STUDYWALKS · COURSE SYLLABUS

History of the United States I — High School Course with CLEP Preparation

The period from colonization to Reconstruction set the terms of most later American debates.

CREDIT LABEL	HOURS GOAL	STUDYWALKS LEARNING HOURS	SUGGESTED OFFLINE HOURS
1.0 credit	**120 h**	**31.5 h**	**88.5 h**
high school, with the study plan	the 1.0-credit convention	measured runtime plus assessment time	reading, review and writing

31.5 h StudyWalks (7.3 h of lessons, 17.4 h of lectures, 6.6 h of quizzes and exams) + **88.5 h** suggested offline study = **120 h**. 820 lessons in 17 units; prepares for the CLEP History of the United States I exam.

High school credit is granted by the homeschool parent under the state's rules. StudyWalks supplies the record: hours, scores and this syllabus. The credit label is a suggestion; the parent makes the final call.

Course contents

Unit	Title and lecture topics	Lessons	Lecture
1	**The Americas, Europe, and West Africa Before 1492** How people came · What Mesoamerica shared · The Aztec · The Inca · North of Mesoamerica · Two ideas of land · Europe before it sailed · Why Europe looked west · West Africa before the trade · What changed about bondage	28	27 min
2	**Early Globalization: The Atlantic World, 1492–1650** Portugal builds the route · Columbus, and who got the name · Why Tenochtitlán fell · The rest of the conquest, and what it paid for · The Reformation · Puritans and the wars of religion · England tries to land · France and the Dutch · Who did the work · The economic argument · What crossed, both ways	32	30 min
3	**Creating New Social Orders: Colonial Societies, 1500–1700** Spanish Florida · New Mexico and the spiritual conquest · The Pueblo Revolt · New Netherland · New France · Virginia survives · Who worked the tobacco · The Anglo-Powhatan wars · Maryland, and what comes next · Bacon's Rebellion, and what followed it · Why the Puritans came · What the colony did with dissent · King Philip's War · The scale of the trade · Native strategy, not Native passivity · What colonisation did to the land	40	45 min (2 parts)
4	**Rule Britannia! The English Empire, 1660–1763** The Restoration and the Carolinas · New York, and a fifty-year strategy · Pennsylvania · The trade laws · James II overreaches · The Glorious Revolution and what it settled · Slavery across the English empire · New York, 1741 · A society growing more British · The Great Awakening · The Enlightenment · Georgia · The wars for empire	36	40 min (2 parts)

Unit	Title and lecture topics	Lessons	Lecture
5	**Imperial Reforms and Colonial Protest, 1763–1774** The bill arrives · The frontier the victory created · The Sugar Act, and what the grievance actually was · The Stamp Act · Protest becomes popular · Townshend · Four more acts, and the colonial answer · Boston, occupied · From the Gaspée to the tea · The Coercive Acts · Disaffection · The First Continental Congress	34	39 min (2 parts)
6	**America's War for Independence, 1775–1783** From raids to a war · Two documents and a proclamation · Two strategies, and a city lost · Winter · Saratoga, and what it bought · A hard winter, and a new theatre · The southern campaign · The peace · The Loyalists · Who else fought, and for whom · What it cost, and what it hardened	34	42 min (2 parts)
7	**Creating Republican Governments, 1776–1790** What a republic was, and was not · Women in the new republic · Slavery after the Revolution · Land and conscience · The Articles, and why they failed · Land ordinances and a rebellion · The Convention · What was checked, and how narrowly it passed	30	32 min
8	**Growing Pains: The New Republic, 1790–1820** Finishing the frame · The debt, and Hamilton's answer · Implied powers and what they built · Two visions, two parties · Who the republic admitted · The Atlantic pulls the republic apart · Haiti · Three risings, and one test · Crisis abroad, laws at home · The Acts enforced, and the states' answer · The party of strict construction takes power · The case that made the courts powerful · Louisiana · After the purchase · The grievance that would not go away · The west, and the case for war · The fighting · What the war destroyed, and what it left	58	1 h 6 min (2 parts)
9	**Industrial Transformation in the North, 1800–1850** The first mills · Lowell · What the mills displaced · Time · What workers did about it · A market economy, running on credit · The Panic of 1819 · The inventors · Roads, and the ditch that moved a country · From canals to rails · What transport changed · The economic elite · The self-made · The middle class · What the middle class thought about slavery · The working class · Why the workers opposed abolition · Four classes, four views	56	1 h 4 min (2 parts)
10	**Jacksonian Democracy, 1820–1840** The election of 1824 · The American System · The tariff, and what it was really about · Deference ends, and the franchise changes · The machine · 1828 · What he did with the offices · A social quarrel with a political chain · The road to nullification · The crisis · The Bank War · The crash, and the party it made · Removal · The courts · A holding ignored, and the removal that followed · Resistance in the north · Culture as cause · The observer who named the danger · The first modern election · The log cabin · What the era settled	62	1 h 17 min (3 parts)
11	**A Nation on the Move: Westward Expansion, 1800s** What was bought, and who was sent to look · The journey · Florida, and the line that made a war · Private armies · Missouri: the amendment · Which chamber · The settlement · What the vote revealed · Texas begins · Why Americans went · The break with Mexico · The revolution · The republic, and the wait · The doctrine and the election · Oregon · The boundary, and the war · The question the administration could not answer · The campaigns · What was taken, and what was promised · Gold · Who was driven out · Free soil · The rival doctrine, and the party · The settlement, and what it was worth	64	1 h 18 min (3 parts)

Unit	Title and lecture topics	Lessons	Lecture
12	**Cotton is King: The Antebellum South, 1800–1860** King Cotton, in numbers · The route, and the land it took · The working year · Moving the crop · The domestic trade · One sale, close to whole · What the region could not make, and who cleared it · Paternalism, and what was done with it · Control · What the law refused · What they made, and kept · One witness in the field · Free Black people · Risings · The debate Virginia held · The second middle passage · Two more witnesses · Who owned the South · The classes below, and what held them · Reach, and an unsettled question · Honour · The household, and two kinds of women · The argument in print · The expansionist goal · Cuba · Nicaragua	68	1 h 31 min (3 parts)
13	**Antebellum Idealism and Reform Impulses, 1820s–1850s** The Second Great Awakening · A doctrine reversed · Finney, and the ground he burned · Transcendentalism · Why communities formed · The same premise, the other way · Reason instead of revelation · The Mormons · Where the reform impulse went first · Temperance escalates · Women, and the law that followed · Immigration, on the witnesses' evidence · Three answers to slavery · Turner's shadow, and the man who defined abolition · The reaction · Politics, and the movement's most famous voice · The women who organised · Organising separately, and speaking publicly · How women got in at all · The comparison, and where it led · The body and the mind · Seneca Falls · The woman who challenged both movements · The problem with the speech · Where the argument went	62	1 h 26 min (3 parts)
14	**Troubled Times: The Sectional Crisis, 1850–1861** What was in dispute · The four speeches · Deadlock, and how it broke · Five bills · The Act in operation · Escape · Three reactions · Whose states' rights · The lull, and why it ended · Three kinds of antislavery · The Act · The parties break · Popular sovereignty on the ground · Lawrence and Pottawatomie · The violence spreads · The other party, and the election · A freedom suit · The ruling · The debates · Ottawa · The answer that cost a presidency · 1859 · The party breaks in two · Forty percent	62	1 h 29 min (3 parts)
15	**The Civil War, 1860–1865** Causes, and the last attempt · Secession · What they wrote down · What Lincoln offered · Sumter · The Upper South, and the border · The first battle, and the plan · The balance sheet · The arithmetic, and the officers · The eastern theatre · The western theatre · Total war, and the Confederate state · Against its own principles · What the Union built · The draft, and its price · Women, and the president's caution · The enslaved force the question · The Proclamation · The reception, and the turning · Abroad · Black soldiers · The last year · One witness on the march · The election, and the end	60	1 h 28 min (3 parts)
16	**The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1877** Two plans · The Thirteenth · Five days after the surrender · Galveston · Johnson · Congress refuses, and the Bureau · The Black codes · The answer · What else the Fourteenth did · Johnson against it · The Radicals · Military Reconstruction · The impeachment · The Fifteenth, and what it left out · Where the movements part · After the split · What Black southerners built · The story told about it, and the record · Rebuilding, and the land · The Klan · One sworn account · What Washington did · Why it stopped · The end	54	1 h 23 min (3 parts)
17	**Capstone: The Four Cross-Cutting Themes** How to use this unit · The first twin · A power claimed, then found unenforceable · The Court decides, and is answered · The arc, and its limit · The early federal government · The second twin · Furthest reach, and the argument that ended it · The arc, and the test · Print · Images, and a source that changed · The migration nobody expects · The two compared · The third twin · The last synthesis · What the exam asks · Method · What the course discloses, and where it ends	40	1 h 9 min (2 parts)

Assessment and grading

- **Unit quizzes.** 17 quizzes, 10 questions each, checked as the student goes, each answer with the lesson to review. Untimed; retakes are unlimited.
- **Mid exam.** 50 questions on units 1–9, drawn fresh each time and scored at the end with a breakdown by content area. Untimed; retakes are unlimited.
- **Final exam.** 120 questions, 90 minutes, on the whole course. Scored 20–80; 50 passes (80 of 120 correct, about 67%). Retakes are unlimited with a 24-hour wait, each a fresh draw.

Suggested composite grade

Part	Weight
Unit quizzes (average of best scores)	20%
Mid exam (best score)	20%
Final exam (percent correct)	60%

Suggested letter scale

Letter	Composite
A	90–100
B	80–89
C	70–79
D	60–69
F	below 60

Suggested; the parent sets the grade. A passing final is the completion standard for the course record.

Study plan

The 88.5 offline hours are spread over the units in proportion to each unit's StudyWalks time. For each unit: read the matching sections of *U.S. History (OpenStax); The American Yawp*, review the unit quiz misses, and write a one-page unit summary. Log the time as you go.

Unit	Title	StudyWalks	Offline, suggested	Unit total
1	The Americas, Europe, and West Africa Before 1492	42 min	2 h 30 min	3 h 12 min
2	Early Globalization: The Atlantic World, 1492–1650	48 min	2 h 50 min	3 h 38 min
3	Creating New Social Orders: Colonial Societies, 1500–1700	1 h 6 min	3 h 55 min	5 h 1 min
4	Rule Britannia! The English Empire, 1660–1763	1 h	3 h 35 min	4 h 35 min
5	Imperial Reforms and Colonial Protest, 1763–1774	57 min	3 h 25 min	4 h 22 min
6	America's War for Independence, 1775–1783	1 h	3 h 35 min	4 h 35 min
7	Creating Republican Governments, 1776–1790	48 min	2 h 50 min	3 h 38 min
8	Growing Pains: The New Republic, 1790–1820	1 h 37 min	5 h 50 min	7 h 27 min
9	Industrial Transformation in the North, 1800–1850	1 h 34 min	5 h 35 min	7 h 9 min
Lessons and lectures		**24 h 44 min**	**88 h 30 min**	**113 h 14 min**
Quizzes, mid exam and final (stated time)		**6 h 36 min**	**—**	**6 h 36 min**

Unit	Title	StudyWalks	Offline, suggested	Unit total
10	Jacksonian Democracy, 1820–1840	1 h 50 min	6 h 35 min	8 h 25 min
11	A Nation on the Move: Westward Expansion, 1800s	1 h 52 min	6 h 40 min	8 h 32 min
12	Cotton is King: The Antebellum South, 1800–1860	2 h 7 min	7 h 35 min	9 h 42 min
13	Antebellum Idealism and Reform Impulses, 1820s–1850s	1 h 59 min	7 h 5 min	9 h 4 min
14	Troubled Times: The Sectional Crisis, 1850–1861	2 h 2 min	7 h 15 min	9 h 17 min
15	The Civil War, 1860–1865	2 h	7 h 10 min	9 h 10 min
16	The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1877	1 h 52 min	6 h 40 min	8 h 32 min
17	Capstone: The Four Cross-Cutting Themes	1 h 30 min	5 h 25 min	6 h 55 min
Lessons and lectures		**24 h 44 min**	**88 h 30 min**	**113 h 14 min**
Quizzes, mid exam and final (stated time)		**6 h 36 min**	**—**	**6 h 36 min**

Unit times are the unit's lecture runtime plus its lessons at the course's measured average lesson length; totals can differ from the learning hours by rounding.

Sources

- **Anchor:** OpenStax, *U.S. History*. Revision dated April 23, 2026. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
- **Witness 1:** *The American Yawp*, Stanford University Press. CC BY-SA
- **Witness 2:** *Digital History*, University of Houston. Free and independently authored.
- **Primary sources:** The Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Colonial charters, the Constitution and treaties in full text.

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