

Virginia Middle School US History A

Course Overview

US History is the study of the people who lived in the Americas before European settlers arrived, how the United States was founded, and how it grew and changed over time. You might be familiar with some of the landmark events in this course, but keep reading anyway. There is always more you can learn about how the United States became a country and how it transformed into the nation that it is today.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the peoples who populated the American continent before the United States was formed.
- Understand the events that led up to the eventual revolution that led to the founding of the United States.
- Understand the many changes the United States underwent as it grew as a nation.
- Form opinions about various historical and social issues.
- Use historical databases to research topics of interest to you.

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Perform online research using various search engines and historical databases.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

Virginia Middle School US History A is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- notebook
- computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you keep on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
3 days: 2–4	Physical Geography of the Americas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>List major geographic zones of the North American continent.</i> • <i>Identify important features of the North American continent.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 5–7	Latitude, Longitude, Continents, and Oceans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use latitude and longitude to locate places in the world.</i> • <i>Locate the seven continents and five oceans.</i> 	Course Activity
2 days: 8–9	Settlement of the Americas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Compare and contrast theories of migration to North America.</i> • <i>Distinguish primary from secondary sources.</i> • <i>Identify characteristics of civilization.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 10–11	Human Cultures of the Americas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the cultures and lifestyles of North America’s native people prior to European contact.</i> • <i>Describe the unique traits of the native people of North America prior to European contact.</i> • <i>Identify how native people interacted with their environment prior to European contact.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 12–14	European Ambitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Characterize the politics of the Middle Ages in Europe and how they led to exploration.</i> • <i>Evaluate Europeans’ economic and political motivations for exploration.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 15–17	The Age of Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>List accomplishments of the major European powers during the Age of Exploration in the 15th and 16th centuries.</i> • <i>Identify key explorers and patrons who contributed to European exploration in the Americas in the 15th and 16th centuries.</i> • <i>Trace the geographic conflict between major European powers in the 15th and 16th centuries.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 18–20	African Roots of America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the location of West African trading societies before the 1500s.</i> • <i>Describe European trade encounters with African people before the 1500s.</i> • <i>Identify the foundations of the slave trade in the Americas, starting in the 1400s.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 21–22	The Columbian Exchange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the Columbian Exchange and its effect on global trade in the 1500s.</i> • <i>Evaluate the early impact of European settlement on the American Indian population in the 1500s.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 23–25	Spanish Exploration and Settlement of the Americas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify key early Spanish colonies in the Americas in the 1500s.</i> • <i>Explain the economic, social, and political motives of the Spanish conquistadors and settlers in the 1500s.</i> • <i>Identify cases of cooperation and conflict between indigenous peoples of the Americas and Spanish colonial settlers in the 1500s.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 26–28	French Settlement of the Americas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify key early French colonies in the Americas in the 1600s.</i> • <i>Explain the economic, social, and political motives of early settlers in the 1600s.</i> • <i>Identify cases of cooperation and conflict between American Indians and colonial settlers in the 1600s.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 29–31	The Economy and Geography of the South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the colonies that made up the American South and trace the development of each through 1750.</i> • <i>Compare and contrast the lives of free and indentured immigrants who came to the American South from Europe.</i> • <i>Describe the South's economic system of cash crops.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 32–33	The South: Politics and Religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify key figures in the South's colonial history.</i> • <i>Explain the emerging class structure in the South during the 1600s and 1700s.</i> • <i>Evaluate attempts at colonial self-government in the South.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
2 days: 34–35	New England Economy and Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the colonies of New England and characterize their development through 1750.</i> • <i>Describe the geography of New England and its importance to the region.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 36–38	Life in Colonial New England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify key figures in New England colonial history.</i> • <i>Explain the role of religion in New England life.</i> • <i>Evaluate attempts at colonial self-government in the New England colonies.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 39–41	Middle Colonies: Economy and Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the Middle Colonies and characterize their development through 1750.</i> • <i>Describe the geography of the Middle Colonies and their importance to the region.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 42–43	Life in the Middle Colonies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify key figures in the Middle Colonies' history.</i> • <i>Explain the importance of diversity in life.</i> • <i>Evaluate attempts at colonial self-government in New England.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 44–45	Slavery Grows in the Colonies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe economic motivations for slavery in the Americas.</i> • <i>Describe the Atlantic slave trade.</i> • <i>Describe the state of minority groups in Colonial America during the 18th century.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 46–47	History in Colonial Architecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explain the purpose and importance of the National Register of Historic Places.</i> • <i>Identify and describe an existing example of a historic structure from the colonial era in the United States.</i> 	Lab
1 day: 48	Midterm	Assessment
3 days: 49–51	The Great Awakening and the Enlightenment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trace the development of the First Great Awakening in the 13 colonies.</i> • <i>Identify the major ideas of the Enlightenment.</i> • <i>Connect the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening's influence to colonial identity.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 52–54	Tensions Between European Powers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evaluate the growing importance of the American colonies to Britain during the 18th century.</i> • <i>Explain the main reasons for conflict between the European powers in North America in the 18th century.</i> • <i>Identify the major causes of the French and Indian War.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 55–57	The French and Indian War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trace the events and course of the French and Indian War until its outcome in 1763.</i> • <i>Describe the participation of the American colonies in the French and Indian War.</i> • <i>Evaluate the changing relationship between Great Britain and the American colonies during and after the French and Indian War.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 58–60	Taxation Without Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Compare and contrast views that patriots, loyalists, and other colonists held toward the British government in the 1750s and 1760s.</i> • <i>List economic and political grievances the colonists had toward Great Britain in the 1750s and 1760s.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 61–63	The Revolutionaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the American colonies' reasons for separation from Great Britain.</i> • <i>Identify the contributions of social minority groups to the Revolutionary movement.</i> • <i>Describe the role various political groups played in the Revolutionary movement.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 64–65	Declaration of Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the events leading up to the first battles of the American fight for independence from Great Britain.</i> • <i>Express the purpose and explain the structure of the Declaration of Independence.</i> • <i>Evaluate immediate and long-term consequences of the Declaration of Independence.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 66–68	The Revolutionary War: 1775–1777 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the course of the Revolutionary War, including major battles, commanders, and events.</i> • <i>Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Continental and British forces.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 69–71	The Revolutionary War: 1777–1783 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the events that brought European aid to the colonists.</i> • <i>Identify the reasons why the Revolutionary War ended when it did.</i> • <i>Identify the contributions of social minority groups to the Revolutionary movement.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 72–74	The Articles of Confederation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the balance of political power in the 13 colonies after the Revolutionary War.</i> • <i>Identify the founders' motivations for creating a weak central government.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 75–76	Constitutional Conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explain regional tensions at the Constitutional Convention and the compromises that eased them.</i> • <i>Describe key components of the Constitution.</i> • <i>Identify the major issues debated and the compromises made in creating the United States government.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 77–78	Ratifying the Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evaluate arguments for and against the Bill of Rights.</i> • <i>Evaluate the process of ratification of the Constitution.</i> • <i>List and describe the content of the Bill of Rights.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 79–81	George Washington Establishes the Executive Branch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the establishment of the US presidency and federal government under George Washington.</i> • <i>Describe the challenges Washington and his cabinet faced in creating a successful government.</i> • <i>Evaluate the impact of George Washington's presidency on the national office and the country.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 82–83	Parties and Diplomacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evaluate major international events during the Washington and Adams presidencies.</i> • <i>Trace the development of the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties.</i> • <i>Describe the early US government's relations with Great Britain and France.</i> 	Lesson
3 days: 84–86	Jefferson's Presidency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>List major policies of Jefferson's presidential term.</i> • <i>Identify the role of John Marshall's Supreme Court in interpreting the federal government's power.</i> • <i>Assess the consequences of the 1800 presidential elections on national politics.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
2 days: 87–88	Diplomacy Between 1800–1812 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify major international events affecting the US in the early 1800s.</i> • <i>Analyze the main causes for the War of 1812.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 89	Semester Review	
1 day: 90	Final Exam	Assessment

Virginia Middle School US History B

Course Overview

US History is the study of the people who lived in the Americas before European settlers arrived, how the United States was founded, and how it grew and changed over time. You might be familiar with some of the landmark events in this course, but keep reading anyway. There is always more you can learn about how the United States became a country and how it transformed into the nation that it is today.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain the first steps the United States took in international diplomacy.
- Understand the events that led up to the American Civil War.
- Understand the many changes the United States underwent as it dealt with Reconstruction and social change.
- Form opinions about various historical and social issues.

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Perform online research using various search engines and historical databases.

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Credit Value

Virginia Middle School US History B is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- notebook
- computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

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Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
3 days: 2–4	The War of 1812 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the main causes of the War of 1812.</i> • <i>Characterize American Indian involvement in the War of 1812, including support for British troops.</i> • <i>Identify the major battles, leaders, and events of the War of 1812.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 5–6	The Era of Good Feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the consequences of major Supreme Court decisions during the early to mid-1800s.</i> • <i>Assess the immediate impact of the War of 1812 on American nationalism, political parties, and foreign relations.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 7–8	America Enters the World Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the events that led the US to acquire Spanish Florida.</i> • <i>Assess the importance of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine on American diplomacy of the 1800s.</i> • <i>Assess the Missouri Compromise and its impact on the political era.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 9–10	The Traits of a President <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the family and social backgrounds of the first four American presidents and the three most recent presidents.</i> • <i>Describe the personal traits and experiences of the first and recent presidents.</i> • <i>Compare and contrast the lives of recent presidents with the first presidents.</i> • <i>Write a personal narrative comparing and contrasting your own life to two presidents' early lives.</i> 	Lab
2 days: 11–12	Jacksonian Democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe changes to voting rights and the party system under Jacksonian Democracy.</i> • <i>Compare and contrast Jacksonian Democracy with Jeffersonian Democracy.</i> • <i>Evaluate Jackson's characterization as the president of the common man.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
2 days: 13–14	Indian Removal Policy in the Jacksonian Era <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify federal and state policies on the removal and resettlement of Cherokee Indians during the Jacksonian era.</i> • <i>Assess the impact of the removal policies on the Cherokee and other American Indian nations.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 15–16	Jackson: Bank Wars and Nullification Crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify Jackson’s role in the dissolution of the Second National Bank in the 1830s.</i> • <i>Briefly summarize the Nullification Crisis of 1832 and the outcome.</i> • <i>Connect the impact of the tariff policy and states’ rights to the regional differences and evolution of political parties in the 1830s.</i> • <i>Trace the legacy of Andrew Jackson’s presidency on US economic policies of the 1830s.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 17–18	Industry and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe new innovations in the United States from 1800 through 1860.</i> • <i>Identify new means of transportation (steamboats, railroads, canals) and their effects on western expansion, settlement, and society.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 19–20	Regional Identities and Immigration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trace the causes of western expansion and settlement in the middle of the 19th century.</i> • <i>Explain the impact of the cotton gin on agriculture and the economics of slavery in the South.</i> • <i>Describe how the North became more industrial in the middle of the 19th century.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 21–22	Political Parties of the 19th Century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trace the birth, life, and (where applicable) death of major political parties from 1790–1860.</i> • <i>Identify the major political issues that divided and united Americans from 1790–1860.</i> • <i>Identify and describe contemporary major political parties and the issues that divide them.</i> 	Lab
2 days: 23–24	The Second Great Awakening and Social Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>List the main causes and characteristics of the Second Great Awakening.</i> • <i>Connect the themes of the Second Great Awakening to social reform movements.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
2 days: 25–26	Abolition and Women’s Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the rise of the abolitionist movement in the 19th century. • Identify the leaders of the suffrage movement and their goals of the 1840s. • Trace the origins of the women’s suffrage movement in the 19th century. • Describe the importance of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. 	Lesson
2 days: 27–28	American Identity and Culture of the 19th Century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify common themes in American art and philosophy in the 19th century. • Describe the importance of the ideas of transcendentalism and self-determinism in the 19th century. • Trace the growth and motivations of nativists and the Know-Nothing party in the mid-19th century. 	Lesson
3 days: 29–31	African Americans in an Unequal America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the lives of enslaved Africans in the 18th and 19th centuries, including common spiritual systems and resistance efforts. • Identify strategies employed by pro-slavery and antislavery groups to preserve or overturn the institution during the early and mid-19th century. 	Lesson
2 days: 32–33	Social Issues and Civic Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a current social issue. • Research the causes and effects of a specific contemporary social issue. • Present potential solutions to a specific social issue. • Apply research in order to write a letter or essay that analyzes the issue and proposes solutions to the issue. 	Lab
2 days: 34–35	Westward Expansion and Regional Tensions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the events leading up to the Mexican-American War of 1846. • Describe the circumstances surrounding the US purchase of the Oregon Territory in 1846. • Describe the effect the Mexican-American War had on westward expansion and the politics of slavery in the mid-19th century. 	Lesson
2 days: 36–37	The Compromise of 1850 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List reasons for the Compromise of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Law. • Describe the political impact of new states on the Union, including the debate over popular sovereignty during the 1850s. • Identify government policies in response to sectional differences in the 1850s. 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 38–40	Antislavery Resistance Increases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe rising tensions over slavery and abolition in the early to mid-19th century. • Describe resistance efforts of enslaved people and abolitionists in the early to mid-19th century. • Characterize the impact of these actions on American attitudes toward slavery in the early to mid-19th century. 	Lesson
3 days: 41–43	Southern Secession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the political, economic, and social reasons for the secession of the Southern states. • Account for the Lower South seceding months before the Upper South. 	Lesson
1 day: 44	Midterm	Assessment
3 days: 45–47	The Civil War Erupts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the North and South at the beginning of the American Civil War. • Identify key political and military leaders of the Civil War. • Identify and describe the major battles of the early Civil War. 	Lesson
3 days: 48–50	The Emancipation Proclamation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation and the war's shifting focus over time. • Describe the role of African Americans, both free and enslaved, during the Civil War. • Identify key battles and the major turning point of the war. 	Lesson
2 days: 51–52	Home Front Life in the Civil War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify characteristics of civilian life during the American Civil War. • Describe differences between home front life in the North and the South. • Analyze documents composed during the Civil War. • Produce a writing selection that applies knowledge of civilian life. 	Lab
3 days: 53–55	The End of the Civil War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List and describe the major battles of the later years of the American Civil War. • Identify key developments in the Civil War, including General Lee's surrender at Appomattox. • Describe the events leading to the death of President Abraham Lincoln. 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 56–58	Aftermath of the Civil War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the advances in warfare that occurred during the American Civil War and their impact on the war. • Identify the effect of the war on combatants, civilians, the environment, and the economy. • Compare and contrast the state of the South and North immediately following the war. 	Lesson
3 days: 59–61	Rebuilding the US: Politics of Reconstruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterize presidential and congressional plans for Reconstruction. • List causes and effects of President Johnson’s impeachment. • Describe racial segregation in the post-Reconstruction South. 	Lesson
3 days: 62–64	Rebuilding the US: Economics of Reconstruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the rise of sharecropping and tenant farming in the post-slavery South. • Trace the rise and growth of the Ku Klux Klan. • Describe the “New South” and the economic recovery of the region. 	Lesson
3 days: 65–67	The West Is Settled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the new states and territories from 1865–1900. • Identify the impact of the West on American culture. • List motivating factors for westward migration. • Trace the impact of the railroad on the settlement and development of the West. 	Lesson
3 days: 68–70	Indian Removal Policy in the Late 1800s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the US government’s American Indian policy in the mid-to late 1800s. • Evaluate the reaction of American Indians to encroachment on their lands and the response of the federal government. • Identify the struggles Indian Americans faced on reservations. 	Lesson
2 days: 71–72	Immigration in America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the importance of immigration to contemporary American culture. • Examine specific historical episodes of immigration to the United States. • Evaluate the experiences of one immigrant group in the U.S. • Describe your own family story as part of the wider landscape of immigration. 	Lab

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 73–75	Industry and Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the technological innovations that emerged during the Second Industrial Revolution. • Identify the expanding roles of key entrepreneurs, industrialists, and bankers in American society after 1865. • Explain how the rise of big business, heavy industry, and mechanized farming transformed the American economy after 1865. 	Lesson
3 days: 76–78	The Urbanization of America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterize new patterns of immigration at the turn of the 20th century. • Identify motivating factors in the movement of African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North and West in the late 1800s. • Evaluate the challenges and benefits of urban life in the late 1800s and early 1900s. 	Lesson
3 days: 79–81	Labor Movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the rise of the labor movement in the United States, including its leaders and major strikes and protests. • Identify the characteristics of the National Grange organization and its impact on farmers. • Explain the effect of the Greenback Party and the Populists on US politics. 	Lesson
4 days: 82–85	The Progressive Era <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the impact of the Progressive Movement on child labor, working conditions, and organized labor in general. • Evaluate the women’s suffrage and the temperance movements. • Trace the progressive actions of Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency toward corporations and conservation. 	Lesson
3 days: 86–88	New Foreign Policy and American Imperialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the reasons for the Spanish-American War. • Evaluate the impact of the Spanish-American War on the United States’ relationships with the European powers. • Characterize Theodore Roosevelt’s views on expansion and his impact on US foreign policy. 	Lesson
1 day: 89	Semester Review	
1 day: 90	Final Exam	Assessment