**The American Dream: Reality and Illusion 1945 - 1980**

This course helps you to acquire a detailed knowledge of an exciting period of historical change, enabling you to become familiar with the personalities and ideas which shaped and dominated the time.

Much of the content will be familiar to you from the Cold War unit in the GCSE course and from your broader general historical knowledge and understanding. However, understading history also required the piecing together of many different strands or themes, and depth studies demand an awareness of the interrelationship of a variety of perspectives, such as the poltical, economic , social, cultural and religious – as well as the individuals and ideas within a relatively short period of time.

Above all, this course help you to understand the USA today.

The USA section of the course is 40% of your overall mark (the other parts being 40% Tudors breadth study and 20% coursework). The course is divided into two parts – the first and second years roughly:

Part one: prosperity, inequality and Superpower status, 1945-1963

* 1. Truman and Post-war America, 1945-1952
  2. Eisenhower: tranquillity and crisis, 1952-1960
  3. John F Kennedy and the ‘New Frontier’, 1960-1963

1. Part two: challenges to the American Dream, 1963-1980
   1. The Johnson Presidency, 1963-1968
   2. Republican reaction: the Nixon Presidency, 1968-1974
   3. The USA after Nixon, 1974-1980

Before you begin any detailed research I would suggest trying to get a better understanding of the geography of America and its political structure. First of all read the Textbook introduction. You may also like to use some of the quizzes on Sporcle to learn the American states and the American presidents (challenge your friends to see who can complete the quizzes the quickest).

To prepare you to study the A level I would recommend first reading the relevant sections on Cliffs notes.

**The Rise of the Cold War 1945-1953**

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/the-rise-of-the-cold-war-19451953/the-cold-war-at-home>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/the-rise-of-the-cold-war-19451953/postwar-america>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/the-rise-of-the-cold-war-19451953/the-origins-of-the-cold-war>

**America in the Fifties**

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/america-in-the-fifties/american-foreign-policy>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/america-in-the-fifties/the-affluent-society>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/america-in-the-fifties/the-civil-rights-movement>

**The New Frontier and the Great Society**

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/the-new-frontier-and-the-great-society/the-counterculture-of-the-1960s>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/the-new-frontier-and-the-great-society/the-kennedy-years>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/the-new-frontier-and-the-great-society/johnson-and-the-great-society>

**From Nixon to Carter**

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/from-nixon-to-carter-19681980/america-in-the-1970s>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/from-nixon-to-carter-19681980/the-nixon-presidency>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/history/us-history-ii/from-nixon-to-carter-19681980/the-united-states-under-ford-and-carter>

Once you have completed your initial research you could research a little bit more on each of the presidents to get a general ideas of them. If you wanted you could make fact files on each president and try to include the key information from the specification. This research could take the form of watching documentaries, reading books or articles or listening to podcasts.

If you want to watch documentaries then I would suggest watching the ‘Cold War’ documentaries for foreign policy and the ‘Eyes on the Prize’ documentaries for Civil Rights. These documentaries/links to the documentaries can be found in the Documentaries folder.

If you prefer podcasts I would recommend those from the Historical Association here: <https://www.history.org.uk/podcasts/categories/world-modern> You may need a log in to access please use the school login: Username: [KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk) and password: history123. There are many in this section on America so just select some that sound interesting.

Whilst listening/reading and watching please bear in mind the following key themes identified t by AQA to frame your study:

1. American identity at home and abroad
2. Anti-communism
3. Social equality, ethnic identities
4. Fderal versus states’rights
5. The nature of democracy in a pluralist society
6. Political protest
7. The power of the media

If you would like to complete some specific research prior to your study I would suggest choosing one of these themes and exploring them in the presidencies of Truman or Eisenhower as these will be the monarchs that you study first.

If you want to start researching your topic the historical Association A Level USA guide is available at:

<https://www.history.org.uk/student/categories/915/module/8701/a-level-topic-guide-usa-in-the-20th-century>

Use the same login details as above to access if necessary but you can also create yourself a basic login for this guide too. If you would like me to have a look at any of your research or you have any questions please don’t hesitate to email me on [kmurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:kmurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)

Best wishes

Mr Murphy