

period 6 apush study guide

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The AP U.S. History (APUSH) curriculum is divided into nine periods, each representing a significant era in American history. Period 6, which spans from 1865 to 1898, is a crucial time frame that encompasses post-Civil War Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, and the onset of the Progressive Era. This study guide aims to provide an overview of key themes, events, and figures from Period 6, along with essential tips for mastering this period in your APUSH course.

Key Themes of Period 6

Understanding the key themes of Period 6 is vital for grasping the complexities of American history during this time. The following themes are instrumental in examining the socio-political and economic transformations that occurred:

- **Industrialization:** The shift from an agrarian economy to an industrial powerhouse shaped American society and altered labor dynamics.
- **Urbanization:** Rapid growth of cities due to immigration and industrialization led to significant social changes and challenges.
- **Political Corruption and Reform:** The Gilded Age was marked by political corruption, leading to calls for reform and the emergence of the Progressive movement.
- **Social Movements:** Various movements, including labor rights, women's suffrage, and civil rights, emerged in response to social inequalities.

- **Expansionism and Imperialism:** The U.S. expanded its territory and influence, both domestically and internationally, during this era.

Major Events and Developments

Period 6 is rich with significant events that shaped the trajectory of American history. Below is a chronological overview of key events:

Reconstruction (1865–1877)

The era immediately following the Civil War was marked by efforts to reintegrate the Southern states and address the status of newly freed African Americans.

1. **Presidential Reconstruction:** Led by Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, this approach aimed for quick reintegration with leniency towards the South.
2. **Radical Reconstruction:** Congress, led by Radical Republicans, imposed stricter measures, including the Reconstruction Acts, which divided the South into military districts.
3. **Civil Rights Amendments:** The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were pivotal in abolishing slavery, granting citizenship rights, and securing voting rights for African American men.

The Gilded Age (1870s–1900)

Coined by Mark Twain, the Gilded Age refers to a period of rapid economic growth, industrialization, and stark social inequality.

1. **Economic Transformation:** The rise of major industries such as steel and railroads transformed the economy.
2. **Labor Movements:** Workers began organizing for better conditions, leading to significant strikes such

as the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 and the Haymarket Affair of 1886.

3. Political Corruption: The era was characterized by political machines and corruption, with notable figures like Boss Tweed.

Social Changes and Movements

As society evolved, various movements emerged to address the needs and rights of marginalized groups.

1. Women's Suffrage Movement: Prominent leaders like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for women's voting rights, culminating in the formation of organizations such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).
2. Labor Rights: The formation of unions, such as the American Federation of Labor (AFL), sought to improve working conditions and wages.
3. Civil Rights Advocacy: Leaders like Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells fought against racial discrimination and lynching.

Imperialism and Expansionism (1890s)

The latter part of Period 6 saw the U.S. adopting an imperialistic stance, leading to significant international engagements.

1. Spanish-American War (1898): This conflict marked a turning point in U.S. foreign policy, resulting in the acquisition of territories like Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.
2. Open Door Policy: The U.S. aimed to ensure equal trading rights in China, reflecting its growing economic interests abroad.

Key Figures of Period 6

Understanding the influential figures of Period 6 is essential for contextualizing the events and movements of this time. Here are some notable personalities:

- **Abraham Lincoln:** His leadership during the Civil War and commitment to preserving the Union set the stage for Reconstruction.
- **Ulysses S. Grant:** The 18th President, whose administration faced numerous scandals but also worked to enforce Reconstruction policies.
- **Andrew Carnegie:** A leading industrialist in the steel industry, known for his philanthropic efforts and the concept of the "Gospel of Wealth."
- **John D. Rockefeller:** Founder of Standard Oil, he exemplified the rise of monopolies and corporate power.
- **Ida B. Wells:** An early civil rights advocate who fought against lynching and for African American women's suffrage.

Important Concepts to Understand

To excel in APUSH, it is vital to grasp several important concepts that emerged during Period 6:

1. **Manifest Destiny:** The belief that the U.S. was destined to expand across the continent, which fueled both domestic and foreign policies.
2. **Social Darwinism:** The application of Darwin's theories to social and economic issues, justifying

inequality and imperialism.

3. **Populism:** A political movement that emerged in the late 19th century, advocating for the rights of farmers and laborers against the elite.
4. **Progressivism:** A response to the challenges of the Gilded Age, focusing on social justice, economic reform, and government intervention.

Strategies for Studying Period 6

When preparing for the APUSH exam, especially for Period 6, consider the following strategies:

1. **Create Timelines:** Visual aids like timelines can help you understand the chronological order of events and their interconnections.
2. **Use Primary Sources:** Analyze speeches, documents, and letters from the period to gain insights into the perspectives of historical figures.
3. **Practice Writing Essays:** Focus on developing strong thesis statements and using evidence to support your arguments in essay responses.
4. **Engage in Group Discussions:** Collaborate with peers to discuss key events and themes, enhancing your understanding through different viewpoints.
5. **Utilize Online Resources:** Websites such as Khan Academy, AP Classroom, and various history blogs offer valuable study aids and practice questions.

Conclusion

Period 6 of AP U.S. History is a fascinating and complex era that laid the groundwork for modern America. By understanding the key themes, events, figures, and concepts, students can better

appreciate the transformations that occurred during this time. With diligent study and the use of effective strategies, mastering Period 6 will contribute to overall success in the APUSH exam and a deeper understanding of American history.

Frequently Asked Questions

What major events define Period 6 in APUSH?

Period 6 (1865-1898) is defined by events such as Reconstruction, the rise of industrialization, westward expansion, and the Gilded Age.

What was the significance of the Homestead Act of 1862?

The Homestead Act encouraged westward expansion by providing 160 acres of public land to settlers for a small fee, promoting agriculture and settlement in the West.

How did the Industrial Revolution impact American society during Period 6?

The Industrial Revolution transformed the American economy from agrarian to industrial, leading to urbanization, changes in labor, and the growth of a consumer culture.

What were the main goals of the Populist Movement in the late 19th century?

The Populist Movement aimed to address the struggles of farmers and laborers by advocating for economic reforms such as the regulation of railroads, a graduated income tax, and the direct election of Senators.

What role did immigration play during Period 6?

Massive waves of immigration during Period 6 contributed to the labor force in industrial cities, leading to cultural diversity but also to nativist sentiments and anti-immigrant policies.

What was the impact of the Transcontinental Railroad on American society?

The Transcontinental Railroad facilitated westward expansion, boosted the economy by improving transportation of goods, and contributed to the displacement of Native American tribes.

What were the key aspects of the Reconstruction era?

Reconstruction focused on rebuilding the South after the Civil War, addressing civil rights for freed slaves, and integrating Southern states back into the Union through various amendments and laws.

How did the Gilded Age affect labor conditions?

The Gilded Age saw poor labor conditions, long hours, and low wages, leading to the rise of labor unions and strikes as workers sought better treatment and rights.

What was the significance of the Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)?

Plessy v. Ferguson upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the 'separate but equal' doctrine, which justified Jim Crow laws and institutionalized racial discrimination.

What were the main themes of American foreign policy during Period 6?

American foreign policy during Period 6 was characterized by expansionism, exemplified by actions like the acquisition of Alaska and the annexation of Hawaii, as well as involvement in overseas

conflicts.

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