

Take a Stand! American History

Socratic Discussion in History

Student's Edition

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Zdenka and the De Gree Kids

Copyright © 2019 by John De Gree. All rights reserved

Painting by Fran Johnston, Used with permission, © 2019 by John De Gree. All rights reserved.

Edited by Jessica De Gree

Published by The Classical Historian, San Clemente, California 92673.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without the prior written permission of the publisher. Address inquiries to www.classicalhistorian.com

Copyright © 2019 by The Classical Historian. All Rights Reserved.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Week One: Western Civilization, Columbus and Colonization _____ | 1 |
| Week Two: Jamestown and Plymouth Plantation _____ | 10 |
| Week Three: Causes of the American Revolution _____ | 16 |
| Week Four: The American Revolution—George Washington _____ | 20 |
| Week Five: The Declaration of Independence _____ | 23 |
| Week Six: The US Constitution _____ | 26 |
| Week Seven: Washington’s Inaugural Address and Farewell Address _____ | 30 |
| Week Eight: Challenges of a Young Nation _____ | 33 |
| Week Nine: The Beginning of Big Government _____ | 36 |
| Week Ten: The War for Texas Independence _____ | 41 |
| Week Eleven: Westward Movement _____ | 45 |
| Week Twelve: Antebellum North and South _____ | 48 |
| Week Thirteen: Causes of the Civil War _____ | 52 |
| Week Fourteen: The Civil War _____ | 54 |
| Week Fifteen: Reconstruction _____ | 60 |
| Week Sixteen: Immigration, 1865 to 1920 _____ | 62 |
| Week Seventeen: The Wild West _____ | 66 |
| Week Eighteen: Progressivism, Part One _____ | 67 |
| Week Nineteen: Building Greatly _____ | 68 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Week Twenty: Progressivism, Part Two | 69 |
| Week Twenty-One: The Roaring Twenties | 70 |
| Week Twenty-Two: The New Deal | 73 |
| Week Twenty-Three: World War II in the Pacific | 75 |
| Week Twenty-Four | 78 |
| Week Twenty-Five: The Cold War in the United States | 79 |
| Week Twenty-Six: An Atomic World | 83 |
| Week Twenty-Seven: The Civil Rights Movement | 84 |
| Week Twenty-Eight: The 60s | 87 |
| Week Twenty-Nine: From Watergate to Carter | 88 |
| Week Thirty: Reagan, Bush, and Clinton | 89 |
| Week Thirty-One: The War of Terror, Obama, and Trump | 90 |
| Week Thirty-Two: Final Class | 91 |

Week One: Western Civilization, Columbus and Colonization Fact or Opinion?

Fact

A **fact** in history is a statement that is accepted as true and is not debatable. A fact often refers to a date, a person, or a document. For example, “The Declaration of Independence was written and signed in 1776.” We know this happened because we have the original document, the men who wrote and signed this document wrote about it, and observers wrote about it as well. There is no doubt in anybody’s mind whether the facts in this statement are true.

Which of these sentences are facts and which are not?

Fact or Not a Fact?

- 1. The first Egyptian settlements were near the Euphrates River.
- 2. Early civilizations often settled near major rivers.
- 3. Another way of saying Old Stone Age is Paleolithic.
- 4. Early man used guns to hunt buffaloes.
- 5. California has the best waves to surf in the United States.

Opinion

An **opinion** is an expression of somebody’s ideas and is debatable. Opinions that are based on facts and good reasoning are stronger than opinions not based on facts. In history, opinions alone tend to be less persuasive than when a person supports his opinions with facts.

Are the following opinions or facts?

Opinion or Fact?

- 1. Life for early man was more peaceful than our life today.
- 2. Teachers who are nice don’t assign homework.
- 3. Almost everybody’s favorite food is pizza.
- 4. Mesopotamia means “the land between two rivers.”
- 5. Sumerians were the first people to use wheeled vehicles.

Now that you've learned the difference between fact and opinion, read the example paragraphs below and answer the questions. These two students attempted to answer the question "Did the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contribute much to world civilizations?"

Student 1: The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world. These societies rocked! When there was a really big war, the Sumerians and Assyrians knew how to fight hard. These societies would use a lot of arrows in their battles, and the enemy wouldn't know how to respond. Most of the time, the enemy would just die, or quit. Also, everyone knows that Mesopotamia had the best kind of clothing. Have you seen pictures of the great Babylonian kings? Their clothing was "tight." And, Mesopotamia was the land between two rivers, so therefore this area had to have a lot of water. All in all, the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world.

Student 2: The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world. The Sumerians created the first written language. We call this "Cuneiform." Sumerians also were the first people to use the wheel for transportation. The Babylonian king Hammurabi established one of the first written law codes, known as Hammurabi's Code. These laws helped the weak against the strong, protected women's property rights, and regulated doctors' fees. Also, the Hittites discovered how to use iron, which at that time was the strongest metal in the world that humans could work with. Phoenicians gave us the world's first alphabet, with 22 symbols. In addition, the Hebrews were the first people ever to worship only one God. Yes, the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world.

Questions

- 1. Which of these two students uses more opinion than fact? _____
- 2. Copy one sentence that is an opinion. _____
- 3. Copy one sentence that details at least one fact. _____
- 4. Which of these two students' writings is more persuasive? Why? _____

Week One: Christopher Columbus: Hero, Villain, or Neither? Open-Ended Question #1

Introduction

Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) was an explorer, cartographer (map maker), and adventurer from the Republic of Genoa (today part of northern Italy). In 1492, he led an expedition from Spain and discovered the islands of the West Indies. He died believing he had found a westerly route to Asia, but in reality, he had opened up the continents of North America and South America for European discovery and colonization. Fifty years ago, Americans viewed Columbus as a hero, and schoolchildren across the country had Columbus Day off from school. Today, students in only a few states honor Columbus, and people in many parts of our country view him with great dislike. Columbus Day is celebrated in some places of the United States on the second Monday of October, sometimes falling on the day he discovered America, October 12, 1492.

Question

Defend or reject this statement: The United States of America is correct to celebrate Christopher Columbus as a federal holiday.

A. The Age of Exploration

1. When was the Age of Exploration? _____

2. From which continent did the great majority of explorers come from? _____

3. What were the primary reasons European sailors explored the world? _____

4. Which two countries led the way in exploring the world in the 1400s? _____

5. Which areas of the world did the Spanish explore and colonize? _____

6. What made Columbus' discovery of America in 1492 different than Leif Ericson and the Viking's discovery of America in 1002? _____

7. Why did the Spanish arrest Columbus and bring him back to Spain in chains? _____

8. What might some people argue that shows Columbus is someone to honor? _____

9. What might some people argue that shows Columbus is not someone to honor? _____

10. Unfortunately, most Americans do not know much about Columbus. In your opinion, what is the best way to increase understanding among Americans about Columbus and what he represents? _____

B. Legal Concepts of Western Civilization

1. Belief in one God: _____

2. Morality: _____

3. Natural Law: _____

4. The Rule of Law: _____

5. Written Law: _____

6. Limited Government: _____

7. Political Liberty of all Citizens: _____

8. Rights of the Accused: _____

C. Christopher Columbus, Symbol of Western Civilization

Christopher Columbus is a symbol of Western Civilization. Columbus started the exploration and the later colonization of South and North America. Columbus brought with him both the negatives and the positives of Western Civilization.

Questions to Ponder

1. Are the eight characteristics of Western Civilization in the Grammar section (the first eight terms) of this lesson good, bad, or neither?

2. Is Columbus a legitimate symbol of Western Civilization? Does Columbus represent the West? Explain your answer.

Reflection

After the Socratic discussion with your classmates, write a Reflection on this topic.

Week Eight: Challenges to the Young Nation Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #8

Introduction

From 1789 to 1815, Americans faced many challenges to their new country. There were threats from abroad, vast areas of unknown land, friendly and hostile neighbors, new industries to learn, and a new government to run.

Question

Based on the evidence, what were the three greatest challenges to the young nation? Below is a list of terms and people you should know to answer the question.

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Indians | Washington | Alien and Sedition Acts | moving west |
| Louisiana | Spain | Jefferson | Hamilton |
| Madison | War of 1812 | Whiskey Rebellion | Shay's Rebellion |

A. Taking Notes

Follow the structure below to write notes. Use a variety of sources.

Louisiana

What? _____

Who? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

Any other information? _____

How much of a challenge did this present to the young republic? _____

Source: _____

A. Rating Challenges

On the chart below write the challenge on the left, describe the challenge in the middle, and rate the challenge on the far right. A rating of 1 would be the toughest challenge and 10 the easiest.

| Challenge | Brief Description | Rating |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Indians | 1. Some fought settlers | ? |
| 2. Great Britain | 2. It did not respect the new U.S.A. | ? |
| 3. | 3. | |
| 4. | 4. | |
| 5. | 5. | |
| 6. | 6. | |
| 7. | 7. | |
| 8. | 8. | |
| 9. | 9. | |
| 10. | 10. | |
| 11. | 11. | |

Week Nineteen: Building Greatly

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #23, Building Greatly

Question:

John F. Kennedy said, “An American by nature is an optimist. He is experimental, an inventor and builder, who builds best when called upon to build greatly.” To what extent do you think Kennedy was correct when considering the time period of 1876-1912?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #24, Spanish-American War

Question:

In 1898, the United States of America fought a war against Spain and acquired territory. Was this a just war? Was America justified in going to war against Spain and in acquiring land?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #25, Theodore Roosevelt

Question:

Was Theodore Roosevelt an elitist who believed it was his role to govern Americans, using every possible method to steer the country towards what he envisioned as the best possible country, or, was he a politician who believed in supporting and defending the limited role of government the American founding fathers believed in?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #26 , Conservationism

Which conservationist held the most correct view of nature and man, John Muir or Theodore Roosevelt? Explain your answer.

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #27, Race Relations

Question: Describe the three paths Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey promoted for Black Americans. Which one was the best path to achieve equality of rights in America?

Reflection

After the Socratic discussion with your classmates, write a Reflection on this topic.

Week Twenty: Progressivism, Part Two
Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #27, Technology

Question

Why was the United States of America the home of so many inventions at the turn of the century, such as the telephone, the airplane, the telegraph, the phonograph, the hand camera, the motor-driven vacuum cleaner the light bulb, the electric iron, the tow truck, etc?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #28, Progressivism

Question

In what area of American life did Progressives of the early 1900s make the biggest impact?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #29, The Income Tax

Question

What were the main causes and effects of the 16th Amendment?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #30, World War I

Question

What was the main cause of the United States entering into World War I?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #30

Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Treaty of Versailles

Question

Did President Wilson help craft a just or unjust peace settlement to end World War I?

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #31

Margaret Sanger, Abortion, and Eugenics

Question

Compare and contrast the early women's rights leaders with Margaret Sanger regarding abortion. Did Sanger continue or break from the work of early women's rights leaders?

Reflection

After the Socratic discussion with your classmates, write a Reflection on this topic.

Week Twenty-Seven: The Civil Rights Movement

Socratic Discussion Open-Ended Question #48

Although Thomas Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration of Independence included the abolition of slavery in America, delegates to the Second Continental Congress would not approve. Jefferson had to strike the end of slavery from the document. Since the beginning of the United States of America, Americans lived in a country built on contradicting ideas. How could a nation formed on the idea that "all men are created equal" enslave other humans?

In 1865, the U.S. government ended the ancient practice of slavery with the passage of the thirteenth amendment. With the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, many Americans hoped that all Americans would enjoy the freedoms that form the ideals of the American way of life. Unfortunately, for most African-Americans, life in America was a bitter promise unfulfilled. After the Civil War, segregation was the norm in most states, and blacks lived as inferior citizens. Denied the right to vote, unprotected by police, unable to attend high-quality schools, black Americans were subjected to a life of oppression and violence. Some white Americans terrorized, beat, raped, and killed black Americans. Although black Americans sacrificed themselves in America's wars, paid taxes, and contributed in every way to American life, they were forced to live as second-class citizens.

Question

In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Americans worked to change the unjust policy of racial segregation. Leaders of this civil rights movement worked towards equal protection of the laws for all Americans, regardless of race. These leaders risked their lives to bring constitutional rights to all. In your essay, research the biographies of these Americans: A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, and Rosa Parks. Answer the question "Which of these leaders did the most to promote civil rights in the United States?" Study these terms and people.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Philip Randolph | Martin Luther King, Jr. | Malcolm X |
| Thurgood Marshall | Rosa Parks | <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> |
| Jackie Robinson | James Farmer | Montgomery bus boycott |
| Little Rock, Arkansas | the Civil Rights Act of 1964 | |
| Black Panther Movement | Elijah Muhammad | |
| National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) | | |

B. The Civil Rights Movement

1. Describe racial segregation in the United States before 1950. _____

2. What Supreme Court decision approved of racial segregation? _____

3. Do you think that this Supreme Court decision (in answer #3) was just or unjust? Explain your answer. _____
4. Name one thing Truman did to promote civil rights of all Americans. _____

5. What was the *Brown v. Board of Education* case? _____

6. What role did the philosophy of nonviolence play in the civil rights movement? _____

7. Describe the Montgomery bus boycott. _____

8. What was the Southern California Leadership Conference? _____

9. What was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee? _____

10. Describe a sit-in. _____

11. Describe freedom rides. _____

12. What was the Albany movement? _____

13. What was the march on Washington? _____

14. Summarize Dr. King's speech at the March on Washington. _____

15. What were the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965? _____

16. What is the Nation of Islam? _____

17. Describe the Black Power Movement. _____

