



Understanding Historical Themes

Objective:

Throughout this course, students will be studying United States history centered on essential themes and utilizing higher level, thematic skills.

Understanding the seven themes is essential for understanding of history and successful application of skills, as well as being fundamental to mastery of course content and success on the AP exam. This activity is an introduction to the seven themes as well as the 19 historical thinking skills. The main objective of the activity is to help students **understand each theme** as they prepare to analyze history thematically. Public Domain image of a magpie captured from cker.com

Directions:

1. Memorize the acronym.
2. Read the descriptions of the seven historical themes.
3. Review each corresponding objective to familiarize yourself with each set.
4. Insert the summary chart into your spiral.
5. Categorize the events according to their major theme.

Adapted from the College Board APUSH Framework, 2015 Revisions

The **thematic learning objectives** describe, at a high level, the knowledge colleges expect students to develop in the AP U.S. History course in order to be qualified for credit and placement. These themes focus on major historical issues and changes, helping students connect the historical content they study to broad developments and processes that have emerged over centuries in what has become the United States. The **19 learning objectives** are grouped into **seven themes** typically included in college-level U.S. history courses:

1. **M****igration and Settlement** - This theme focuses on why and how the various people who moved to and within the United States both adapted to and transformed their new social and physical environments.

Corresponding Objectives:

- MIG-1.0: Explain the causes of migration to colonial North America and, later, the United States, and analyze immigration's effects on U.S. society.
 MIG-2.0: Analyze causes of internal migration and patterns of settlement in what would become the United States, and explain how migration has affected American life.

2. **A****merica in the World** - This theme focuses on the interactions between nations that affected North American history in the colonial period, and on the influence of the United States on world affairs.

Corresponding Objectives:

- WOR-1.0: Explain how cultural interaction, cooperation, competition, and conflict between empires, nations, and peoples have influenced political, economic, and social developments in North America.
 WOR-2.0: Analyze the reasons for and results of U.S. diplomatic, economic, and military initiatives in North America and overseas.

3. **G****eography and the Environment** - This theme focuses on the role of geography and both the natural and human-made environments on social and political developments in what would become the United States.

Corresponding Objective:

- GEO-1.0: Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of various communities, and analyze how competition for and debates over natural resources have affected both interactions among different groups and the development of government policies.

4. **P****olitics and Power** - This theme focuses on how different social and political groups have influenced society and government in the United States, as well as how political beliefs and institutions have changed over time.

Corresponding Objectives:

- POL-1.0: Explain how and why political ideas, beliefs, institutions, party systems, and alignments have developed and changed.
 POL-2.0: Explain how popular movements, reform efforts, and activist groups have sought to change American society and institutions.
 POL-3.0: Explain how different beliefs about the federal government's role in U.S. social and economic life have affected political debates and policies.

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5. **American and National Identity** - This theme focuses on how and why definitions of American and national identity and values have developed, as well as on related topics such as citizenship, constitutionalism, foreign policy, assimilation, and American exceptionalism.

Corresponding Objectives:

- NAT-1.0: Explain how ideas about democracy, freedom, and individualism found expression in the development of cultural values, political institutions, and American identity.
 NAT-2.0: Explain how interpretations of the Constitution and debates over rights, liberties, and definitions of citizenship have affected American values, politics, and society.
 NAT-3.0: Analyze how ideas about national identity changed in response to U.S. involvement in international conflicts and growth of the United States.
 NAT-4.0: Analyze relationship among different regional, social, ethnic, and racial groups, and explain how these groups' experiences have related to U.S. national identity.

6. **Work, Exchange, and Technology** - This theme focuses on the factors behind the development of systems of economic exchange, particularly the role of technology, economic markets, and government.

Corresponding Objectives:

- WXT-1.0: Explain how different labor systems developed in North America and the United States, and explain their effects on workers' lives and U.S. society.
 WXT-2.0: Explain how patterns of exchange, markets, and private enterprise have developed, and analyze ways that governments have responded to economic issues.
 WXT-3.0: Analyze how technological innovation has affected economic development and society.

7. **Culture and Society** - This theme focuses on the roles that ideas, beliefs, social mores, and creative expression have played in shaping the United States, as well as how various identities, cultures, and values have been preserved or changed in different contexts of U.S. history.

Corresponding Objectives:

- CUL-1.0: Explain how religious groups and ideas have affected American society and political life.
 CUL-2.0: Explain how artistic, philosophical, and scientific ideas have developed and shaped society and institutions.
 CUL-3.0: Explain how ideas about women's rights and gender roles have affected society and politics.
 CUL-4.0: Explain how different group identities, including racial, ethnic, class, and regional identities, have emerged and changed over time.

Identify the theme for each item below, discuss the meaning of each item, propose specific examples of each item, and categorize them in your spiral.

Military/economic involvement in developing world	Expansionism	Regulation
Religious groups & ideas	Innovation & Technology	Liberty, Rights, Democracy
Slavery	Philosophical ideas	What it means to be American
Wage Labor	Imperialism	Relationships among different groups
Demographics	Land distribution	Regions within the United States
Artistic ideas	Group identities	Nationalism & patriotism
Authority of government	Government Federation vs Confederation	Movement of peoples
Cooperation and competition among Nations	Globalization	Freedom/Liberty
Capitalism & free market	Changes as a result of internal conflicts	Scientific ideas
Women's rights & gender roles	Motivations as world actors	Race & ethnicity
Commerce/Trade	Political & Physical Geography	Socialism & communism
Republicanism, Federalism, & Democracy	Environment, natural & man-made	Global conflicts & World Wars
Concepts and rights of citizenship	Natural resources	Labor & social classes
Climate and weather	Nativism & Xenophobia	Human interaction with the environment
Movement to, from, & within the U.S.	Exchanges: plants, disease, animals, technologies	Trade patterns/ exchange
Foreign policy/Diplomacy	Preservation & Conservation	Political processes
Agriculture	Constitution/interpretation	Liberalism vs conservatism
Morality, Moral Values	Role of the state in society	Manufacturing & Industrialization
Individualism	Transportation	Way of life
Pollution	Assimilation	Cultural conflict
Debates over immigration	Political parties	Globalization

The items below are for your spiral. Throughout the year you will be asked to complete various writing activities in your spiral. Having these items as reference may be helpful.

MAGPIES

- M**igration and Settlement
- A**merica in the World
- G**eography and the Environment
- P**olitics and Power
- I**dentify; American and National
- E**conomy; Work, Exchange, & Technology
- S**ociety and Culture



Migration and Settlement - This theme focuses on why and how the various people who moved to and within the United States both adapted to and transformed their new social and physical environments.

America in the World - This theme focuses on the interactions between nations that affected North American history in the colonial period, and on the influence of the United States on world affairs.

Geography and the Environment - This theme focuses on the role of geography and both the natural and human-made environments on social and political developments in what would become the United States.

Politics and Power - This theme focuses on how different social and political groups have influenced society and government in the United States, as well as how political beliefs and institutions have changed over time.

American and National Identify - This theme focuses on how and why definitions of American and national identity and values have developed, as well as on related topics such as citizenship, constitutionalism, foreign policy, assimilation, and American exceptionalism.

Work, **E**xchange, and **T**echnology - This theme focuses on the factors behind the development of systems of economic exchange, particularly the role of technology, economic markets, and government.

Culture and **S**ociety - This theme focuses on the roles that ideas, beliefs, social mores, and creative expression have played in shaping the United States, as well as how various identities, cultures, and values have been preserved or changed in different contexts of U.S. history.

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