

# CLEP® History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present

## AT A GLANCE

### Description of the Exam

The History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present exam covers material that is usually taught in the second semester of what is often a two-semester course in United States history. The exam covers the period of United States history from the end of the Civil War to the present, with the majority of the questions on the 20th century.

The exam contains approximately 120 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that won't be scored. Any time test takers spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

### Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the History of the United States II exam require candidates to demonstrate one or more of the following abilities:

- Identify and describe historical phenomena
- Analyze and interpret historical phenomena
- Compare and contrast historical phenomena

The subject matter of the History of the United States II exam is drawn from the following topics. The percentages next to the main topics indicate the approximate percentage of exam questions on that topic.

#### TOPICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- 30%** Political institutions and public policy
- 30%** Social developments
- 10%** Economic developments
- 20%** Cultural and intellectual developments
- 10%** Diplomacy and international relations

## CHRONOLOGICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**30%** 1865–1914

**70%** 1915–present

The following are among the specific topics tested:

- The impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the South
- The motivations and character of American expansionism and imperialism
- Legal history, including constitutional amendments and major Supreme Court cases
- The role of the environment in United States history
- The development of American political parties, movements, and realignments
- The changing role of the federal government in the economy and American life
- The intellectual and political expressions of liberalism and conservatism
- Long-term demographic trends
- The process of economic growth and development, including periods of depression and recession
- The changing occupational structure, nature of work, and labor organization
- Immigration and the history of racial and ethnic minorities
- Urbanization and industrialization
- The causes and effects of major wars in United States history and diplomacy and engagement with the world
- Major movements and individual figures in the history of American arts and culture
- Trends in the history of women and the family
- Trends in education, science, and technology and their impact on United States society
- Civil rights movements, the women’s rights movement, protest movements, and the expansion of individual rights and civil liberties

## Study Resources

Most textbooks used in college-level United States history (post-1865) courses cover the topics in the outline above, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphases given to them may differ. When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the knowledge and skills required for this test. Additional details and differing interpretations can be gained by consulting readers and specialized historical studies. Pay attention to visual materials (pictures, maps, and charts) as you study.

A survey conducted by CLEP® found that the following textbooks are among those used by college faculty who teach the equivalent course. You might find one or more of these online or at your local college bookstore.

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| Berkin et al., <i>Making America</i> (Wadsworth)  |
| Boydston et al., <i>Making a Nation</i> (Prentice Hall)   |
| Boyer et al., <i>The Enduring Vision</i> (Wadsworth)  |
| Brinkley, <i>American History: A Survey</i> (McGraw-Hill)   |
| Davidson et al., <i>Nation of Nations: A Concise Narrative of the American Republic</i> (McGraw-Hill) |
| Divine et al., <i>The American Story</i> (Penguin/Prentice Hall)                                      |
| Faragher et al., <i>Out of Many: A History of the American People</i> (Prentice Hall)                 |
| Foner, <i>Give Me Liberty!</i> (W. W. Norton)   |
| Goldfield et al., <i>American Journey</i> (Prentice Hall)   |
| Henretta et al., <i>America’s History</i> (Bedford/St. Martin’s)                                      |
| Jones et al., <i>Created Equal: A History of the United States</i> (Prentice Hall)                    |
| Kennedy et al., <i>Brief American Pageant: The History of the Republic</i> (Wadsworth)                |
| Murrin et al., <i>Liberty, Equality and Power</i> (Wadsworth)   |
| Nash et al., <i>The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society, Concise Ed.</i> (Prentice Hall) |
| Tindall and Shi, <i>Essential America</i> (W. W. Norton)  |

The online resources below, compiled by the CLEP test development committee and staff members, may help you study for your exam. However, none of these sources are designed specifically to provide preparation for a CLEP exam. College Board has no control over their content and cannot vouch for accuracy.

Annenberg's A Biography of America telecourse:  
[www.learner.org/series/a-biography-of-america/](http://www.learner.org/series/a-biography-of-america/)

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History:  
[gilderlehrman.org](http://gilderlehrman.org)

HippoCampus textbooks and courses:  
[hippocampus.org](http://hippocampus.org)

History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web:  
[historymatters.gmu.edu](http://historymatters.gmu.edu)

History of the United States II course by Modern States Education Alliance:  
[modernstates.org/course/history-of-the-united-states-ii](http://modernstates.org/course/history-of-the-united-states-ii)

Khan Academy®: U.S. History:  
[khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history](http://khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history)

U.S. History Pre-Columbian to the New Millennium:  
[ushistory.org/us](http://ushistory.org/us)

You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty members post their course materials on their schools' websites.

## Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions don't appear on an actual CLEP exam. They are intended to give potential test takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the exam and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and info about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.

1. Populists in the nineteenth century opposed railroad companies' practice of
  - A. charging higher rates for farmers than for grain elevator owners
  - B. lobbying Congress to nationalize the telegraph network
  - C. purchasing equipment and raw materials overseas
  - D. employing African American porters on railcars
  - E. hiring rural workers to maintain the railroads
2. Which of the following was an effect of the New Deal's recovery measures on United States society by the 1950s?
  - A. Working-class people and Americans in urban areas formed a solid voting block for the Republican Party.
  - B. Many Americans accepted the intervention of the federal government in the economy to secure the basic welfare of citizens.
  - C. Desegregation measures were broadly embraced, and public schools around the nation were quickly integrated.
  - D. Americans increasingly saw Congress and not the president as their primary voice in the national government.
  - E. Opposition to the policies of Franklin Roosevelt led Southern voters to defect from the Democratic Party.
3. Which of the following best describes the United States economy in the 1950s?
  - A. An extended depression led to widespread unemployment.
  - B. High inflation rates and an oil embargo led to stagnation in the economy.
  - C. Government financing for education and homeownership supported economic growth.
  - D. Businesses successfully lobbied the government to lessen regulation of corporate trusts.
  - E. Technological innovations led to declining employment in manufacturing.

4. A major goal of the Black Power movement in the 1960s was to
- assert African American control over civic and cultural institutions in African American neighborhoods
  - empower church-affiliated African American civil rights organizations
  - foster greater African American integration into predominately white suburban communities
  - assist African Americans seeking vocational and industrial training
  - encourage African American rights activists to form alliances with leaders of other rights movements
5. Which of the following describes an important effect of John Dewey's ideas on education in the early twentieth century United States?
- A focus on the mastery of facts and rote memorization in student learning
  - The adoption of cultural relativism in the study of history and society
  - The reinforcement of religious doctrine in science and philosophy
  - A shift to experiential learning as central to educating citizens
  - An emphasis on ethnic and racial integration in education
6. A genre of popular entertainment that frequently provided an outlet for expressing fears about the Cold War in the 1950s was
- the Western
  - science fiction
  - rock and roll
  - the variety show
  - musical theater
7. The Camp David Accords, brokered in 1978 by President Jimmy Carter, sought to resolve which of the following situations?
- Diplomatic strains with China
  - Competing claims to the Suez Canal
  - Conflict between Egypt and Israel
  - Human rights abuses in Latin America
  - Tensions with the Soviet Union over Afghanistan
8. Which one of the following views was NOT a central element of Ronald Reagan's political perspective?
- Government intervention in the economy should be reduced to encourage free enterprise.
  - Job and skills training should be encouraged to lessen dependency on welfare programs.
  - Defense spending should be reduced to spur economic growth.
  - Labor unions should have less power in order to allow employers more flexibility.
  - Tax rates should be lowered to maximize tax revenue and increase investment.
9. Place the following events in the correct chronological order. Place the earliest event first.
- The *Roe v. Wade* decision
  - The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment
  - The popularization of Rosie the Riveter
  - The passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
10. Which of the following was an important direct effect of the Compromise of 1877?
- Sharecropping and tenant farming spread throughout the Southern states.
  - The former Confederate states recognized the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.
  - The Democratic Party maintained control of the presidency for the next decade.
  - The United States removed the last federal troops overseeing Reconstruction in the South.
  - Railroad owners came to an agreement with workers on a nationwide strike.

## Credit Recommendations

The American Council on Education has recommended that colleges grant 3 credits for a score of 50, which is equivalent to a course grade of C, on the CLEP History of the United States II exam. Each college, however, is responsible for setting its own policy. For candidates with satisfactory scores on the History of the United States II exam, colleges may grant credit toward fulfillment of a distribution requirement, or for a particular course that matches the exam in content. Check with your school to find out the score it requires for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted, and the course that can be bypassed with a passing score.

### Answers to Sample Questions:

1-A; 2-B; 3-C; 4-A; 5-D; 6-B; 7-C; 8-C; 9-B, C, A, D; 10-D