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Welcome, students! Here are thirty-eight short essays from [History Now](#) [9], an online publication from Gilder Lehrman. Each piece is written by a prominent historian and addresses a key topic in US history. The readings are designed to provide you with more information on subjects you are likely to see on the AP US History Exam in the DBQ and/or FRQ sections.



[10]

Essay

[The Columbian Exchange](#) [10]

[11] Millions of years ago, continental drift carried the Old World and New Worlds apart, splitting North and South America from Eurasia and Africa. That...



[12]

Essay

[Change and Crisis: North America on the Eve of the European Invasion](#) [12]

[13] It was around the year 1450. A young man was living alone in the dense forest somewhere southeast of Lake Ontario because there was not enough...



Essay

[Jamestown and the Founding of English America](#) [14]

Shortly before Christmas 1606, three small ships left London's Blackwall docks to establish a settlement on Chesapeake Bay, in North America. The largest of the ships, the heavily armed, 120-ton merchantman *Susan Constant*, carried...

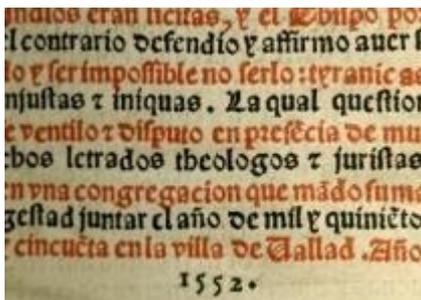


[15]

Essay

[The Colonial Virginia Frontier and International Native American Diplomacy](#) [15]

Telling the story of Native Americans and colonial Virginians is a complex challenge clouded by centuries of mythology. The history of early settlement is dominated by the story of a preteen Pocahontas saving the life of a courageous John Smith....



[16]

Essay

[Indian Slavery in the Americas](#) [16]

[17] The story of European colonialism in the Americas and its victimization of Africans and Indians follows a central paradigm in most textbooks. The African...



[18]

Essay

[Unruly Americans in the Revolution](#) [18]

[19] Nearly all of the blockbuster biographies of the Founding Fathers?whether the subject is George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, or John Adams?portray the...



[20]

Essay

[The Indians? War of Independence](#) [20]

[21] In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson clearly described the role of American Indians in the American Revolution. In...



[22]

Essay

[The Righteous Revolution of Mercy Otis Warren](#) [22]

Seven months after British Regulars marched on Lexington and Concord, three months after King George III declared the colonies in a state of rebellion, and a month after British artillery leveled the town of Falmouth (now Portland, Maine), even...



[23]

Essay

[The Antifederalists: The Other Founders of the American Constitutional Tradition?](#) [23]

The Great Debate

The publication of the Constitution in September 1787 inaugurated one of the most vigorous political campaigns in American history. In the process of arguing over the merits of the new plan of government, Americans not only...



[24]

Essay

[The Supreme Court Then and Now](#) [24]

The framers of the United States Constitution made clear that the document was to be regarded as fundamental law. Article VI states that the Constitution and those laws which shall be made in pursuance thereof (as well as treaties) shall be...



[25]

Essay

[The Legal Status of Women, 1776-1830](#) [25]

State law rather than federal law governed women's rights in the early republic. The authority of state law meant that much depended upon where a woman lived and the particular social circumstances in her region of the country. The disparity in...



Essay

[The Presidential Election of 1800: A Story of Crisis, Controversy, and Change](#) [26]

[27]Nasty political mud-slinging. Campaign attacks and counterattacks. Personal insults. Outrageous newspaper invective. Dire predictions of...



[28]

Essay

[Andrew Jackson and the Constitution](#) [28]

[29]In 1860, biographer James Parton concluded that Andrew Jackson was "a most law-defying, law obeying citizen." Such a statement is obviously contradictory...



[30]

Essay

[Andrew Jackson's Shifting Legacy](#) [30]

[31]Of all presidential reputations, Andrew Jackson's is perhaps the most difficult to summarize or explain. Most Americans recognize his name...



[32]

Essay

[Indian Removal](#) [32]

[33] In 1828 pressure was building among white Americans for the relocation of American Indians from...

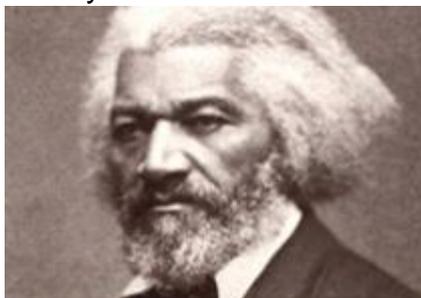


[34]

Essay

[Abolition and Antebellum Reform](#) [34]

[35] When the Boston abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson looked back on the years before the Civil...



[36]

Essay

[Allies for Emancipation? Black Abolitionists and Abraham Lincoln](#) [36]

[37] Abraham Lincoln was not an original advocate of abolition. In fact we know that his journey to what he called 'the central act of my administration, and...



[38]

Essay

[Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights](#) [38]

Voting Rights on the Eve of the Revolution

The basic principle that governed voting in colonial America was that voters should have a "stake in society." Leading colonists associated democracy with disorder and mob rule, and believed that the vote...



[39]

Essay

[Women and the Early Industrial Revolution in the United States](#) [39]

The industrial revolution that transformed western Europe and the United States during the course of the nineteenth century had its origins in the introduction of power-driven machinery in the English and Scottish textile industries in the second...

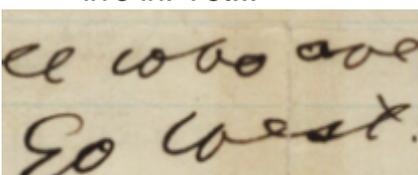


[40]

Essay

[A New Look at the Great Plains](#) [40]

To most Americans the Great Plains are the Great Flyover, or maybe the Great Drivethrough. Viewed from a window seat the plains seem nearly devoid of interest, something to get across enroute to someplace far worthier to explore or live in. Yet...



Essay

[Born Modern: An Overview of the West](#) [41]

[42] The present American West is a creation of history rather than geography. There has never been a single West; American Wests come and go....



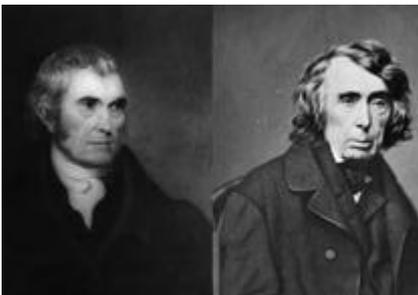
[43]

Essay

[The Underground Railroad and the Coming of War](#) [43]

[44]

The Underground Railroad was a metaphor. Yet many textbooks treat it as an official name for a secret network that once helped...



[45]

Essay

[The Marshall and Taney Courts: Continuities and Changes](#) [45]

Though the first holders of the job thought it more a burden than a position of honor or power, the office of chief justice of the United States has a pivotal role in the American constitutional system, thanks mainly to John Marshall (1755?1835...



Essay

[Abraham Lincoln and Jacksonian Democracy](#) [46]

[47] Abraham Lincoln was, for most of his political career, a highly partisan Whig. As long as the Whig Party existed, he never supported the...



[48]

Essay

[Lincoln's Interpretation of the Civil War](#) [48]

[49] On March 4, 1865, Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office for the second time. The setting itself...



[50]

Essay

[Reconstruction and the Battle for Woman Suffrage](#) [50]

[51] The origins of the American women's suffrage movement are commonly dated from the public protest meeting held in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. At...



[52]

Essay

[Transcontinental Railroads: Compressing Time and Space](#) [52]

[53] Many of our modern clichés about the impact of technology, particularly about the consequences of the Internet and telecommunications, first appeared as...



[54]

Essay

[The Myth of the Frontier: Progress or Lost Freedom](#) [54]

[55] For two centuries the frontier West was the setting for America's most enduring form of popular...



[56]

Essay

[The Square Deal: Theodore Roosevelt and the Themes of Progressive Reform](#) [56]

[57] Progressivism arrived at a moment of crisis for the United States. As the nineteenth century came to a close, just decades after the Civil...

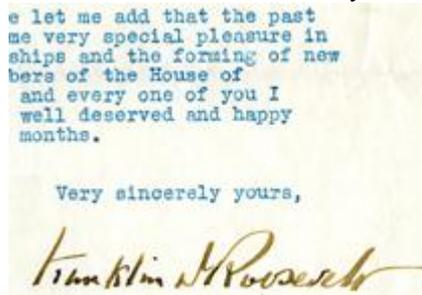


[58]

Essay

[Theodore Roosevelt: The Making of a Progressive Reformer](#) [58]

[59] Theodore Roosevelt's interesting life often tempts biographers to write about him with the history left out. His story offers plenty of...



[60]

Essay

[The Hundred Days and Beyond: What Did the New Deal Accomplish?](#) [60]

[61]

There wasn't anybody in that entire Brains Trust apparently that had given any thought?they had absolutely no plans?or any real...



[62]

Essay

[The World War II Home Front](#) [62]

World War II had a profound impact on the United States. Although no battles occurred on the American mainland, the war affected all phases of American life. It required unprecedented efforts to coordinate strategy and tactics with other members...



Essay

[Patriotism Crosses the Color Line: African Americans in World War II](#) [63]

[64] Although African Americans have been the victims of racial oppression throughout the...



[65]

Essay

[The Civil Rights Movement: Major Events and Legacies](#) [65]

From the earliest years of European settlement in North America, whites enslaved and oppressed black people. Although the Civil War finally brought about the abolition of slavery, a harsh system of white supremacy persisted thereafter. In the...



[66]

Essay

[Different Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement](#) [66]

In 1984 Jimmy Carter reflected on growing up in the segregated South. He recalled that as a young child, he, like many white children, had had an African American child as his closest friend. The two children spent all their play time together....



Essay

[The Consequences of Defeat in Vietnam](#) [67]

As historians of the Vietnam War know all too well, the amount of documentation about the conflict available in US archives—to say nothing of foreign repositories—can be overwhelming. To master even a small slice of this material is a herculean...



[68]

Essay

[Cold War, Warm Hearth](#) [68]

In the summer of 1959, a young couple married and spent their honeymoon in a fallout shelter. *Life* magazine featured the "sheltered honeymoon" with a photograph of the duo smiling on their lawn, surrounded by dozens of canned goods and...



[69]

Essay

[Ronald Reagan and the End of the Cold War: The Debate Continues](#) [69]

For a British professor with more than a passing interest in US foreign policy and the role of the United States in ending the Cold War, it is indeed fascinating to observe how deeply divided opinion still remains over the part played in the...

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