INTRODUCTION

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton is a six-part original documentary series on The HISTORY Channel hosted and executive produced by the 42nd President of the United States. In each episode, President Clinton provides a unique perspective on key moments in presidential decision-making, examining historical moments of crisis and of opportunity and exploring whether the actions of our presidents brought us closer to our founding ideals of a “more perfect Union” and “We the People.”

In Separate but Unequal, President Clinton explores the long struggle for racial equality and the role Presidents James Buchanan, Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight. D. Eisenhower, Harry Truman and Lyndon B. Johnson played during moments of both crisis and possibility, and how their decisions helped shape the story of America.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton – “Separate but Unequal” would be useful for American History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here: The American Presidency with Bill Clinton

TERMS TO DEFINE

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the documentary.

- Leadership
- Citizenship
- Equality
- “Separate but Unequal”
- Integration & Desegregation
- Discrimination
- Executive Order
- Constitutional Authority
- Civil Rights
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. Why was the ruling in the case of Brown v. Board of Education one of the most important Supreme Court decisions of the 20th century?
2. Why did President Eisenhower feel like he had to use the power of the federal government to support the integration of Little Rock High School? Do you agree with his decision?
3. President Buchanan hoped that the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision would resolve the issue of slavery in America. Why did it have the opposite effect, and how did it worsen divisions within the country regarding slavery?
4. Why was President Theodore Roosevelt’s White House dinner with Booker T. Washington controversial? How did the meeting become a symbolic achievement in the fight for civil rights?
5. How did the contribution of African American soldiers during WWII influence President Truman’s decision to integrate the Armed Forces?
6. How did President Lyndon Johnson use his personality and unique leadership style to secure passage of legislation like the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts?
7. What obstacles did President Johnson face from Southern Democrats, and what was the political cost to this landmark legislation?
8. Why are many of the economic, political and social divisions mentioned in the 1968 Kerner Report still prevalent today, and how have they impacted modern-day social justice movements?
PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITIES

1. Executive Order 9981: President Truman Desegregates the U.S. Armed Forces

On July 26, 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, calling for the desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces. Truman's decision had been influenced the service of Black soldiers during World War II and the lobbying efforts of African American leaders. It marked the first use of a presidential executive order to implement a civil rights policy, and laid the groundwork for future desegregation victories.

Have students read President Truman’s Executive Order and the letters to the president both opposing and supporting integration. Using the primary sources and their own research, have students create a visual presentation or write an essay outlining both Truman’s reasons for issuing the executive order, the influence of outside advisors, and the political outcome for Truman in the 1948 election.

Prompts and questions to consider for the activity could including the following:

- What role did prominent civil rights activists like A. Philip Randolph play in convincing Truman to desegregate the military? How did African Americans respond to Truman’s order?
- Why did Truman opt to issue an executive order instead of traditional legislation passed through the U.S. Congress?
- How did the different branches of the U.S. military respond to Truman's actions?
- What was the reaction from white Southern Democrats to Truman’s actions, and what impact did that have on his 1948 re-election campaign?
- What are the lasting legacies of Truman's decision, and how did military desegregation open to the door to future civil rights achievements?

Primary sources:

Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces, July 26, 1948

Sources in support of military desegregation

Letter from Grant Reynolds and A. Philip Randolph to President Truman, July 1948
https://catalog.archives.gov/id/201129

Letter to President Truman from Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Dagen, June 1948

Letter from Marshall Ross to President Truman, 1951
https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/marshall-ross-harry-s-truman
Sources opposing military desegregation:

Letter from Worthington Thompson to Philleo Nash, 1950—including report entitled “Attitude Toward Integration of Negro Soldiers in U.S. Army

Letter from Joseph Beauharnais to Harry S. Truman, June 1949

Additional Material

Article: Why Harry Truman Ended Segregation in the US Military in 1948

Article: How Executive Order 9981 Desegregated the U.S. Military—ThoughtCo.

2. Enforcing Brown v. Board of Education: Little Rock Central High School Crisis

In its 1954 landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional. Many in the South protested the decision, and in 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus attempted to block integration of Little Rock’s Central High School. President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in federal troops to escort the Little Rock Nine into the school, drawing national attention to the civil rights movement.

Have students read related primary sources documenting the debate over the integration of Central HS in 1957. Students should then select one of two options to write their own letters, using the sources and their own research. Students can choose to write as President Eisenhower, exploring his reasons for using the power of the federal government to intervene in the crisis, alternatively students can opt. to write as one of the “Little Rock Nine,” exploring their experience before, during and after the integration battle.

Prompts and questions to consider for the Eisenhower letter activity could include the following:

• What was the reaction to the Brown v. Board of Education decision in the South?
• What tactics did state and local governments use to block implementation of the Brown v. Board of Education decision?
• Do you agree with him that he had the Constitutional and legal right to intervene?
• In his address to the nation regarding the Little Rock crisis, President Eisenhower stated that the United States was “a nation in which laws, not men, are supreme.” What did he mean by that, and how did his actions during the crisis support that concept?
Eisenhower & Integration sources:

Text of September 24, 1957 speech President Eisenhower delivered to the nation on the Little Rock Crisis

Letter to President Eisenhower from Evelyn Grimes Allen In Favor of School Integration, September 25, 1957

Letter to President Eisenhower from 12-Year Old Marilyn Albertson In Favor of School Integration
https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6092855

Letter to President Eisenhower from Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Armstrong Against School Integration

Telegram from Georgia Sen, Richard B. Russell to President Eisenhower, September 26, 1957

Prompts and questions to consider for the Little Rock Nine letter activity could include the following:

• Why did the U.S. Supreme Court rule in the Brown v. Board of Education decision that many segregated Black schools were inherently “unequal” with white-only schools?
• What was life like for many Black students before Brown v. Board?
• What did the Little Rock Nine students experience during the first days of the attempt Central High School? What was the reaction of those who opposed integration?
• What impact did the fight over integration have on them, both in the immediate aftermath of the crisis and in the long-term?
• How did the Little Rock Nine students lay the groundwork for future civil rights victories, in schools and elsewhere?

Little Rock Nine Sources:

Oral History Interviews with the Little Rock Nine
https://ualrexhibits.org/legacy/oral-histories/

Letter from Daisy Bates to Roy Wilkins, describing treatment of Little Rock Nine, 1957
http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=ody_mssmisc&fileName=ody/ody0918a/ody0918apage.db&recNum=0

“Nine from Little Rock,” 1964 documentary produced by U.S. Information Agency

Additional material:

Article: Brown v. Board of Education: The First Step in the Desegregation of America’s Schools

Article: Why Eisenhower Sent the 101st Airborne to Little Rock After Brown v. Board

RELATED CONTENT FROM HISTORY.COM

Article: Brown v. Board of Education
https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/brown-v-board-of-education-of-topeka

Article: Brown v. Board of Education: The First Step in the Desegregation of America’s Schools

Article: Why Eisenhower Sent the 101st Airborne to Little Rock After Brown v. Board

Article: Dred Scott Case
https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/dred-scott-case

Article: James Buchanan
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/james-buchanan
Article: Booker T. Washington
https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/booker-t-washington

Article: How Teddy Roosevelt’s Belief in a Racial Hierarchy Shaped His Policies

Article: Why Harry Truman Ended Segregation in the US Military in 1948

Article: How Tuskegee Airmen Fought Military Segregation With Nonviolent Action

Article: Black Americans Who Served in WWII Faced Segregation Abroad and at Home

Article: Did World War II Launch the Civil Rights Movement?

Article: Lyndon B. Johnson
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/lyndon-b-johnson

Article: Civil Rights Act of 1964
https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-act

Article: Voting Rights Act of 1965
https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/voting-rights-act

Article: Why the 1967 Kerner Report on Urban Riots Suppressed Its Own Expert Findings

More Related Content

Article: Brown v. Board: When the Supreme Court ruled against segregation—Constitution Daily
https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/on-this-day-the-supreme-court-rules-against-segregation

Article: ‘I Had a Right to Be at Central’: Remembering Little Rock’s Integration Battle – TIME
https://time.com/4948704/little-rock-nine-anniversary/

https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/little-rock-nine

Article: President James Buchanan Directly Influenced the Outcome of the Dred Scott Decision—Smithsonian
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AMERICAN
PRESIDENCY
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THE TOUGHEST PRESIDENTIAL
DECISIONS THAT SHAPED AMERICA

PRESIDENTIAL VISION
STUDY GUIDE

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In Presidential Vision, President Clinton explores decisions made by Presidents George Washington, John Adams, William McKinley, Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover and Dwight D. Eisenhower during critical moments in our nation’s history when extreme elements threaten to upset the balance between law and order and the freedoms and liberties enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton – “Presidential Vision” would be useful for American History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here: The American Presidency with Bill Clinton

TERMS TO DEFINE

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the documentary.

- Leadership
- Executive Powers
- Liberty & Equality
- Space Race
- Cold War
- Conservation
- Great Depression and New Deal
- Nuclear Disarmament
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. What does President Clinton mean when he says that moments of great presidential leadership can encourage Americans to be better citizens?
2. How did President Kennedy use the Space Race with the Soviet Union as an opportunity to inspire the American people?
3. In the Gettysburg Address, President Lincoln speaks of a “new birth of freedom.” What did he mean by that, and how did he use the speech to reframe the meaning and purpose of the American Civil War as one being fought for equality and opportunity?
4. Why did President Theodore Roosevelt fear that technological advancements of the early 20th century posed a threat to America’s natural resources? What steps did he take to prevent this?
5. President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed in the role of an active federal government in times of crisis. Was this a unique view of the role of government, and if so, how did it differ from the view of earlier presidents?
6. How did FDR use his Fireside Chats as a means of communication with the American people? What does that say about his style of leadership?
7. How did President Eisenhower’s experience as a military leader shape his views on the Cold War arms race with the Soviet Union? How did he try to persuade the American people that weapon disarmament would be a benefit to American society, and why was he ultimately unsuccessful?
8. In the program, historian Jon Meacham says that America’s most successful presidents are those who govern and make decisions for the long-term benefit of American people, not short-term goals. What does he mean by this, and how did Presidents featured in the program try to live up to that ideal?
PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITIES

1. We Choose to Go to the Moon: JFK and the Space Race

As Cold War tensions between the United States and USSR intensified in the early 1960s, space became new frontier in the battle between the two superpowers. When President John F. Kennedy took office in January 1961, the U.S. lagged far behind the Soviet Union in the “space race.” Kennedy’s call for increased American commitment to space exploration became one of his key legacies.

Have students read or watch President John F. Kennedy’s two major speeches regarding the space program. Students should create a visual presentation outlining Kennedy’s support of the space program and its and importance within the broader conflict of the Cold War.

Prompts and questions to consider for the activity could including the following:

• Why did President Kennedy believe that space “held the key to our future on Earth,” as stated in his address to Congress?
• What long-term benefits and rewards did Kennedy argue would come from American investment in space exploration? Do you believe that these rewards were worth the economic sacrifice it took to build the space program?
• Why did Kennedy claim the space program was a tool that could be used to defend the idea freedom and peace around the world during the Cold War?
• What kind of opposition did Kennedy receive to his call for increased funding for the space program? Did Kennedy himself have doubts about the feasibility of the program?
• In his Rice University speech, Kennedy declared that the United States “was not built by those who wished to look behind them,” but was “conquered by those who moved forward.” What did he mean by that, and how did that reflect his broader vision for America and its role in the world?

Primary sources:

Excerpt of Kennedy’s Address to Congress, May 25, 1961

Kennedy’s Address at Rice University, September 12, 1961
https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/address-at-rice-university-on-the-nations-space-effort

Additional material:

Article: The Space Race
https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/space-race

Interactive: Lift Off! JFK and the Space Program—Google Arts & Culture/JFK Presidential Library and Museum
2. Theodore Roosevelt’s Call to Conservation

President Theodore Roosevelt was a passionate outdoorsman with a lifelong love of the American West. After becoming president in 1901, Roosevelt made environmental conservation a major part of his presidency, doing more than any previous president to preserve and protect America’s natural resources.

Have students read President Roosevelt’s 1909 message to Congress on conservation, and using the text and their own research to answer the following questions:

*Prompts and questions to consider for the Eisenhower letter activity could include the following:*

- In the program, historian Douglas Brinkley notes that Roosevelt championed conservation as a way to preserve nature as an “outdoor Bill of Rights.” What do you think he means by that?
- Why did Roosevelt believe protect natural resources was in the nation’s best interests, and would unite the nation in a sense of shared responsibility for the natural world?
- What concrete actions did Roosevelt take to preserve American natural resources?
- Why was Roosevelt’s conservation position a radical change from previous presidents?
- How did Roosevelt help inspire the modern conservation movement?

*Primary sources:*

Roosevelt’s Message to Congress on the National Conservation Commission, February 1909
http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrv:@field(DOCID+@lit(amrvgvg38div5))

*Additional material:*

https://www.doi.gov/blog/conservation-legacy-theodore-roosevelt

Article: Theodore Roosevelt and the Environment—PBS
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tr/environment/

*RELATED CONTENT FROM HISTORY.COM*

Article: John F. Kennedy
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/john-f-kennedy

Article:
How JFK, LBJ and Nixon All Put Their Stamp on the Apollo 11 Moon Landing

Article: The Space Race
https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/space-race
Video: The Space Race: A Surrogate Superpower War
https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/the-space-race-video

Article: The Gettysburg Address
https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/gettysburg-address

Video: Gettysburg Address
https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/gilder-lehrman-gettysburg-address-video

Article: Abraham Lincoln
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/abraham-lincoln

Article: Seven Score and 10 Years Ago: The Gettysburg Address
https://www.history.com/news/seven-score-and-10-years-ago-the-gettysburg-address

Article: Theodore Roosevelt
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/theodore-roosevelt

Article: Theodore Roosevelt Makes Grand Canyon a National Monument
https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/theodore-roosevelt-makes-grand-canyon-a-national-monument

Article: National Park Service
https://www.history.com/topics/us-government/national-park-service

Article: How FDR’s ‘Fireside Chats’ Helped Calm a Nation in Crisis

Article: Great Depression
https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression-history

Article: Bank Run
https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/bank-run

Article: Franklin D. Roosevelt
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/franklin-d-roosevelt

Audio: Franklin D. Roosevelt Handles Banking Crisis
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/franklin-d-roosevelt-handles-banking-crisis-video

Article: Dwight Eisenhower
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/dwight-d-eisenhower

Article: Arms Race
https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/arms-race
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https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/space-program

Interactive: Lift Off! JFK and the Space Program—Google Arts & Culture/JFK Presidential Library and Museum

Article: JFK’s ‘Moon Speech’ at 60: Remember Apollo, and What Made it Possible—Space.com
https://www.space.com/jfk-moon-speech-congress-apollo-60-years

Article: Imagining a World Where Soviets and Americans Joined Hands on the Moon—Smithsonian

Article: “We Choose to go to the Moon:” JFK’s Moon Shot—Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum
https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/we-choose-go-moon-jfks-moon-shot

Article: Gettysburg Address—National Geographic
https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/gettysburg-address/

Article: Gettysburg Address—Encyclopaedia Britannica
https://www.britannica.com/event/Gettysburg-Address

Interactive: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—House Divided Project/Dickinson College
https://artsandculture.google.com/story/lincolns-gettysburg-addresses-house-divided-project-at-dickinson-college/8AXxBerwOx8ABA?hl=en

https://www.doi.gov/blog/conservation-legacy-theodore-roosevelt

Article: Theodore Roosevelt and the Environment—PBS
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/FEATURES/tr-environment/

Article: With This One Quotable Speech, Teddy Roosevelt Changed the Way America Thinks About Nature—Smithsonian

Text: FDR’s Fireside Chat on Banking
https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/fireside-chat-banking

Article: FDR and the Banks—Constitutional Rights Foundation
Interactive: The Banking Crisis and the Great Depression—FDIC

Article: Franklin D. Roosevelt—The Miller Center
https://millercenter.org/president/fdroosevelt

Article: Origins of the Nuclear Arms Race—National Park Service
https://www.nps.gov/articles/mimiarmsrace-02.htm

Article: President Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” Speech—Atomic Archive
https://www.atomicarchive.com/resources/documents/deterrence/atoms-for-peace.html

Article: Dwight D. Eisenhower: Foreign Affairs—Miller Center
https://millercenter.org/president/eisenhower/foreign-affairs

Article: The Cold War—BBC
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zxds4j6/revision/3

Article: The Soviet-American Arms Race—History Today
https://www.historytoday.com/archive/soviet-american-arms-race
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In Building the Economy, President Clinton explores decisions made by Presidents Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland, and Dwight D. Eisenhower as they sought to build American prosperity, while balancing both the opportunities and new economic challenges of the growing nation.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton – “Building the Economy” would be useful for American History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here:
The American Presidency with Bill Clinton

TERMS TO DEFINE

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the documentary.

- Westward Expansion
- Limited Government
- Central Bank
- Gilded Age
- Labor Movement
- Executive Powers
- Separation of Powers
- Constitutionalism
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. How was President Jefferson’s decision to purchase the Louisiana territory a departure from his own political beliefs regarding government, presidential powers and the Constitution?
2. How did the Louisiana Purchase transform America?
3. What impact did Jackson’s “Bank War” have on America’s long-term economic security?
4. How did President Lincoln use the Civil War to convince Congress to pass legislation funding the Transcontinental Railroad?
5. How did President Cleveland’s decision to send federal troops to break-up the Pullman Car Strike reflect his views on the role of government during the late 19th century?
6. How did the Gilded Age expose divisions within American society?
7. Why did President Eisenhower believe the Interstate Highway System was crucial to American security and prosperity?
8. What were some of the unintended consequences of the Interstate and urban growth for American society?
9. What does President Clinton mean by the statement, “America is most successful when we’re in the “future business” with regards to economic issues? Do you agree with his statement??
PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITIES

1. Andrew Jackson vs. the Bank of the United States

A national bank had first been created by George Washington and Alexander Hamilton in 1791 to serve as a central repository for federal funds. The Second Bank of the United States was founded in 1816. President Andrew Jackson, the epitome of the frontiersman, resented the bank’s ties to industry and manufacturing, and lack of funding for expansion into the unsettled Western territories. Jackson also objected to the bank’s unusual political and economic power and to the lack of congressional oversight over its business dealings.

The Bank War was the political struggle that ensued over the fate of the Second Bank of the United States during the presidency of Andrew Jackson. In 1832, Jackson vetoed a bill to re-charter the Bank, and began a campaign that would eventually lead to its destruction.

Have students view the primary sources to answer the following questions.

Prompts and questions to consider for the activity could including the following:

- What are some of the examples in the text of what President Jackson considered the “dangers” of a national bank?
- What reasoning does President Jackson give in the text to support his position that he has the right to veto the bill re-chartering the Bank of the U.S.? Do you agree with this position?
- What point of view on the Bank War is Edward Clay making? Is the author in support or opposed to Jackson’s actions during the Bank War?
- How is the author of the second cartoon using satire to criticize Jackson in the second cartoon? What does the author mean intend by using the term “King” in this context?

Primary sources:

Excerpt of text of President Jackson’s Veto Message Against Re-chartering the Bank of the United States, 1832

Cartoon by Edward Clay, “The Downfall of Mother Bank,” 1832

Jackson cartoon, “King Andrew the First,” 1832
https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.15771/

Additional material:

Bank War—History.com
https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/bank-war

King Andrew and the Bank War—National Endowment for the Humanities
2. Grover Cleveland and the 1894 Pullman Strike

In 1893, during a nationwide economic recession, George Pullman laid off hundreds of employees and cut wages for the remaining workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company. Meanwhile, he refused to lower rents or store prices in Pullman, Illinois, the company town south of Chicago where many of his employees lived. Angry Pullman workers walked out in May 1894, and the following month, the American Railway Union declared a sympathy boycott of all trains using Pullman cars. Railroad companies sought help from the federal government to end the strike.

In July, the Justice Department issued an injunction against the strike and the following day, President Cleveland dispatched federal troops to the city to enforce the injunction. Illinois’ pro-labor governor, John Altgeld called Cleveland’s actions unconstitutional, and the conflict turned violent leading to 30 deaths and more wounded.

Have students read the primary sources and write a brief essay answering the following questions.

**Prompts and questions to consider for the Eisenhower letter activity could include the following:**

- What were conditions like for the striking Pullman workers, according to their letters to Gov. Altgeld and Altgeld’s letter to President Cleveland?
- How did the Pullman Strike exemplify tensions between labor, workers and government in the late 19th century?
- How did the Pullman Company react to Gov. Altgeld’s request for aid to assist the striking workers?
- What reason and justification did President Cleveland give for his decision to send troops to end the Pullman Strike? Do you agree with his position and decision?
- What was the long-term impact of the Pullman Strike on labor relations in the United States?

**Primary sources:**

Letters from Pullman employees and Illinois Gov. John Altgeld on the Pullman Strike
[https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1102](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1102)

Text of President Cleveland’s Proclamation on Pullman Strike, July 8, 1894

**Additional Material:**

The Pullman Strike of 1894—ThoughtCo

The Pullman Strike—Northern Illinois University
[https://digital.lib.niu.edu/illinois/gildedage/pullman](https://digital.lib.niu.edu/illinois/gildedage/pullman)
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https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/louisiana-purchase

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Article: The Louisiana Purchase Was Driven by a Slave Rebellion

Article: Westward Expansion
https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/westward-expansion

Article: Bank War
https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/bank-war

Video-Bank War
https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/jackson-censured-in-bank-war-video

Article: Andrew Jackson shuts down Second Bank of the U.S.

Article: Transcontinental Railroad
https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/transcontinental-railroad

Article: 10 Ways the Transcontinental Railroad Changed America

Article: The Transcontinental Railroad’s Dark Costs: Exploited Labor, Stolen Lands

Article: How a Deadly Railroad Strike Led to the Labor Day Holiday
https://www.history.com/news/labor-day-pullman-railway-strike-origins

Article: Pullman Porters
https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/pullman-porters

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https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-louisiana-purchase-jeffersons-constitutional-gamble

Article: How the Louisiana Purchase Changed the World—Smithsonian

Article: Jefferson Buys Louisiana Territory, and the Nation Moves Westward—National Archives

Article: King Andrew and the Bank War—National Endowment for the Humanities

Article: The Transcontinental Railroad—Library of Congress

Article: Effect of Railroads on the U.S.—ThoughtCo
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Article: The Pullman Strike—Northern Illinois University
https://digital.lib.niu.edu/illinois/gildedage/pullman

Article: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Birth of the Interstate Highway System—U.S. Army

Article: Ike's Interstates at 50—National Archives

Article: How WWII Created the Interstate Highways—ThoughtCo
https://www.thoughtco.com/interstate-highways-1435785
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EXTREMISM

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threaten to upset the balance between law
and order and the freedoms and liberties
enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton – “Extremism” would be useful for American
History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle
school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here:
The American Presidency with Bill Clinton

TERMS TO DEFINE

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the
documentary.

- Extremism
- Executive Power
- Civil Rights & Civil Liberties
- Loyalty
- Sedition
- Propaganda
- Democracy
- Repatriation
- McCarthyism
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. What do you think President Clinton means when he says that “American democracy only thrives when freedom and order are in balance to presidential power?” Do you agree with this statement?
2. How did President Washington react to the Whiskey Rebellion, and do you believe that his actions were justified? What would you have done in that situation?
3. What did President Adams hope to achieve by passing the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798? Did he achieve those goals, and what was the cost?
4. What steps did President Wilson take to limit dissent during World War I? Why were German-Americans, pacifist, socialists and other groups demonized during the war, and what was the result of these attacks?
5. Why did President McKinley refuse to use his powers to send federal troops to intervene in Wilmington? Do you agree with his decision?
6. What did President Hoover mean by the phrase “American jobs for real Americans?”
7. How did mistreatment and forced repatriation of Mexican-Americans, including many born in the United States, during the Hoover Administration lay the seed for future anti-Latinx prejudice?
8. How did Senator Joseph McCarthy use Cold War-era fears to his political advantage? What threat did McCarthy’s tactics pose to American democracy?
9. Why was President Eisenhower reluctant to confront Senator McCarthy, and why did he ultimately decide to do so?
10. As President Clinton notes, extremism has always been a threat to the American experiment. What do you think is the role of the president in combatting extremism?
11. What are the potential dangers to American democracy when governments restrict civil rights and liberties, even in the face of challenges from extreme elements?
 PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITIES


The Alien and Sedition Acts were a series of laws passed by the U.S. Congress in 1798 amid widespread fear that war with France was imminent. The four laws—which remain controversial to this day—restricted the activities of foreign residents in the country and limited freedom of speech and of the press. In October 1798, Matthew Lyon, a Republican congressman from Vermont, became the first person tried under the new law in October 1798.

Have students read the text of the Sedition Act of 1798, and the text of the indictment charging Matthew Lyons with sedition to answer the questions below.

*Prompts and questions to consider for the activity could including the following:*

- What was the goal of the Alien and Sedition Acts
- What were the possible penalties for those accused of violating the Sedition Act?
- How did the Sedition Act limit the right to free speech protected under the First Amendment?
- What crimes was Matthew Lyon accused of? Do you believe that his acts were dangerous and seditious?
- How did the Alien and Sedition Acts lay the ground for infringement of civil liberties by future presidents?

*Primary sources:*


*Additional Reading:*


2. *American Coup: The Wilmington Race Riot*

On November 10, 1898, white supremacist members of the Democratic Party overthrew the biracial, legally elected government of Wilmington, North Carolina in the only coup d’etat in American history. In the violence that followed, between six and 100 African Americans were killed. Despite appeals, President McKinley refused to send federal troops to restore the ousted government officials.
In the days before the election, Furnifold Simmons, a white supremacist local Democratic party leader, made a racial-charged appeal to voters encouraging them to vote. In the violence that consumed Wilmington after the election, a Black resident of the city wrote President McKinley asking him to intervene in the crisis.

Have students read the text of both sources, and write a brief essay considering the following questions:

Prompts and questions to consider for the Eisenhower letter activity could include the following:

- How did African-Americans living in Wilmington, North Carolina build political and economic power in the decades after the Civil War?
- How did Democrats like Furnifold Simmons inflame racial fears leading up the election?
- What happened to the Black community of Wilmington after the riots?
- What kind of help from the federal government is the African American who wrote President McKinley seeking?
- Why did McKinley refuse to intervene in the Wilmington Riot, and what were the short-term and long-term outcomes of this refusal?

Primary sources:

November 3, 1898. 
https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/democrats-appeal-voters

Letter from an African American Citizen of Wilmington to President McKinley, November 13, 1898 
https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/letter-african-american

Additional Reading:

Article: America's Only Successful Coup d'Etat Overthrew a Biracial Government in 1898—History.com  

Article: Wilmington Coup and Massacre—Encyclopaedia Britannica  
https://www.britannica.com/event/Wilmington-coup-and-massacre

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https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/woodrow-wilson

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https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/herbert-hoover

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https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/dwight-d-eisenhower

Article: How Eisenhower Secretly Pushed Back Against McCarthyism

Article: Joseph McCarthy
https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/joseph-mccarthy

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Article: The Whiskey Rebellion—PBS
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexperience/features/duel-whiskey-rebellion/

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https://www.ushistory.org/us/19e.asp

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https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1238/sedition-act-of-1798

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Article: Wilmington Coup and Massacre—Encyclopaedia Britannica
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https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3699

Article: Mexican Americans and the Great Depression—Gilder Lehrman Institute
https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teaching-resource/historical-context-mexican-americans-and-great-depression

Article: Eisenhower and McCarthy—PBS
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americangreatdepression/features/eisenhower-politics/

Article: Eisenhower and McCarthy: How the President Toppled a Reckless Senator—National Archives
INTRODUCTION

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton is a six-part original documentary series on The HISTORY Channel hosted and executive produced by the 42nd President of the United States. In each episode, President Clinton provides a unique perspective on key moments in presidential decision-making, examining historical moments of crisis and of opportunity and exploring whether the actions of our presidents brought us closer to our founding ideals of a “more perfect Union” and “We the People.”

In We the People, President Clinton explores decisions made by Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Chester Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt during critical moments in American history that both widened and curtailed the concept of citizenship, loyalty and civil rights.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The American Presidency with Bill Clinton – “We the People” would be useful for American History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here: The American Presidency with Bill Clinton

TERMS TO DEFINE

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the documentary.

- Citizenship
- Emancipation
- Suffrage
- Civil Rights & Civil Liberties
- Internment
- Propaganda
- Loyalty
- Xenophobia
- McCarthyism
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. How is America's democracy strengthened by multiculturalism and a diversity of views and opinions?
2. Why did President Lincoln see the end of slavery in America as an opportunity to create a “more perfect union?”
3. What role has xenophobia played in the persecution of Asian Americans, Native Americans and other minority groups during times of crisis in American history?
4. Why did President Arthur sign the Chinese Exclusion Act? Do you agree with his decision?
5. How have Native Americans been excluded from fully participating in American democracy?
6. How did President Benjamin Harrison's decision to send federal troops to suppress the Ghost Dance movement lead to the massacre of Native American at Wounded Knee?
7. Why was President Wilson reluctant to support women's suffrage? Why did he ultimately decide to support a federal amendment?
8. President Franklin D. Roosevelt has been called a “champion of freedom.” How do we square that idea with his decision to order the relocation and internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II?
9. Despite the persecution that they faced, many Japanese American men joined the U.S. Army during WWII? Why were they willing to fight for a country that did not consider them equal citizens?
10. In the program, George Takei says, “Democracy is imperfect, because people, we the people, are imperfect.” What do you think he means by that, and do you agree?
PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITIES

1. Closing the Door: The Chinese Exclusion Act

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first significant law restricting immigration into the United States. Anti-Chinese prejudice and violence increased, although some Americans protested this mistreatment. Although the Chinese composed only .002 percent of the nation’s population, Congress passed the exclusion act to placate worker demands and assuage prevalent concerns about maintaining white “racial purity.”

Propaganda became a primary tool in both drumming up support for the Chinese Exclusion Act and for those protesting its severe restrictions. Have students view the primary sources and write a brief essay explaining the Act’s impact.

Prompts and questions to consider for the activity could including the following:

• What was life like for early Chinese immigrants to America, and native-born Chinese Americans? What obstacles did they face?
• What was the goal of the Chinese Exclusion Act? Which groups was it designed to appease and help?
• How did the cartoon by George Keeler and the letter from Mayor Phelan use stereotypes to paint a negative picture of Chinese immigration?
• Do you think the Chinese Exclusion Act infringed upon the Constitutional rights of Chinese Americans, as the authors of the letter to President Arthur argue?
• What point of view does the cartoon by Thomas Nast represent?
• What was the lasting legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Act?

Primary sources:

Sources in support of restricting Chinese immigration

Cartoon by George Keeler, “The Coming Man,” 1881  
https://thomasnastcartoons.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/the-coming-man-20-may-18811.jpg

Letter from San Francisco Mayor James D. Phelan, calling for the extension of Chinese immigration laws in 1901  

Sources opposing restricting Chinese immigration

Letter to the President and U.S. Congress from Citizens of California and West Coast, 1885  
https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.00201700/

Cartoon by Thomas Nast, “Which Color is to be Tabooed Next?” 1882  
https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3e02195/
2. The Silent Sentinels and the Fight for the Vote

In the early 20th century, new, often younger activists within the fight for women's suffrage began to shift tactics, from quiet appeals and lobbying to more dramatic and confrontational acts that courted publicity for their cause. These tactics, which eventually included picketing the White House and President Woodrow Wilson. When the U.S. entered World War II in 1917, new government propaganda and laws aimed at limiting political dissent during wartime failed to stop these new suffrage leaders, who continued to picket and protest. Some critics questioned these more militant tactics and even challenged the loyalty and civil rights of the suffragists themselves, who became known as the Silent Sentinels. They faced arrest and brutal treatment at the hand of their own government.

Have students views the primary source photographs and use those and their own research to create a visual presentation.

Prompts and questions to consider for the Eisenhower letter activity could include the following:

• Why did the Silent Sentinels feel they needed to directly confront the government to secure the vote?
• Many of the primary source photos of these protests accuse President Wilson of hypocrisy for saying America's role in World War I was to fight for democracy abroad, while failing to support democracy by securing women's suffrage. Do you agree with that criticism?
• What was the Wilson government’s reaction to the protests? What was the public's reaction to the Sentinels?
• Do you believe these protests were illegal, or were they protected as free speech under the First Amendment, even during wartime or crisis?
• What impact did the Sentinels have on the fight women's suffrage?

Primary sources:

Photograph of Suffragists demonstrating against Woodrow Wilson in Chicago, 1916
https://learninglab.si.edu/collections/the-suffragist-classroom-videos/eCtLoNW1C2cbDG7k#r/220884

Photograph New York Pickets at the White House, January 26, 1917
https://www.loc.gov/resource/mnwp.276019/

Photograph: Suffragette banner. One of the banners the women who picketed the White House and Capitol carried. [Link](https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/kaiser-wilson-suffragette)

Photograph: Party watchfires burn outside White House, Jan. 1919. [Link](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mnwp.276030)

Photograph: Police arresting party demonstrators outside Senate Office Building, Oct. 1918. [Link](https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000302)

Newspaper clipping: Anti-Suffrage demonstration, 1917 [Link](https://learninglab.si.edu/resources/view/91134#more-info)

**Additional Material:**


**RELATED CONTENT FROM HISTORY.COM**

Article: Emancipation Proclamation [Link](https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/emancipation-proclamation)


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Article: Born in the USA: The Chinese Immigrant Son Who Fought for Birthright Citizenship

Article: Wounded Knee
https://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/wounded-knee

Remembering the Wounded Knee Massacre

Article: This Huge Women’s March Drowned Out a Presidential Inauguration in 1913

Article: The Night of Terror: When Suffragists Were Imprisoned and Tortured in 1917

Article: 19th Amendment: A Timeline of the Fight for All Women’s Right to Vote
https://www.history.com/news/19th-amendment-women-vote-timeline

Article: How Suffragists Pioneered Aggressive New Tactics to Push for the Vote

Article: Japanese Internment Camps
https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/japanese-american-relocation

Article: These Photos Show the Harsh Reality of Life in WWII Japanese American Internment Camps

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https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/chinese-immigration

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http://www.eyewitnesshistory.com/knee.htm

Article: The Massacre at Wounded Knee: Why Did the US Army Attack the Lakota Sioux?—History Extra  

Article: Wilson and Women’s Suffrage—PBS  
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/wilson-womens-suffrage/

Article: Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson and the Battles for Liberty—National Park Service  

Article: How a Group of Silent Women Won a Battle with President Wilson a Century Ago—National Parks Magazine  
https://www.npca.org/articles/2639-how-a-group-of-silent-women-won-a-battle-with-president-wilson-a-century
INTRODUCTION

*The American Presidency with Bill Clinton* is a six-part original documentary series on The HISTORY Channel hosted and executive produced by the 42nd President of the United States. In each episode, President Clinton provides a unique perspective on key moments in presidential decision-making, examining historical moments of crisis and of opportunity and exploring whether the actions of our presidents brought us closer to our founding ideals of a “more perfect Union” and “We the People.”

In *Becoming a Superpower*, President Clinton explores decisions made by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson and John F. Kennedy as America grows from a new nation to a global power and tried to find its place on the world stage.

CURRICULUM LINKS

*The American Presidency with Bill Clinton – “Becoming a Superpower”* would be useful for American History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here: [The American Presidency with Bill Clinton](#)

TERMS TO DEFINE

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the documentary.

- Isolationism
- Neutrality
- Cold War
- Atomic Age
- Diplomacy
- Coup d’état
- Hard Power vs. Soft Power
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. Do you agree with the idea that America should play an active role in world affairs, or should it instead focus primarily on domestic issues?
2. How did President Theodore Roosevelt see America's role in the world? How did that differ from the vision of earlier presidents?
3. What was isolationism, and role did it play in American politics during World War II?
4. Why did President Franklin D. Roosevelt feel the need to arm the Allies, despite neutrality laws in place before America entered the war?
5. What was the result of the post-World War II power shift that saw the United States and USSR emerge as global superpowers?
6. Do you agree with historian Jon Meacham's assertion that President Truman's decision to use atomic bombs on Japan was one of the most fateful decisions in human history?
7. How did Cold War fears influence President Eisenhower's decision to support the covert coup that toppled Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh?
8. Why did President Lyndon B. Johnson decide to escalate U.S. military involvement in Vietnam?
9. Why did American opposition to the war increase after the 1968 Tet Offensive, and what impact did that have on the Johnson administration?
10. What is "soft power," and how was President Kennedy's Peace Corps Program an example of this foreign policy tool?
11. What should America's role be in confronting issues that confront global issues like climate change, cyber warfare and terrorism?
PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITIES

1. FDR and the “Arsenal of Democracy”

In the decades following World War I, many Americans remained extremely wary of becoming involved in another costly international conflict. Even as fascist regimes like Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler took aggressive action in Europe the 1930s, isolationist members of Congress pushed through a series of laws limiting how the United States could respond. By the summer of 1940, Britain was fighting virtually alone against Germany and British prime minister, Winston Churchill appealed to President Franklin D. Roosevelt for help. Roosevelt began working to convince Congress (and the American public) that providing more direct aid to Britain was in the nation’s own interest.

In mid-December 1940, Roosevelt introduced a new policy initiative whereby the United States would lend, rather than sell, military supplies to Great Britain for use in the fight against Germany, known as the Lend-Lease Act. To garner support, Roosevelt delivered a Fireside Chat, calling for American to be an “arsenal of democracy.” In March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act and Roosevelt signed it into law.

Have students listen to and read the text of FDR's "Arsenal of Democracy" speech and have them write an op-ed or newspaper article summing up the president’s views and positions.

Prompts and questions to consider for the activity could including the following:

- How did President Roosevelt use his skills as a communicator to appeal to American patriotism to gain support for his programs and initiatives?
- What did Roosevelt mean by the phrase “Arsenal of Democracy?”
- In the fireside chat, Roosevelt criticizes those Americans who support American neutrality in the war. Why did Roosevelt believe that these isolationist policies were now untenable?
- What are some examples from the speech where Roosevelt warned against the growing threat Nazi Germany posed to American security?
- What role did Roosevelt believe workers and manufacturers could play in the national effort to make America the “arsenal”?
- What was the goal of the Lend-Lease Act? Do you agree with Roosevelt’s decision to arm the Allies at that time, despite isolationist public opinion and laws put in place to maintain American neutrality?

Primary sources:

President Roosevelt’s Fireside Chat on the “Great Arsenal of Democracy,” December 29, 1940  
https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrarsenalofdemocracy.html

Additional material:

How Was the US Involved in WWII Before Pearl Harbor?—History.com  

Article: The Lend-Lease Program—FDR Presidential Library and Museum  
https://www.fdrlibrary.org/lend-lease
2. The Silent Sentinels and the Fight for the Vote

The United States began working on developing an atomic weapon in 1940, fearing that Germany was already conducting research into nuclear weapons. By the time the U.S. conducted the first successful test in July 1945, Germany had already been defeated. The war against Japan in the Pacific, however, continued to rage. President Harry S. Truman, warned by some of his advisers that any attempt to invade Japan would result in horrific American casualties, ordered that the new weapon be used to bring the war to a speedy end.

On August 6, 1945, the American bomber Enola Gay dropped a five-ton bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima, immediately killed 80,000 people. Tens of thousands more died in the following weeks from wounds and radiation poisoning. Three days later, another bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, killing nearly 40,000 more people. A few days later, Japan announced its surrender.

Have students read the primary sources and write a brief speech or address to answer the following questions:

Prompts and questions to consider for the Eisenhower letter activity could include the following:

- What was the position of the scientists who wrote to President Truman in July 1945? What were they hoping to achieve?
- What options was President Truman weighing when it came to his decision to use atomic weapons against Japan?
- Do you think you would have made the same decision, or a different one? Do you believe it was necessary to use atomic weapons to end the war in Japan?
- How did the atomic bomb and nuclear weapons change the world and the role of America as superpower?

Primary sources:

Petition from Leo Szilard and Other Scientists to President Truman Regarding Use of Atomic Weapons, July 14, 1945

Text of President Truman’s Speech Announcing the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, August 6, 1945

Letter from President Truman to Senator Richard Russell, August 9, 1945
https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/harry-s-truman-richard-russell

Excerpts from President Truman’s Radio Address Urging Japan to Surrender, August 9, 1945
http://www.shoppbs.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/truman/psources/ps_warning.html
Additional Material:

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Article: Harry S Truman's Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb—National Park Service
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https://www.ushistory.org/us/50d.asp

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