

Contents:

1. Introduction to A-level History – The Making of a Superpower
2. Preparing for Unit 1K The Making of a Superpower
3. How to take notes at A-level

Section 1: Introduction to History A-level- Unit 1.

L.P. Hartley said:

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.”

You are going to travel to that country. The American Civil War ended in 1865. This was a the single most bloody conflict in US History and is considered by historians to be the beginning of America’s rise towards becoming a global super power on the world stage.

In this course you explore individuals, key ideas, technological advancements, the creation of new political parties and world shattering crises that have defined American history and continue to define an American psyche unique to any other history.

1K is the breadth unit:

Your course will be broken down into these 4 topics for each era of US history studied each year.

Topic One: The Era of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1890

- The weaknesses of Federal Government: Johnson, Grant and the failure of Radical Reconstruction
- The politics of the Gilded Age and the era of weak presidents; political corruption
- Social, regional and ethnic divisions: divisions within and between North, South and West; the position of African-Americans
- Economic growth and the rise of corporations: railways; oil; developments in agriculture; urbanisation
- Laissez-faire dominance and consequences; the impact of the ending of the frontier
- The limits of foreign engagement and continuation of isolationism: the continuation of the Monroe Doctrine; territorial consolidation (Alaska) and tensions over Canada

Topic Two: Populism, progressivism and imperialism, 1890–1920

- Political tensions and divisions: the reaction against Big Business at national and state level
- The ideas and influence of Bryan, Roosevelt and Taft; Populism, Progressivism and Wilson's New Freedom
- Economic change and developments: the rise of US dominance as an economic and industrial power and the consequences of this
- Social developments: mass immigration and urbanisation and their consequences; the position of African-Americans
- Foreign affairs: imperialism; engagement in international affairs; Spain and the Philippines; the Panama Canal; the First World War, neutrality and entry
- The USA by 1920: economic power; social and ethnic divisions; political reaction and renewed isolationism

Topic Three: Crisis of identity, 1920–1945

- Domestic politics: Harding, Coolidge and Republican conservatism; Hoover and the Depression
- FD Roosevelt and the New Deals: conflict of ideas over the role of the Federal Government
- The economy: boom to bust and recovery; structural weaknesses and the impact of the New Deals and the Second World War on economic recovery
- Social and cultural developments: 'the Jazz Age' in the 1920s; new social values and the role of women; the failure of prohibition and its significance; social impact of the Depression and the Second World War
- Social, regional and ethnic divisions: countryside versus city; divisions between North, West and South; African-Americans and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan
- The USA and international relations: the extent of isolationism; FDR and the end of isolationism and the Second World War

Topic Four: The Superpower, 1945–1975

- Domestic politics: Truman, Eisenhower and post-war reconstruction
- Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon; New Frontier; the Great Society; Nixon and Republican revival
- Economic change and developments: the rise of the consumer society and economic boom
- Ideological, social, regional and ethnic divisions: McCarthyism; civil rights; youth culture; protest and the mass media

- The USA and international relations: the Cold War and relations with the USSR and China; the Vietnam War
- The USA by 1975: its place as a Superpower; the limits of social cohesion; new cultural developments, including the role of women and the position of African-Americans

You will explore key questions as noted below:

- How did government, political authority and political parties change and develop?
- In what ways did the economy and society of the USA change and develop?
- How did the role of the USA in world affairs change?
- How important were ideas and ideology?
- How united was the USA during this period?
- How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

Alongside the Making of a Superpower you will also:

- Study UNIT 2S – The Making of Modern Britain (40%)
- Non-examined element (coursework) which will be on either Tudors or Crusades (unless you have topic pre-1700s that you're interested in. But we will discuss more as the year progresses) – (20%)

Section 2 – ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF US HISTORY

You do not have to complete all of these, but select at least three from A-D - from the Make notes / read / listen / watch / virtual visit sections it is best to do as many as you can.

Those in red are the recommended first activities.

Write up anything you find out as a 1/2 A4 page summary. Choose how you would like to represent your findings – diagram, graphic organiser or bullet point notes.

Which method will summarise the information best? Page 9 gives you ideas about how to make notes.

An interesting overview of America can be found at:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B002RI9LIA/ref=db_s_a_def_rwt_hsch_v_api_tkin_p1_i0

This is not our core text book, but it is a valuable resource for extra research into any of the topics below.

Another valuable overview of America can be found at:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Penguin-History-United-States-America-ebook/dp/B002RI920M/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=hugh+brogan&qid=1623136419&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

Background

1) Read and make notes: These are textbooks and are meant to be accessible to A Level Students. I recommend that you complete activity within these textbooks as well.



- a) J de Pennington, Modern America: 1865 to the Present, Hodder, 2005
- b) D Murphy et al, Flagship History - United States 1776-1992, Collins, 2001

2) Listen to:



- a) American History by Topics:
<https://open.spotify.com/show/5sJJAhHR3az1qfyllwioy> - The Monday American: A History podcast by Andrew Gehrt. This is a podcast that discuss key events within US History. Some episode will be out of our timeframe but can be useful for contextual knowledge.
- b) **The study of History:**
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00gryrx> - **History of History** - Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss how the writing of history has changed over time, from ancient epics to medieval hagiographies and modern deconstructions.

A. 1865-1920: Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, The Progressive Era and WW1

1. Make notes on:



- a) Paul Scott Corbett's US History - <https://openstax.org/details/books/us-history> (Download as a PDF).

Focus on chapters 16 - 23.

2. Listen to and make notes on:



- a) US History Repeated - <https://open.spotify.com/show/31ySrZziXlfWpN7rgbAcFO>

Specifically listen to the following episodes:

- Abraham Lincoln: His Life, presidency and assassination
- Reconstruction and the presidency of Andrew Johnson

- Presidency and Life of Ulysses S Grant
- Presidency of Rutherford B Hayes
- US Expansion and Manifest Destiny
- The Industrial Revolution
- Western Expansion and the Transcontinental Railroad

3. Watch



a) Henry Louis Gates – Many Rivers to Cross

Episode 3 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhF9j7wwjRM>

Episode 4 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NQ7Rf1H50>

b) Ken Burns – The West.

Episode 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-
jfXuNP4Kc&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-
jfXuNP4Kc&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=2)

Episode 3:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sXKrjukHPs&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=3>

Episode 4:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUy3wdy2ACc&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=4>

Episode 5:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIYATwSMRsU&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=5>

Episode 6:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrTKBL7LnYw&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=6>

Episode 7:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fh_8r0pq4Bs&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=7

Episode 8:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epkx0lobUb4&list=PLXKLYIH9Cw8sq5XGC1akjPg2u4V66OFpo&index=8>

C) Ken Burns – The Roosevelts

Episode 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzjK6WkgZfE>

Episode 2 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8iE8g0Z_Hk

Episode 3 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cx5J9o6nAk>

B. 1920-1975: Boom and Bust, WW1, Post War America and Conflict aboard and at home

Make Notes



a). Paul Scott Corbett's US History - <https://openstax.org/details/books/us-history> (Download as a PDF)

Focus on chapters 24 - 30.

2. Read



a) **The Grapes of Wrath** by John Steinbeck

b) **The Great Gatsby** by F Scott Fitzgerald

c) **The Invisible Man** by Ralph Emerson

d) **On the Road** by Jack Kerouac

3. Watch



a) The Century: America's Time

Episode 3 -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN7ftyZiqYs&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=3

Episode 4 -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSfzFWU5LbY&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=4

Episode 5 -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWg2xghlbnc&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=5

Episode 6 -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPP0ae2zrXY&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=7

Episode 7 -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VdXTw4q6y8&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=8

Episode 8 -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VdXTw4q6y8&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=8

Episode 9 – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93iBar-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93iBar-VrqA&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=10)

[VrqA&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93iBar-VrqA&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=10)

Episode 10 - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jET2qR8Y-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jET2qR8Y-Ng&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=11)

[Ng&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jET2qR8Y-Ng&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=11)

Episode 11-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4clvv5FH0FA&list=PLvGgZ5v2o_N8dDogxreL2-NbnfKHgHxqY&index=12

b) Henry Louis Gate – Many Rivers to Cross Episode 5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiwLt96cGqo>

c) Ken Burns – The Roosevelts

Episode 4 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikkvnADheuc&t=220s>

Episode 5 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOs6amWZm_0

Episode 6 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLYTWURqll0>

Episode 7 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7Y_1YQ3Nil

4. Listen to and make notes on:



a) Renegades: Born in the USA -

<https://open.spotify.com/show/42xagXCUDsFO6a0lcHoTlv>



5. Visual Learning:

• http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/20th.asp

• <http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory>

- <http://backstoryradio.org/>
- <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/>
- <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
- <http://www.flowofhistory.com/units>
- <http://sheg.stanford.edu/us>

FURTHER READING

The following books are excellent in extending your knowledge and grasping the content of the course:

P Boyer, *American History: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP, 2012

P Clements, *Prosperity, Depression and the New Deal*, Hodder, 2005

R Dallek, *Hail to the Chief*, Oxford University Press, 1996

H Evans, *The American Century*, Random House, 1998

H Zinn, *The Twentieth Century: A People's History*, SOS Free Stock, 2003

Useful skills for further education

- 1) The Open University have a number of free online course.
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>
You can filter by selecting History and the Arts.
Here are a few to get you started:
 - a. Open University: Extending your thinking skills
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/extending-and-developing-your-thinking-skills/content-section-0?intro=1>
 - b. Open University : What is good writing?
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/culture/literature-and-creative-writing/what-good-writing/content-section-0?intro=1>
 - c. Open University: History of Reading: An introduction to reading in the past
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/culture/literature-and-creative-writing/history-reading-introduction-reading-the-past/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- 2) The National Archives:
 - a. Focus on film as an information source
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/focuson/film/>
- 3) Articles
 - a. Synoptic essays
<https://www.history.org.uk/student/categories/916/resource/3210/what-is-a-synoptic-essay-and-how-do-i-write-one>

If you think you might want to study a Humanities subject at Uni – then try
<https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/applying-to-univ/resource-hub/?category=humanities>

Section 3 - Taking notes at A-level

During classes and for home learning you will be expected to take notes on a broad range of topics and case studies, therefore it is important that you arrange and structure these notes in a way that is both informative and easy to revise from when required. The more organised you are with your note taking the easier your revision will be.

To help you with note taking at A-level below are some different note taking and revision strategies that you should be familiarising yourselves with. Not every format will work for you but it is important that you establish good practice. Notes are not about writing down everything they are about recording the key information As you go through the resources above try some of the different note taking strategies below:

1. The outline method:

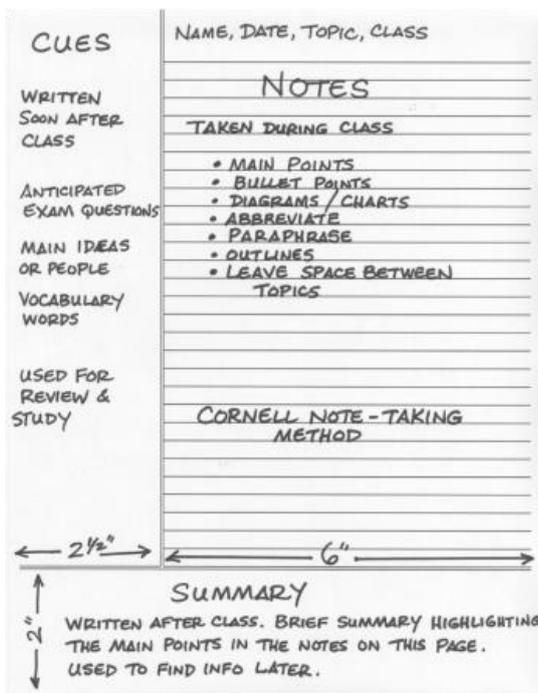
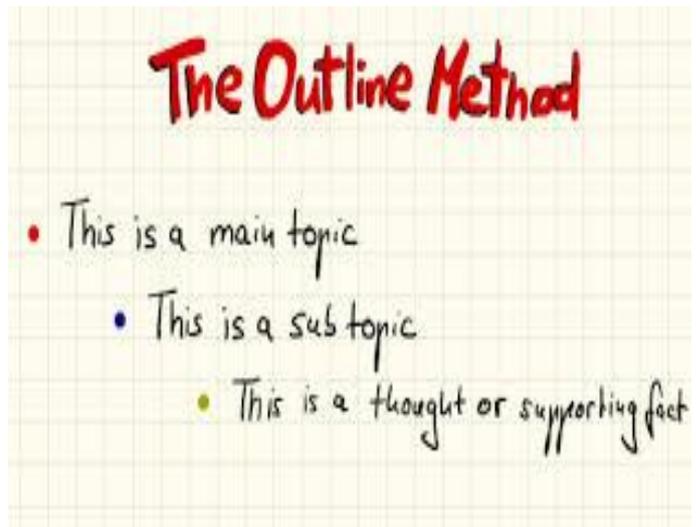
One of the best and most popular methods, it lets you organise notes in a structured form and break up different topics and their subtopics. Main topics go on the far left and add subtopics below using indents.

Pros:

- Highlights points in a logical way
- Reduces reviewing and editing time
- Gives a clear structure.

Cons:

- Doesn't work well if the lesson or resource jumps between topics.



2. The Cornell Note:

<http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/cornell-note-taking-system/>

One you may be familiar with from GCSE. A very structured form of note taking with a clear page layout, all the main notes from class go in the main note taking section, the small left hand column is for main topics or questions, and the section at the bottom allows you to summarise your learning.

Pros:

- A quick way to organise and review notes
- Very systematic
- Cuts down reviewing time

Cons:

- Requires preparation beforehand
- Needs time for reviewing and summarising after

the lesson.

3. The Boxing Method:

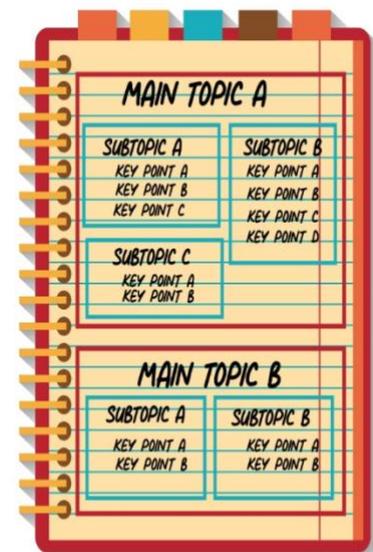
A less common method but becoming more popular. A dedicated box is assigned for each section of notes, with smaller boxes used for each sub section. Best used when doing digital notes but can still be used for hand written work or when reviewing notes from a lesson.

Pros:

- Segregates and organises information
- Allows you to focus on one box at a time when revising

Cons:

- Not east to do during a live lesson
- Doesn't work well if no overall topics can be assigned to groups.



4. The Mapping Method:

Mind mapping is one of the most common forms of note taking, and is best used when there is a large amount of content around a topic, for instance tectonics has a large number of volcanic and seismic case studies. Mind mapping is also useful to show the relationships and links between different sub topics.

There are two types of mind mapping you can use, a traditional **mind map** (spider diagram) or a **flow line map**.

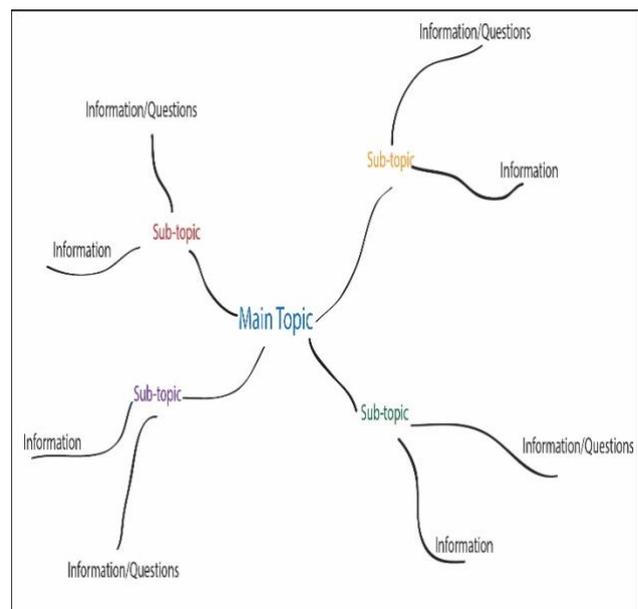
A traditional mind map is excellent for breaking down large case studies or key ideas, whilst a flow line map is an excellent visual way of outlining geographic processes.

Pros:

- Visually appealing
- Detailed information in a concise form
- Easy editing of notes

Cons:

- Can run out of space if notes are too detailed
- Can be time consuming to create.



There is no definitive way to take notes and you will naturally fall into a structure that is natural for you during lessons.