

Take a Stand!®

Modern American History

Reading, Discussing, and Writing

by John De Gree

**The Classical Historian
San Clemente, California**

DEDICATION

Dedicated to students willing to take a stand

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Part One: Social Studies Curriculum

Chapter I: Social Studies Essay Questions and Prewriting Activities

1. How the United States Became a World Power

The Effects of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Urbanization

After U.S. involvement in World War I, there was no doubt that America had entered the world stage as a formidable country. Before World War I, however, the United States was considered a regional power at best. Heeding the words of first President George Washington, Americans hesitated to get involved in world affairs or European wars. The isolationism of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America changed drastically in the early twentieth century. The United States became an imperialist nation, conquering and controlling many Latin American and Asian lands. The United States was a key reason for the defeat of the Central Powers in World War I. America became an agricultural and industrial powerhouse, setting agricultural and economic examples at which the world could marvel. Various American scientists, inventors, and industrialists set the standard for modernized countries to follow. Furthermore, in World War I, it was the Americans who made the final difference for the Allies.

In your essay, explain the main causes for this drastic change of the United States. Answer the questions: "What caused the United States to change from a regional power to a world power? How was the U.S. different from other countries?" Explore the key factors that enabled the United States to emerge as one of the most powerful countries on earth.

To answer this question well, you should be familiar with these terms and people:

the Civil War Reconstruction democracy capitalism
natural resources World War I imperialism urbanization
Theodore Roosevelt Woodrow Wilson European aristocracy Manifest Destiny
American industrialists and inventors

This essay has six assignments:

Assignment	Due Date		Due Date
1. Prewriting Activities	_____	4. Rough Draft	_____
2. Thesis Statement	_____	5. Final	_____
3. Outline	_____	6. Works Cited	_____

Prewriting Activities
A. Taking Notes

The Civil War
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
Did American experiences in the Civil War lead the United States to become a world power? ____

Any other information? _____

Source: _____

Reconstruction
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
Did American experiences in Reconstruction lead the United States to become a world power? ____

Any other information? _____

Source: _____

Democracy
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
Did the democratic system of government lead the United States to become a world power? ____

Any other information? _____

Source: _____

B. Compare and Contrast: Nineteenth-Century Europe and Post-Civil War America

By using a variety of sources, compare and contrast the two societies on nineteenth-century Europe and post-Civil War America. Your aim is to try to discover what caused the United States to "catch up" to Europe and even surpass her in terms of agricultural and industrial might. Your goal is to discover "What caused the United States to become a world power in the beginning of the twentieth century?"

1. In the early 1900s, what type of government did most European countries have? _____

2. In Europe, how did people become political leaders? _____

3. In the early 1900s, what type of government did the United States have? _____

4. How did Americans become political leaders? _____

5. Define "aristocracy." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, did European countries or the United States have an aristocracy? _____

6. What is a serf? _____

7. When were the serfs freed in the Austro-Hungarian Empire? When were serfs freed in Russia? _____

8. When were slaves freed in the United States _____

9. In European countries, who made most decisions involving the economy (e.g., what factories would be built, what farmers would grow)? _____

10. In the United States, who made most decisions involving the economy? _____

11. Compare and contrast the natural resources of European countries with that of the United States. _____

12. What did the United States learn militarily from fighting the Civil War? _____

C. Class Discussion

When you share ideas with other students, your ideas may be reinforced, rejected, or slightly changed. Listening to your classmates' ideas will help you form your own judgment.

Each student must interview at least three classmates who do not sit next to one another. The answers to the following questions must be written down on a piece of paper.

1. What is your name?
2. What led the U.S. to change from being a regional power to a world power?
3. Which facts do you have that support what you think?

Reflection

After you have written down all your classmates' responses, think about them and ask yourself the following questions. Write down your answers under your classmates' responses.

1. What do I think of my classmates' answers?
2. Which are the best answers to question #2 above?
3. Have I changed the way I think?

You should now have a chance to present your ideas in a class discussion. If somebody says something with which you disagree, speak up! In your discussion, you may find out they are actually right, and you are wrong. All possible viewpoints should be valued and defended out loud. Test your ideas in class.

2. Immigration

From 1865 to 1920, nearly 30 million people immigrated to the United States. These immigrants braved a dangerous journey to America for many of the same reasons of those who came before and after them. War, poverty, and lack of financial opportunities pushed people from various nations and continents to the foreign land of America. Once in America, these immigrants faced many difficulties, such as racism, tough living conditions, and the challenges of learning a new language and culture. Even though the challenges were great, people of the world continued to come to the United States by the millions because of the great political, economic, and religious freedoms Americans enjoy.

During this period, some Americans felt that too many immigrants were bad for the country. They questioned the idea that there was enough opportunity in America for all to enjoy. Cities were crowded. Schools were inundated with students who did not know English. Foreigners would work for less pay than native-born Americans. Other Americans welcomed newcomers and thought that immigrants made America strong. Immigrants worked hard and sometimes held two or three jobs. The new industrial America needed unskilled labor, and immigrants provided this. Also, many felt that America was a "nation of nations," as poet Walt Whitman wrote. What made America strong was that it was a melting pot of different cultures and peoples.

In your essay, using 1865–1920 as a historical backdrop, defend or reject the position "Immigration limits are a necessary way to protect the American way of life. Open borders are inherently wrong." Use evidence from 1865 to 1920 to show that you agree or disagree with this quote.

Be familiar with these terms before you write your essay:

industrialization
political machine
steerage
Ellis Island
Webb Alien Land Law
slum

nativism
immigration quota
Homestead Act
Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
Immigration Restriction Act of 1921

This essay has six assignments:

Assignment	Due Date		Due Date
1. Prewriting Activities	_____	4. Rough Draft	_____
2. Thesis Statement	_____	5. Final	_____
3. Outline	_____	6. Works Cited	_____

Prewriting Activities
A. Taking Notes

Industrialization
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
What role did industrialization play in immigration? _____

Any other information? _____

Source: _____

Nativism
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
What role did nativism play in immigration? _____

Any other information? _____

Source: _____

Political Machine
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
What role did the political machine in immigration? _____

Any other information? _____

Source: _____

B. Immigration to the United States, 1865–1920

Find a graph that shows immigration to the United States during the time period, 1865–1920. If you are able to find a graph showing immigration to the United States at a slightly different time period (for example, 1880–1915), you may use these years as well.

List the number of people who immigrated to the United States from these areas:

1. Northwestern Europe: _____
2. Central Europe: _____
3. Eastern Europe: _____
4. Southern Europe: _____
5. Asia: _____
6. The Americas: _____
7. Africa: _____
8. Oceania : _____

Immigrants and Native-Born Americans from 1865 to 1920

Immigrants to America had different political and economic experiences and religious backgrounds than native-born Americans. Most Americans in 1865 were white Protestants who were accustomed to a democratic society. Some Americans feared that differences with foreigners would negatively change the United States. Choose seven countries from which people emigrated. Research the type of government under which immigrants lived and the kind of religion most practiced in their homeland.

Country of Immigrants	Government	Religion
1. Germany	limited monarch	Lutheran, Roman Catholic
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

C. Arguments for and against Immigration Limits

List the arguments that were used during the period 1865–1920 for immigration limits and against immigration limits.

Arguments...	
For Immigration Limits	Against Immigration Limits
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

<p>1. Which arguments do you think were the strongest? Why? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>2. Which arguments do you think are the ones most based on historical fact? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3. Which arguments do you think are mostly based on opinions? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>4. In today's debate on immigration, which of these arguments from the period 1865–1920 are repeated? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

5. Using Quotes

An effective analytical essay in social studies will use quotes. For example, an essay about the Declaration of Independence will be stronger if certain passages from this document are used. When you argue a point about the past, there is no better evidence than a quote from a primary source. Also, when you use quotes, it is essential that you frame the quote. Before the quote is used, you need to introduce it. Introducing a quote means to write the original author's name and the speech or document from which the quote was taken, and to explain the quote briefly. Then write the quote. After you write the quote, tell the reader its meaning. It is your job to lead the reader through the quote, so your main point is emphasized. Do not imagine the reader will understand exactly what you mean, unless you tell the reader exactly what you are thinking.

Look at the example below. The paragraph is part of an answer to the question "According to Thomas Jefferson, is there anybody in society who should have more rights than others?"

According to Thomas Jefferson, all men should have the same rights in society. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson writes, "All men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This means that each person should be treated equally under the law. Whether you are rich or poor, or whether your family is famous or not, all citizens should have the same rights.

Practice

Practice framing three quotations taken from your textbook. Use correct punctuation.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

6. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means to take information from your research and to put it in your own words. This is an important skill to have when writing a research paper. If you copy directly from a source such as a book, but do not place the words in quotation marks and write the author's name, it is called **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is against the rules of writing and your teacher will not accept the work! The law may punish a professor or an author for plagiarizing.

Here is an example of paraphrasing a quote from a teacher.

Quote:

"In 1914, European nations began a war that was caused by dislike and hatred among countries. The United States tried to stay out of the war by being neutral. After German sailors aboard a submarine killed Americans on the British ship the *Lusitania*, President Woodrow Wilson grew to believe that Germany was a danger, and persuaded the U.S. Congress to declare war in 1917."

Paraphrase:

European nations began fighting World War I because of old rivalries. Woodrow Wilson's attempt to keep the United States out of the war succeeded for some time. Nevertheless, German actions affected American citizens. A German submarine destroyed the British ship, the *Lusitania*. Americans were on this ship and died. The United States declared war in 1917.

Practice

Quote: "Although Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Communists are responsible for the killing of over 20 million of their own people, Hitler and the Nazis are better known for their murderous ways."

Paraphrase: _____

Quote: "The French military officer Napoleon Bonaparte knew how to handle a riotous mob. To quell a protest, he ordered his soldiers to fire cannon directly into civilians. Instead of firing a cannonball, however, Bonaparte ordered his soldiers to pack scrap metal, nails, and bullets into the cannon. This way, more protesters would be killed or wounded."

Paraphrase: _____

7. Thesis Statement

The **thesis statement** is the main idea or argument of your entire essay. It is your main judgment regarding the essay question, and it should contain words used in the prompt. A thesis statement is not a fact. Instead, it is your judgment of the facts. Because of this, a thesis has to be something with which not everyone will agree. Every thesis will provide pieces of evidence in order to provide the reader with a general outline of your essay.

Here is an example from the essay questions “What caused the United States to change from a regional power to a world power? What were the key factors that enabled the United States to emerge in the world as one of the most powerful countries on earth?”

Example 1: The United States changed from a regional power to a world power primarily because of its economic development and its imperialistic philosophy.

This thesis answers the question and provides an outline for the rest of the essay. In the essay, the writer will expand on “economic development” and “imperialistic philosophy.”

Come up with two more examples of a thesis based on this question.

Example 2: _____ _____
Example 3: _____ _____

The Good Thesis Test

If you can answer, “Yes,” to these questions, you most likely have a good thesis.

1. Does the thesis address the prompt directly?
2. Does the thesis take a position that I can argue with evidence?
3. Could somebody argue against my thesis statement?

8. Conclusion

The **conclusion** ties the evidence presented in the essay back to the thesis statement. It is the writer's last chance to present how the evidence supports the thesis statement. In a one-paragraph essay, the conclusion can be one sentence, but it may be more.

Here is an example answering the questions “What caused the United States to change from a regional power to a world power? What were the key factors that enabled the United States to emerge in the world as one of the most powerful countries on earth?”

The last two sentences in the following paragraph are the conclusion.

The United States changed from a regional power to a world power primarily because of its economic development and its imperialistic philosophy. Ambitious industrial leaders such as Carnegie and Rockefeller led the urbanization of the late nineteenth century. These men brutally conquered their competition and in the process they urbanized the United States. America quickly became the strongest country in the world. Also, Americans became more imperialistic in their thinking. From the mid–nineteenth century, with the Mexican-American War as the beginning, the United States conquered and took giant areas of land. These areas of land include the American Southwest and islands in the Pacific and in the Caribbean. The United States won in war, or annexed, double its size from 1846 through 1900. **In conclusion, the United States changed from a regional power to a world power because of its economic development and its imperialistic philosophy. It used its power to conquer the American Southwest and islands in the Pacific and Caribbean.**

The Good Conclusion Test

If you can answer, “Yes,” to these questions, you have written a good conclusion.

1. Does the conclusion restate the thesis?
2. Does the conclusion include the pieces of evidence from my essay?
3. Does the conclusion help convince the reader that the thesis is correct?

9. Outline for a One-Paragraph Essay

An **outline** helps you organize your thoughts and make sure you have enough evidence to support your thesis statement. An outline does not need to be written in complete sentences, except for the thesis statement and the conclusion. In one paragraph, the more evidence you include, the stronger your argument will be.

An example outline follows to the essay question "What caused the Cold War?"

I. Thesis Statement: "Soviet fears of a third world war and democratic nations' fears of communism caused the Cold War."

Supporting Evidence:

1. Warsaw destruction with no Russian help
2. Potsdam Conference
3. No free elections in Eastern Europe
4. Hungary, 1956
5. Czechoslovakia, 1968
6. German invasion of Russia in WWI and WWII
7. Western hatred of communism

II. Conclusion: Both the Soviets and the free world feared each other greatly. These fears caused the Cold War.

Following this page are two forms, a "Basic Outline Form for a One-Paragraph Essay," and an "Advanced Outline Form for a Paragraph." These forms will help you outline your essay.

Basic Outline Form for a One-Paragraph Essay

(Use complete sentences for the thesis statement and the conclusion.)

I. Thesis Statement: _____

A. Supporting Evidence _____

B. Supporting Evidence _____

C. Supporting Evidence _____

II. Conclusion: _____

Advanced Outline Form for a One-Paragraph Essay

(Use complete sentences for the thesis statement and the conclusion.)

I. Thesis Statement: _____

A. Supporting Evidence _____

B. Supporting Evidence _____

C. Supporting Evidence _____

D. Supporting Evidence _____

E. Supporting Evidence _____

II. Conclusion: _____

10. Rough Draft of a One-Paragraph Essay

The **rough draft** is the first time that you will explain all the supporting evidence that you use. To do this, take your outline and explain how your evidence supports the thesis statement. Instead of listing your evidence, you will explain its importance.

Here is an example of a rough draft of a one-paragraph essay based on the question “What caused the United States to change from a regional power to a world power? What were the key factors that enabled the United States to emerge in the world as one of the most powerful countries on earth?” The sentences in bold are those that explain how your evidence supports the thesis.

The United States changed from a regional power to a world power primarily because of its economic development and its imperialistic philosophy. Ambitious industrial leaders such as Carnegie and Rockefeller led the urbanization of the late nineteenth century. **These men destroyed their competition, but in the process they urbanized the United States. America quickly became the strongest country in the world.** Also, Americans became more imperialistic in their thinking. From the mid-nineteenth century, with the Mexican-American War as the beginning, the United States conquered and took giant areas of land. These areas of land include the American Southwest and islands in the Pacific and in the Caribbean. The United States won in war, or annexed, double its size from 1846 through 1900. **This land increased changed America. The United States was now a large country and needed a strong military.** In conclusion, the United States changed from a regional power to a world power because of its economic development and its imperialistic philosophy. In the process, it conquered and controlled the American Southwest and islands in the Pacific and Caribbean.

On this page and the next are the basic and advanced rough draft forms.

Basic Rough Draft Form for a One-Paragraph Essay (Use complete sentences.)
I. Thesis Statement: _____
A. Supporting Evidence: First of all, _____
Explanation: (Explain how the evidence supports the topic sentence) _____
B. Supporting Evidence: Secondly, _____
Explanation: (Explain how the evidence supports the topic sentence) _____
II. Conclusion: In conclusion, _____

