

Quick Prep

This Quick Prep section provides a handy reference to key facts on a variety of topics in American history.

Major Eras of American History

Era and Dates	Description
<i>Pre-European Contact</i> c. 1000 B.C.–1492	Flourishing societies of indigenous peoples live by hunting, farming, fishing, and trading.
<i>Exploration & Colonization</i> 1492–1763	Europeans explore, establish colonies, create conflict with Native Americans; European rivalries continue.
<i>Revolutionary Era</i> 1763–1789	Maturing colonial economies; increasing tension with Great Britain leads to war and independence.
<i>Early Republic</i> 1789–1812	New federal government; first political parties; uncertain international relations; expansion to the Mississippi
<i>Westward Expansion</i> 1812–1846	Growth in transportation and industry; Jacksonian democracy; Manifest Destiny; removal of Native Americans
<i>Antebellum Era</i> 1836–1860	Differences over expansion of slavery leads to increasing sectionalism; conflict with Mexico.
<i>Civil War and Reconstruction</i> 1860–1877	War over states' rights to secede and emancipation; union preserved; voting rights for African Americans
<i>Industrial Age/ Gilded Age</i> 1877–1900	Immigration, industrialization, urbanization Big business, railroads, organized labor, machine politics
<i>Progressive Era</i> 1890–1920	Reform—urban problems; temperance; government and business corruption; women's right to vote.
<i>American Imperialism</i> 1890–1920	America becomes a world power, gains overseas colonies.
<i>World War I</i> 1914–1918	European conflict challenges U.S. policy of neutrality; Allied victory intended to make the world safe for democracy.
<i>Roaring Twenties</i> 1920–1929	Business booms, superficial prosperity; new lifestyles for women; growth of mass media; Red Scare
<i>Great Depression</i> 1929–1941	World trade declines, banks fail, high unemployment, urban and rural poverty; New Deal expands role of federal government.
<i>World War II</i> 1939–1945	Dictators threaten world peace on 2 fronts—Europe and Pacific; mobilizes U.S. economy and industry; U.S. helps win war and becomes a world leader
<i>Cold War</i> 1945–1989	Tension and competition between U.S. and Communist USSR; threat of nuclear war; McCarthyism (1950s)
<i>Postwar Boom</i> 1946–1959	American dream—social conformity, suburban and automobile culture, baby boom, consumerism; TV
<i>New Frontier and Great Society</i> 1960–1968	New leadership, bold ideas, prosperity; space race Johnson's Great Society—social welfare, civil rights
<i>Civil Rights Movement</i> 1954–1968	Nonviolent protest—voting rights, desegregation; federal support vs. states' resistance; Black Power movement and urban riots
<i>Vietnam War Years</i> 1954–1975	Domino theory—contain communism War divides the country—campus protest, draft resistance
<i>Era of Social Change</i> 1960–1975	Women, Latinos, and Native Americans seek equality; Hippie counterculture; “do your own thing”
<i>End of the 20th Century</i> 1970s–1990s	1970s—inflation, energy crisis, environmentalism 1980s—political conservatism, federal deficit 1990s—booming economy, digital revolution, economic globalization