

AP U.S. HISTORY

UNIT 5

Period 5: 1844–1877



10–17%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~17
CLASS PERIODS

The AP icon consists of the letters 'AP' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered within a white square. This square is itself centered within a larger white circle. The circle and square are both outlined with a thin blue border.

Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Personal Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Personal Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Personal Progress Check 5

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions

Short-answer: 2 questions

- Secondary source (2 sources)
- No stimulus

Free-response: 2 questions

- Long essay (partial)
- Document-based (partial)


Period 5: 1844–1877

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Thematic Focus	Topic	Reasoning Process	Suggested Skill	Class Periods
				~17 CLASS PERIODS
	5.1 Contextualizing Period 5	Continuity and Change	4.B Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.	
GEO	5.2 Manifest Destiny	Causation	1.B Explain a historical concept, development, or process.	
WOR	5.3 The Mexican–American War	Causation	3.C Compare the arguments or main ideas of two sources.	
NAT	5.4 The Compromise of 1850	Comparison	4.B Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.	
ARC, SOC	5.5 Sectional Conflict: Regional Differences	Comparison	2.B Explain the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience of a source.	
PCE	5.6 Failure of Compromise	Causation	5.B Explain how a historical development or process relates to another historical development or process.	
	5.7 Election of 1860 and Secession	Causation	4.B Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.	
WOR	5.8 Military Conflict in the Civil War	Comparison	5.A Identify patterns among or connections between historical developments and processes.	

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UNIT AT A GLANCE *(cont'd)*

Thematic Focus	Topic	Reasoning Process	Suggested Skill	Class Periods
				~17 CLASS PERIODS
NAT	5.9 Government Policies During the Civil War	Continuity and Change	2.B Explain the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience of a source.	
PCE	5.10 Reconstruction	Causation	3.D Explain how claims or evidence support, modify, or refute a source's argument.	
NAT	5.11 Failure of Reconstruction	Continuity and Change	3.C Compare the arguments or main ideas of two sources.	
	5.12 Comparison in Period 5	Comparison	6.C Use historical reasoning to explain relationships among pieces of historical evidence.	
	Go to AP Classroom to assign the Personal Progress Check for Unit 5. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.			

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching some of the topics in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 217 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	5.2	<p>Making Connections</p> <p>Write terms or concepts related to this topic’s thematic focus, GEO, on index cards, place them in a box, and have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term or concept and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their terms or concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the terms or concepts are related.</p>
2	5.7	<p>Debate</p> <p>This topic takes students chronologically up to the breakdown of the Union in 1860–1861. Thinking back over the previous units and topics in this unit, have students debate at what point in time, or by which event, was the Civil War inevitable. Ask students to use evidence and reasoning to support their claims.</p>
3	5.8	<p>Discussion Groups</p> <p>Assign students to groups to discuss the learning objective for this topic, <i>Explain the various factors that contributed to the Union victory in the Civil War</i>, with the view to help them gain new understanding by hearing the views of their classmates. After discussion, ask groups to present their conclusions on the factors and whether or not their groups reached a consensus.</p>
4	5.10, 5.11	<p>Look for a Pattern</p> <p>This activity bridges Topics 5.10 and 5.11. Present students with a series of data in various forms relevant to these topics: population by state, registered voters by state, political representation, land and type of ownership, and any other data relevant to Reconstruction. Have students compare the data presented, identify trends, and draw conclusions about how and why Reconstruction resulted in change and continuity regionally and nationally for African Americans.</p>



Unit Planning Notes

Use the space below to plan your approach to the unit. Consider how you want to pace the unit; which specific historical figures, groups, or events you will use to illustrate the concepts noted in the historical development statements; where you will incorporate writing assignments; and which primary and secondary sources you will use.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

 Contextualization

4.B

Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.

TOPIC 5.1

Contextualizing Period 5

Spend a class period helping students understand some contexts for this unit. Considering this unit's key concepts (previewed below), select one or two for which your students will most need context.

To understand context, your students could examine:

- Change from and/or continuity with preceding historical developments.
- Similarities and/or differences with contemporaneous historical developments in different regions or geographical areas.

Whenever possible, draw upon students' relevant prior knowledge, and anchor this contextualization lesson in historical source material of varying formats such as visuals, data, or written texts, or conduct an activity that engages students in exploring context.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective A

Explain the context in which sectional conflict emerged from 1844 to 1877.

PREVIEW: UNIT 5 KEY CONCEPTS

KC-5.1

The United States became more connected with the world, pursued an expansionist foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere, and emerged as the destination for many migrants from other countries.

KC-5.1.I

Popular enthusiasm for U.S. expansion, bolstered by economic and security interests, resulted in the acquisition of new territories, substantial migration westward, and new overseas initiatives.

KC-5.1.II

In the 1840s and 1850s, Americans continued to debate questions about rights and citizenship for various groups of U.S. inhabitants.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective A**

Explain the context in which sectional conflict emerged from 1844 to 1877.

PREVIEW: UNIT 5 KEY CONCEPTS**KC-5.2**

Intensified by expansion and deepening regional divisions, debates over slavery and other economic, cultural, and political issues led the nation into civil war.

KC-5.2.I

Ideological and economic differences over slavery produced an array of diverging responses from Americans in the North and the South.

KC-5.2.II

Debates over slavery came to dominate political discussion in the 1850s, culminating in the bitter election of 1860 and the secession of Southern states.

KC-5.3

The Union victory in the Civil War and the contested reconstruction of the South settled the issues of slavery and secession, but left unresolved many questions about the power of the federal government and citizenship rights.

KC-5.3.I

The North's greater manpower and industrial resources, the leadership of Abraham Lincoln and others, and the decision to emancipate slaves eventually led to the Union military victory over the Confederacy in the devastating Civil War.

KC-5.3.II.i

Reconstruction and the Civil War ended slavery, altered relationships between the states and the federal government, and led to debates over new definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Developments
and Processes*

1.B

Explain a historical concept, development, or process.

TOPIC 5.2

Manifest Destiny

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS

Geography and the Environment **GEO**

Geographic and environmental factors, including competition over and debates about natural resources, shape the development of America and foster regional diversity. The development of America impacts the environment and reshapes geography, which leads to debates about environmental and geographic issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective B

Explain the causes and effects of westward expansion from 1844 to 1877.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

KC-5.1.A

The desire for access to natural and mineral resources and the hope of many settlers for economic opportunities or religious refuge led to an increased migration to and settlement in the West.

KC-5.1.B

Advocates of annexing western lands argued that Manifest Destiny and the superiority of American institutions compelled the United States to expand its borders westward to the Pacific Ocean.

KC-5.1.D

Westward migration was boosted during and after the Civil War by the passage of new legislation promoting western transportation and economic development.


KC-5.1.E

U.S. interest in expanding trade led to economic, diplomatic, and cultural initiatives to create more ties with Asia.

TOPIC 5.3

The Mexican–American War

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Claims and Evidence in Sources*

3.C

Compare the arguments or main ideas of two sources.

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS**America in the World** **WOR**

Diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military interactions between empires, nations, and peoples shape the development of America and America’s increasingly important role in the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective C**

Explain the causes and effects of the Mexican–American War.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**KC-5.1.I.C**

The United States added large territories in the West through victory in the Mexican–American War and diplomatic negotiations, raising questions about the status of slavery, American Indians, and Mexicans in the newly acquired lands.

KC-5.1.II.C

U.S. government interaction and conflict with Mexican Americans and American Indians increased in regions newly taken from American Indians and Mexico, altering these groups’ economic self-sufficiency and cultures.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Contextualization

4.B

Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.

TOPIC 5.4

The Compromise of 1850

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS

American and National Identity **NAT**

The development of and debates about democracy, freedom, citizenship, diversity, and individualism shape American national identity, cultural values, and beliefs about American exceptionalism, and in turn, these ideas shape political institutions and society. Throughout American history, notions of national identity and culture have coexisted with varying degrees of regional and group identities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective D

Explain the similarities and differences in how regional attitudes affected federal policy in the period after the Mexican–American War.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

KC-5.2.II.A

The Mexican Cession led to heated controversies over whether to allow slavery in the newly acquired territories.

KC-5.2.II.B.i

The courts and national leaders made a variety of attempts to resolve the issue of slavery in the territories, including the Compromise of 1850.

TOPIC 5.5

Sectional Conflict: Regional Differences

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Sourcing and
Situation***2.B**Explain the point of view,
purpose, historical situation,
and/or audience of a source.

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS**American and Regional Culture** **ARC**

Creative expression, demographic change, philosophy, religious beliefs, scientific ideas, social mores, and technology shape national, regional, and group cultures in America, and these varying cultures often play a role in shaping government policy and developing economic systems.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective E**

Explain the effects of immigration from various parts of the world on American culture from 1844 to 1877.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**KC-5.1.II.A**

Substantial numbers of international migrants continued to arrive in the United States from Europe and Asia, mainly from Ireland and Germany, often settling in ethnic communities where they could preserve elements of their languages and customs.

KC-5.1.II.B

A strongly anti-Catholic nativist movement arose that was aimed at limiting new immigrants' political power and cultural influence.

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THEMATIC FOCUS**Social Structures** **soc**

Social categories, roles, and practices are created, maintained, challenged, and transformed throughout American history, shaping government policy, economic systems, culture, and the lives of citizens.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective F**

Explain how regional differences related to slavery caused tension in the years leading up to the Civil War.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**KC-5.2.I.A**

The North's expanding manufacturing economy relied on free labor in contrast to the Southern economy's dependence on slave labor. Some Northerners did not object to slavery on principle but claimed that slavery would undermine the free labor market. As a result, a free-soil movement arose that portrayed the expansion of slavery as incompatible with free labor.

KC-5.2.I.B

African American and white abolitionists, although a minority in the North, mounted a highly visible campaign against slavery, presenting moral arguments against the institution, assisting slaves' escapes, and sometimes expressing a willingness to use violence to achieve their goals.

KC-5.2.I.C

Defenders of slavery based their arguments on racial doctrines, the view that slavery was a positive social good, and the belief that slavery and states' rights were protected by the Constitution.

TOPIC 5.6

Failure of Compromise

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS

Politics and Power **PCE**

Debates fostered by social and political groups about the role of government in American social, political, and economic life shape government policy, institutions, political parties, and the rights of citizens.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective G

Explain the political causes of the Civil War.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

KC-5.2.II.B.ii

The courts and national leaders made a variety of attempts to resolve the issue of slavery in the territories, including the Kansas–Nebraska Act, and the Dred Scott decision, but these ultimately failed to reduce conflict.

KC-5.2.II.C

The Second Party System ended when the issues of slavery and anti-immigrant nativism weakened loyalties to the two major parties and fostered the emergence of sectional parties, most notably the Republican Party in the North.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Making Connections*

5.B

Explain how a historical development or process relates to another historical development or process.



AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- AP Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 5: 1844–1877, Focus on Research “The Coming of the Civil War”](#)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Contextualization

4.B

Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.

TOPIC 5.7

Election of 1860 and Secession

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS**Politics and Power** **PCE**

Debates fostered by social and political groups about the role of government in American social, political, and economic life shape government policy, institutions, political parties, and the rights of citizens.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective H**

Describe the effects of Lincoln's election.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**KC-5.2.II.D**

Abraham Lincoln's victory on the Republicans' free-soil platform in the presidential election of 1860 was accomplished without any Southern electoral votes. After a series of contested debates about secession, most slave states voted to secede from the Union, precipitating the Civil War.

TOPIC 5.8

Military Conflict in the Civil War

SUGGESTED SKILL *Making Connections***5.A**

Identify patterns among or connections between historical developments and processes.

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS

America in the World **WOR**

Diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military interactions between empires, nations, and peoples shape the development of America and America's increasingly important role in the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective I

Explain the various factors that contributed to the Union victory in the Civil War.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

KC-5.3.1.A

Both the Union and the Confederacy mobilized their economies and societies to wage the war even while facing considerable home front opposition.

KC-5.3.1.D

Although the Confederacy showed military initiative and daring early in the war, the Union ultimately succeeded due to improvements in leadership and strategy, key victories, greater resources, and the wartime destruction of the South's infrastructure.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Sourcing and Situation*

2.B

Explain the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience of a source.



AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Professional Development
> [Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 5: 1844–1877, Focus on Research “Focus on Emancipation”](#)

TOPIC 5.9

Government Policies During the Civil War

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS

American and National Identity **NAT**

The development of and debates about democracy, freedom, citizenship, diversity, and individualism shape American national identity, cultural values, and beliefs about American exceptionalism, and in turn, these ideas shape political institutions and society. Throughout American history, notions of national identity and culture have coexisted with varying degrees of regional and group identities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective J

Explain how Lincoln’s leadership during the Civil War impacted American ideals over the course of the war.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

KC-5.3.I.B

Lincoln and most Union supporters began the Civil War to preserve the Union, but Lincoln’s decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation reframed the purpose of the war and helped prevent the Confederacy from gaining full diplomatic support from European powers. Many African Americans fled southern plantations and enlisted in the Union Army, helping to undermine the Confederacy.


KC-5.3.I.C

Lincoln sought to reunify the country and used speeches such as the Gettysburg Address to portray the struggle against slavery as the fulfillment of America’s founding democratic ideals.

TOPIC 5.10

Reconstruction

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Claims and Evidence in Sources*

3.D

Explain how claims or evidence support, modify, or refute a source's argument.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources
 - > ["Voting Rights Since the Fifteenth Amendment"](#)
- Professional Development
 - > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 5: 1844–1877, Focus on Research "Interpretations of Reconstruction"](#)

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS**Politics and Power** **PCE**

Debates fostered by social and political groups about the role of government in American social, political, and economic life shape government policy, institutions, political parties, and the rights of citizens.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective K**

Explain the effects of government policy during Reconstruction on society from 1865 to 1877.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**KC-5.3.II.ii**

Reconstruction altered relationships between the states and the federal government and led to debates over new definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.

KC-5.3.II.A

The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, while the 14th and 15th amendments granted African Americans citizenship, equal protection under the laws, and voting rights.


KC-5.3.II.B

The women's rights movement was both emboldened and divided over the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

KC-5.3.II.C

Efforts by radical and moderate Republicans to change the balance of power between Congress and the presidency and to reorder race relations in the defeated South yielded some short-term successes. Reconstruction opened up political opportunities and other leadership roles to former slaves, but it ultimately failed, due both to determined Southern resistance and the North's waning resolve.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Claims and Evidence in Sources***3.C**

Compare the arguments or main ideas of two sources.



AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources
 - > [Essay from the American Organization of Historians and AP \(“The Civil War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction on the World Stage”\)](#)

TOPIC 5.11

Failure of Reconstruction

Required Course Content

THEMATIC FOCUS**American and National Identity** **NAT**

The development of and debates about democracy, freedom, citizenship, diversity, and individualism shape American national identity, cultural values, and beliefs about American exceptionalism, and in turn, these ideas shape political institutions and society. Throughout American history, notions of national identity and culture have coexisted with varying degrees of regional and group identities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective L**

Explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**KC-5.3.II.D**

Southern plantation owners continued to own the majority of the region’s land even after Reconstruction. Former slaves sought land ownership but generally fell short of self-sufficiency, as an exploitative and soil-intensive sharecropping system limited blacks’ and poor whites’ access to land in the South.

KC-5.3.II.E

Segregation, violence, Supreme Court decisions, and local political tactics progressively stripped away African American rights, but the 14th and 15th amendments eventually became the basis for court decisions upholding civil rights in the 20th century.

TOPIC 5.12

Comparison in Period 5

The final topic in this unit focuses on the skill of argumentation and so provides an opportunity for your students to draw upon the key concepts and historical developments they have studied in this unit. Using evidence relevant to this unit’s key concepts, students should practice the suggested skill for this topic.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Unit 5: Learning Objective M

Compare the relative significance of the effects of the Civil War on American values.

REVIEW: UNIT 5 KEY CONCEPTS

KC-5.1

The United States became more connected with the world, pursued an expansionist foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere, and emerged as the destination for many migrants from other countries.

KC-5.1.I

Popular enthusiasm for U.S. expansion, bolstered by economic and security interests, resulted in the acquisition of new territories, substantial migration westward, and new overseas initiatives.

KC-5.1.II

In the 1840s and 1850s, Americans continued to debate questions about rights and citizenship for various groups of U.S. inhabitants.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Argumentation*

6.C

Use historical reasoning to explain relationships among pieces of historical evidence.



AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- External Resource > [Gilder Lehrman Institute’s AP U.S. History Study Guide](#)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**Unit 5: Learning Objective M**

Compare the relative significance of the effects of the Civil War on American values.

REVIEW: UNIT 5 KEY CONCEPTS**KC-5.2**

Intensified by expansion and deepening regional divisions, debates over slavery and other economic, cultural, and political issues led the nation into civil war.

KC-5.2.I

Ideological and economic differences over slavery produced an array of diverging responses from Americans in the North and the South.

KC-5.2.II

Debates over slavery came to dominate political discussion in the 1850s, culminating in the bitter election of 1860 and the secession of Southern states.

KC-5.3

The Union victory in the Civil War and the contested reconstruction of the South settled the issues of slavery and secession, but left unresolved many questions about the power of the federal government and citizenship rights.

KC-5.3.I

The North's greater manpower and industrial resources, the leadership of Abraham Lincoln and others, and the decision to emancipate slaves eventually led to the Union military victory over the Confederacy in the devastating Civil War.

KC-5.3.II.i

Reconstruction and the Civil War ended slavery, altered relationships between the states and the federal government, and led to debates over new definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.