

Section 4: The development of the USA, 1930–2000

Chapter 10: Changing life in the USA, 1930–2000

10.1 What were the main influences on American life between 1930 and 1945?

Exam practice (page 95)

How important was President Roosevelt to the lives of the American people in the 1930s? **[8 marks]**

Sample answer: Through his New Deal policies President Roosevelt attempted to improve the lives of the American people. He became President in 1932 at a time when America was experiencing the Great Depression. There were millions unemployed and the economy was in a very poor state. Roosevelt based his New Deal on the Three R's – Relief, Recovery and Reform. Through the establishment of Alphabet Agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) he created thousands of new jobs. Other organisations such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) helped to tackle poverty and provide emergency relief. The Emergency Banking Act (EBA) reformed the banks and restored confidence. Through his New Deal policies Roosevelt kick started the US economy. He created jobs and restored confidence. He had done what the previous President, Herbert Hoover, had failed to do. His policies were therefore important in improving the lives of millions of Americans.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a detailed and well-supported answer with good factual support. The answer shows how Roosevelt restored confidence, stimulated the economy and created jobs through his New Deal policies. The concluding sentence shows how this was important in improving the lives of many Americans, and to highlight the importance reference is made to the failings of the previous President.

10.2 What were the main political and economic developments in the USA after 1945?

Exam practice (page 98)

Outline the key features of McCarthyism in the 1950s. **[5 marks]**

Sample answer: McCarthyism is the name given to the practice of making accusations of disloyalty or treason against individuals without proper evidence. It is named after the practices of Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy who used his position as Chairman of a Senate Committee to investigate the alleged Communist activities of hundreds of individuals working in the US government. During the early 1950s McCarthy led a witch-hunt, targeting high-profile figures, causing many of them to be blacklisted and labelled as Communists. When McCarthy extended his accusations in 1954 to target army officers he was challenged to produce evidence to support his claims. When he was unable to do so and his evidence was exposed as being no more than rumours, he was dismissed from office. He died an alcoholic in 1957 but only after ruining the lives of many hundreds through his false accusations of Communist sympathy.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate has provided a good overview of the key features of McCarthyism and has included specific factual detail. Reference has been made to the false accusations of Communist sympathy waged against

high profile figures in government and in the army, reaching a high-point in the mid-1950s. By 1957 McCarthy had been discredited and his accusations had been proved to have been based on very little, if any, evidence. The answer displays a good understanding of this topic area.

Exam practice (page 102)

Describe President Reagan's domestic policies in the 1980s. [5 marks]

Sample answer: Ronald Reagan was President for most of the 1980s. When he took office in 1981 America was facing serious economic problems. There was high inflation, the government was in debt because it had borrowed too much and unemployment was very high. Reagan introduced a series of economic reforms which were nicknamed 'Reaganomics'. To encourage people to spend more he cut taxes. To reduce government spending he cut welfare benefits. He wanted to return to the old policy of rugged individualism. However, in 1987 the US was hit by a stock market crash and Reagan was forced to increase government spending. He also spent money on space research. This caused the national debt to grow. Reagan's policies had mixed success.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate has provided a good overview of Reagan's domestic policies and has included specific factual detail. Reference has been made to the key features of 'Reaganomics' which involved major tax cuts, the reduction in welfare benefits and a return to the Republican policy of rugged individualism. Reference has also been made to the financial crash of 1987 which forced Reagan to increase government spending. The answer displays a good understanding.

10.3 What were the main social developments in the USA from 1945 to 2000?

Exam practice (page 107)

Look at the Sources A and B about life for women in the USA during the 1950s and 1960s. Explain why life had changed for some women in the USA by the 1960s. [7 marks]

Sample answer: The lives of many American women had changed considerably by the 1960s. Source A is a photograph showing the typical image of the American housewife of the 1950s. The media of the 1950s encouraged the image of the suburban housewife who looked after the home, cooked the meals and brought up the children, while the husband went out to work. Source A fits this image. This is in contrast to Source B which says that by the 1960s many women had broken out of this mould. The growth in labour-saving devices had given them more leisure time and they had become bored with the suburban lifestyle. Source B suggests many women had gone out to find jobs and by 1965 1.5 million were in university. Part of the reason for this change was the growth of the feminist movement which encouraged women to fight for their rights and follow careers of their own. The two sources show a change in attitude, from the 1950s when women were content to be suburban housewives, to the 1960s when they began to display more independence through better education and finding a good job.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a structured and well informed answer. There is a clear attempt to explain and analyse the content of both sources, expanding upon points through the inclusion of own knowledge. Reference is made to change and the reasons for it – women abandoning the suburban housewife lifestyle of the 1950s for a more independent career outside the home in the 1960s, a move associated with the growth of feminism.

Chapter 11: Changing attitudes to the race issue in the USA, 1930–2000

11.1 Why was there so much racial inequality in the USA between 1930 and 1945?

Exam practice (page 111)

Why was the Second World War a turning point in the growth of the Civil Rights Movement? [8 marks]

Sample answer: The Second World War was a turning point in the growth of the Civil Rights Movement because the direct involvement of black Americans in the war effort helped to stimulate a desire for change. Following America's entry into the war in 1941 black Americans enlisted to play their part in the fight against Japan and Nazi Germany and they formed the Jim Crow Army. They had to fight in segregated units. Most men in the army were used in non-combat military jobs, but some did get a chance to serve in the front lines. The Tuskegee Airmen won glory for providing fighter escorts for bombers over Germany. The 761st tank battalion made up of black soldiers saw action in Europe. On the home front black Americans made an important contribution to the war effort and by 1944 there were 2 million black workers in factories.

The war changed the attitude many black Americans had towards the Jim Crow laws. Some veterans came back with a more militant attitude, believing that having fought for freedom overseas they now needed to fight for their own freedom at home. During the war membership of the NAACP increased from 50,000 to 450,000 as more black people began to question the segregation laws. As part of his 'Fair Deal' policy, President Truman established a civil rights committee in 1946 to examine violence against black Americans. He was successful in ending segregation in the armed forces.

The experience of war led to a growing sense of injustice by many black Americans and was therefore a turning point in the campaign for civil rights. It resulted in a rise of black resistance and this helped lay the foundations for the famous legal challenges to segregation in the courts during the 1950s.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is accurate and well informed, being supported with specific factual detail. The first paragraph outlines the contribution of black Americans to the war effort and the second paragraph shows how this brought about a desire for change. The third paragraph acts as a good conclusion in which there is a clear reference to a turning point and an attempt at a reasoned judgement.

11.3 How much progress has been made by black Americans since the 1960s?

Exam practice (page 115)

Describe the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s. [5 marks]

Sample answer: During the 1960s a number of laws were passed by the US government to remove discrimination and achieve civil rights for all Americans. The first major law was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which banned racial discrimination in employment and gave black Americans equal rights to enter all public places and bodies. This aimed to end discrimination in schools, hospitals, cinemas, restaurants and on public transport. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 took away the obstacles which had prevented non-whites from voting and banned such things as the use of literacy tests to qualify for voting rights. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 made it illegal to discriminate in the housing market. Through these laws Americans of all races were granted civil rights and legal protection of those rights.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a detailed and well-structured answer which identifies three important pieces of civil rights legislation. Each law is named and its key features are described. The concluding sentence provides a good summing up.

Exam practice (page 116)

What have been the most important factors bringing about change in the lives of black Americans since 1930? [12 marks & 3 marks for SPaG]

Sample answer: Between 1929 and 2000 black Americans were involved in a long struggle to achieve civil rights and equality. Several factors helped secure change and a key turning point was the impact of the Second World War. During the 1930s segregation which was in force in the southern states made the lives of black Americans difficult and miserable. Division was enforced through the Jim Crow Laws and even migration to the northern cities which were free of segregation did not stop discrimination. Black Americans often lived in poor neighbourhoods and were paid the lowest wages. When America entered the war in 1941 many black Americans joined the armed forces or went to work in the factories. Their contribution to the war effort helped to generate a desire for change and a belief that they should fight for equality.

The result was a growth in membership of the NAACP and during the 1950s this body was involved in campaigns to end segregation in education and on public transport. In terms of education the Brown V. Topeka case was a victory for change, as was the campaign in Little Rock Central High School in 1957 and James Meredith's fight to attend Mississippi University in 1962. These events helped begin a period of change but it was many years before all schools were fully integrated. In terms of public transport change was achieved through the actions of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56. The boycott saw the birth of the Civil Rights Movement with Dr Martin Luther King emerging as its leader. By following his policy of non-violent protest the boycott was successful in bringing an end to segregation on public transport. The Freedom Rides of 1961 helped end segregation on inter-state transport.

During the early 1960s King's campaign of peaceful protest helped bring change. His famous 'I Have a Dream' speech in 1963 convinced President Kennedy of the need for a civil rights bill. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was followed by the Voting Rights Act in 1965; laws which helped change the lives of black Americans. However, while King continued his peaceful protests younger more radical blacks fell under the influence of Malcolm X and later Stokely Carmichael who adopted more violent forms of protest. They formed the Black Power movement and they were prepared to use violence to push for change. The late 1960s and 1970s saw riots in many US cities as young black males, frustrated at being unemployed or having low paid jobs and living in ghetto environments, took to the streets in protest. A serious riot broke out in Los Angeles in 1992.

Despite such protests, life for many black Americans did improve during the 1980s and 1990s and some made significant gains in the fields of politics, sport and the media. In 1984 the Rev. Jesse Jackson stood to become president and in 1989 Colin Powell became the first black American to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In sport Muhammad Ali became the World Heavyweight Boxing Champion in the 1960s and during the 1980s Carl Lewis won 9 Olympic gold medals. On TV Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey became famous personalities, while in films Eddie Murphy, Whoopi Goldberg and Morgan Freeman proved that it was possible for black Americans to reach the top in their professions.

Many factors have therefore brought about change in the lives of black Americans. Some of the most important factors have been the impact of the Second World War, the Civil Rights Movement

and its leaders, the Civil Rights legislation and a more accepting attitude towards black Americans which has emerged since the 1970s in all sectors of American society.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a structured and well informed account which identifies specific causes of change and describes them in some detail. There is a clear attempt to cover the whole period 1929 to 2000 and there is recognition that the pace of change has varied, the 1950s and 1960s being two decades which saw significant progress. The conclusion provides a good summing up, with a judgement which links back to the essay question. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar is very good throughout.

Chapter 12: The USA and the wider world, 1930–2000

12.1 How and why did US foreign policy change between 1930 and 1945?

Exam practice (page 120)

Look at Source A and B about American foreign policy during the 1930s and 1940s. Explain why American foreign policy had changed by the mid-1940s. [7 marks]

Sample answer: Throughout the 1920s and 1930s America had followed a policy of isolationism and had refused to become involved in the affairs of other countries. Source A, which is an extract from a school history textbook, comments that America's attitude to foreign policy was different to other countries, and was based upon the firm principal of non-intervention. It was very much based upon a belief in a policy of America being 'inactive' and not becoming involved in world affairs.

However, American foreign policy was forced to change drastically after the Japanese bombed the US naval base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii in December 1941. America was forced to abandon its 'inactive' approach and become 'reactive' by entering the Second World War to fight against Japan and later Japan's ally, Nazi Germany. Source B shows American involvement in the Pacific fighting the war against Japan. It shows the strategy of 'island hopping' which was the attempt to capture islands held by Japanese forces and it locates the key battles of Midway (1942), Coral Sea (1942), Guadalcanal (1942), and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki upon which the US dropped two atomic bombs in August 1945.

Sources A and B show complete opposites in American foreign policy. Source A shows the traditional policy of isolationism and inactivity on the world stage, a policy which was brought to a sudden end by the actions of Japan in December 1941. Source B shows the change towards a reactive foreign policy from 1942 onwards as America was forced to play a key role in the fight to end Japanese expansionism in the Pacific. The sources therefore show the move from an inactive to a reactive foreign policy.

Comment: The candidate has produced a detailed and well-structured response which names both sources, describes and explains the content of each source, and places these events into their historical context. The concluding paragraph cross-references the sources and spells out the fundamental change in US foreign policy.

12.2 How and why was the US involved in the Cold War?

Exam practice (page 123)

Why was the Cuban missile crisis a turning point in American foreign policy? [8 marks]

Sample answer: The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was one of the most serious flashpoints of the Cold War. The decision by Khrushchev, the leader of the USSR, to place nuclear missiles on the island of Cuba was a serious worry for the new American President, John F. Kennedy. Cuba was only 90 miles from the US coast and if missiles were installed on the island they could attack all of America's major cities. When a U2 spy plane took photographs of Russian ships carrying the missiles crossing the Atlantic, Kennedy decided to impose a blockade around the island. Both sides now played the game of brinkmanship, pushing each other to the brink of a nuclear war. In the end Khrushchev backed down but the crisis could have ended in a war. The crisis proved a turning point in relations between America and the USSR. Brinkmanship was too dangerous a game to play and they agreed to set up a hot line between the White House and the Kremlin. In 1963 they agreed a nuclear Test Ban Treaty. It made America realise she could not use nuclear weapons.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a detailed and well informed answer which provides a clear outline of the flashpoint in the Cold War in October 1962 which threatened to end in a nuclear conflict. Reference is made to it being a turning point and this is explained through reference to brinkmanship and its consequences, which forced the two superpowers to agree to communicate more.

12.3 What role has the USA played in the search for world peace since 1970?

Exam practice (page 126)

Outline the reasons why America's relationship with China and the USSR improved between 1971 and 1979. [5 marks]

Sample answer: Several reasons explain why America's relationship with China and the USSR improved during the 1970s. When Richard Nixon became President in 1969 he promised to end the war in Vietnam and he hoped that by improving relations with China and the USSR these two powers could help with peace negotiations with North Vietnam. Nixon also wanted to reduce the tension of the Cold War. The nuclear arms race was proving very expensive as was the cost of the war in Vietnam, and Nixon hoped improved relations between the super powers could cut this heavy financial burden. More friendly relations would also benefit the other super powers. Relations between China and the USSR had cooled and China was keen to become friendlier with America. In 1972 Nixon visited Mao in China and signed important trade agreements. That same year he visited Brezhnev in Moscow and signed the SALT I agreement with the USSR. This reduced the number of nuclear weapons held by both the USA and USSR. This was followed in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Agreements relating to international security and human rights issues. During the 1970s a period of détente emerged between the super powers but this was broken in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a detailed and well-structured answer which identifies and describes improved relations between the USA, the USSR and China during the 1970s. Specific examples are given such as Nixon's visits to China and the USSR, the SALT I agreement and the period of détente. The candidate displays an in-depth knowledge and thorough understanding of this topic area.

Exam practice (page 128)

How far has America's role in world affairs developed since 1930? [12 marks & 3 marks for SPaG]

Sample answer: America's role in world affairs between 1929 and 2000 has gone through a number of developments. It started with a period of America being inactive, following a policy of isolationism, but the events of Pearl Harbour forced her to become reactive. America's involvement

in the Second World War caused her to play a more active role in world affairs and after 1945 her policy became proactive.

During the 1930s America continued with its traditional foreign policy of isolationism. This was the belief that America should not play an important role in world affairs but should concentrate upon what was happening within her own back yard. For this reason America signed a series of Neutrality Acts during the 1930s which she hoped would keep her out of future wars. However, President Roosevelt did agree to a 'Cash and Carry' scheme which allowed the sale of war material to other countries and in 1941 he agreed to the 'Lend-Lease' scheme which involved lending military equipment to Britain and the USSR.

America's policy of isolationism was shattered by one event which proved to be a turning point in her foreign policy. On 7 December 1941 the Japanese attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbour on Hawaii. This forced America to react by declaring war on Japan. This also brought her into war with Germany and Italy in Europe. America went on to play a dominant role in the Second World War, fighting the Japanese in the Pacific and the Fascists in Europe. In June 1944 America and Britain launched the D Day landings and by April 1945 Allied forces had entered Berlin. In the Pacific it took the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki before Japan surrendered.

Once the war was over America became concerned about the threat from the spread of Communism, especially in Eastern Europe. In 1947 President Truman issued his Doctrine of Containment which offered help to any country threatened by a Communist takeover. The Marshall Plan offered economic aid. This was a major change in American foreign policy and it was the start of a more proactive policy. For the next half-century America was to play a major part in leading the West in the Cold War. American forces were sent to Berlin, Korea, Cuba and Vietnam in a deliberate attempt to stop the spread of Communism.

During the 1970s America wanted to cut the expense of such a policy and attempted to develop more friendly relations with the Communist superpowers. In 1972 President Nixon signed a trade and friendship agreement with China. Between 1971–79 a policy of détente improved relations with the USSR and even resulted in the signing of arms reduction treaties such as SALT I. In 1985, President Reagan and Gorbachev, the new leader of the USSR, returned to a policy of détente and by 1989 the Cold War was coming to an end. During the 1990s America turned her attention to the Middle East, becoming involved in conflicts in Iran and Iraq. The Gulf War of 1990-91 was fought by America to protect oil supplies from Kuwait, a conflict which showed that America was still very proactive in world affairs.

Since 1929 America's involvement in world affairs has gone through clear lines of development. It started in the 1930s with being inactive and isolationist. The Japanese attack in 1941 forced her to become reactive and enter the Second World War. After 1945 America followed a proactive policy and took the lead in the fight against Communism. Since the 1970s she has attempted to be less confrontational and has followed a policy of détente whenever possible.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a very thorough account which provides an informed overview of American foreign policy between 1929 and 2000. The introduction and conclusion address the key issue of a line of development, outlining the change from being inactive to being reactive and finally proactive. The discussion part of the essay provides factual detail to illustrate each of these three stages and there is a clear focus upon the key issue. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar is very good throughout.