to independence	A popular myth about the Boston Tea Party's signal was not supported.
4	Expansion	Death tolls on the Trail of Tears varied by thousands depending on the source.
5	Slavery and civil war	A main source on abolition returned little usable content.
6	Reconstruction	A once-dominant historical interpretation was later discredited.
7	Industrialisation	A monopoly was broken up after its market share had already declined.
8	Progressive Era and Depression	Economists disagree on the Depression's cause, and the source named no consensus.
9	Civil rights	A popular account of Rosa Parks's motive was corrected by the source itself.

Course complete: US History, 10 chapters.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Choose a different thread through the nine chapters, for example the changing legal status of enslaved and formerly enslaved people, and build a table like the one above, citing a chapter for each row.

[→ Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain why the capstone treats the grant-then-block pattern as a real finding but a modest one, and what evidence would make it stronger.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Name one group's story in this course that does not fit the grant-then-block pattern, and explain why forcing it into that shape would misrepresent the chapter it comes from.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Thread:** who counted as a full citizen, from indentured servants and enslaved people through indigenous dispossession, the Reconstruction amendments, Jim Crow, women's suffrage, to the 1964 and 1965 acts
- **Pattern found twice:** a formal right granted, then blocked by poll taxes, literacy tests and grandfather clauses (Chapters 6 and 8)
- **Does not fit the pattern:** indigenous dispossession (no comparable right was ever granted) and indenture (a real legal exit enslaved people did not have)
- **Left open:** everything after 1968, and every group this course's own sources did not cover