



CAMBRIDGE

International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge International AS Level

US History to 1877

Syllabus code 8101

for centres in the United States of America

Use this syllabus for exams in 2027, 2028 and 2029.

Exams are available in the June and November series.

This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones.

Please check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/8101 to see if this syllabus is available in your administrative zone.



Version I

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Cambridge
Pathway

Why choose Cambridge?

We work with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills. Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.

As part of the University of Cambridge, we offer a globally trusted and flexible framework for education from age 3 to 19, informed by research, experience, and listening to educators.

With recognised qualifications, high-quality resources, comprehensive support and valuable insights, we help schools prepare every student for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

From the world's top-ranked universities to local higher education institutions, Cambridge qualifications open doors to a world of opportunities.

Setting a global standard

With over 160 years of experience in delivering fair, valid and reliable assessments to students worldwide, we offer a global, recognised performance standard for international education.

Your path, your way

Schools can adapt our curriculum, high-quality teaching and learning resources and flexible assessments to their local context. Our aligned offer helps Cambridge schools support every learner to reach their potential and thrive.

Learning with lasting impact

Cambridge learners build subject knowledge and conceptual understanding, and develop a broad range of skills, learning habits and attributes to help make them ready for the world.

Improving learning outcomes through data-led insight and action

Our trusted baseline and diagnostic assessments, together with our insights and evaluation service, help schools turn data into knowledge and actionable insights, to inform teaching decisions and improve learner outcomes.

Bringing together a community of experts

We bring together the collective knowledge of experts and our diverse community of educators worldwide, supporting them to learn from one another and share ideas and information.

Tackling the climate crisis together

We believe that education is key to tackling the climate crisis. Together with Cambridge schools, we can empower young people with the skills and knowledge to take action on climate change, helping them be ready for the world.

School feedback: 'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

©Cambridge University Press & Assessment September 2024

Cambridge International Education is the name of our awarding body and a part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which is a department of the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment retains the copyright on all its publications. Registered centres are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use. However, we cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within a centre.

Contents

Why choose Cambridge?	2
1 Why choose this syllabus?	4
2 Syllabus overview	8
Aims	8
Content overview	9
Assessment overview	10
Assessment objectives	11
3 Subject content	12
Paper 1 – Historical Sources	12
Paper 2 – Outline Study	16
4 Details of the assessment	25
Paper 1 – Historical Sources	25
Paper 2 – Outline Study	26
Command words	29
5 What else you need to know	30
Before you start	30
Making entries	31
Accessibility and equality	31
After the exam	32
How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades	33
Changes to this syllabus for 2027, 2028 and 2029	34

Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2027, 2028 and 2029, go to page 34.



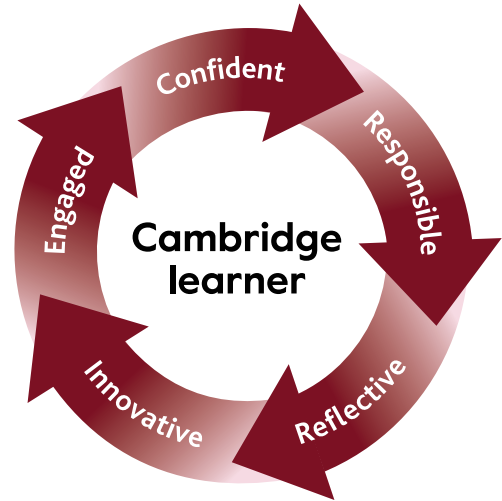
1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

The best motivation for a student is a real passion for the subject they are learning. Cambridge International AS & A Level give schools flexibility to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a choice of over 50 subjects. Students can select the subjects they love and that they are best at, enabling them to reach their potential and thrive.

Following a Cambridge International AS & A Level programme helps students develop abilities which universities value highly, including:

- a deep subject knowledge
- conceptual understanding and higher-level thinking skills
- presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- independent learning and research.



Cambridge International AS Level US History to 1877 explores the past from a diversity of perspectives, including social, economic, political and cultural. Learners develop transferable skills. These include the ability to evaluate historical evidence and present clear and logical arguments.

Learners develop an understanding of historical concepts such as cause and consequence and significance.

Our approach in Cambridge International AS Level US History to 1877 supports the development of learners who are:

confident, developing the ability to analyse, explain, interpret and evaluate historical issues and perspectives

responsible, acquiring knowledge and skills through independent reading and enquiry

reflective, recognising the complexities of the past and the significance of events, individuals and time periods and making links with new areas of historical study

innovative, learning how to present clear, logical arguments and supporting their own judgements

engaged, developing their interest in history and broadening their knowledge and understanding of different perspectives.

School feedback: 'Cambridge students develop a deep understanding of subjects and independent thinking skills.'

Feedback from: Principal, Rockledge High School, USA

Key concepts

Key concepts are essential ideas that help students develop a deep understanding of their subject and make links between different aspects. Key concepts may open up new ways of thinking about, understanding or interpreting the important things to be learned.

Good teaching and learning will incorporate and reinforce a subject's key concepts to help students gain:

- a greater depth as well as breadth of subject knowledge
- confidence, especially in applying knowledge and skills in new situations
- the vocabulary to discuss their subject conceptually and show how different aspects link together
- a level of mastery of their subject to help them enter higher education.

Carefully introducing and developing key concepts at the right time will help to underpin the teaching. You may identify additional key concepts which will also enrich teaching and learning.

The key concepts for Cambridge International AS Level US History to 1877 are:

- **Similarity and difference**
The patterns of similarity and difference that exist between people, lived experiences, events and situations in the past.
- **Cause and consequence**
The relationship in history between events, circumstances, actions and beliefs (cause) and the result, event or action that follows (consequence).
- **Change and continuity**
How some aspects have changed over time (change) and how some have stayed the same (continuity) within a given time frame.
- **Significance**
The importance given to events, individuals or ideas from the past. One person's view of historical significance may not be the same as another's, and views may change over time.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

Cambridge qualifications prepare and equip learners with the skills they need to thrive at university and beyond. The world's best higher education institutions recognise our qualifications and value the critical thinking skills, independent research abilities and deep subject knowledge that Cambridge learners bring.

We continually work with universities and colleges in every part of the world to ensure that they understand and accept our qualifications. More than 2220 universities in over 90 countries formally recognise Cambridge qualifications, with many more accepting our qualifications on application.

UK ENIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge International AS & A Level and found it to be comparable to the standard of AS & A Level in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications are accepted as equivalent, grade for grade, to UK AS & A Levels by leading universities worldwide.

Cambridge International AS Level US History to 1877 is a standalone qualification which provides transferable skills to support further study of history. Depending on local university entrance requirements, students may be able to use it to progress directly to university courses in history or some other subjects. It is also suitable as part of a course of general education.

Visit www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition-search/ and university websites for the most up-to-date higher education entry requirements.

Learn more: www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

Supporting teachers

We believe education works best when teaching and learning are closely aligned to the curriculum, resources and assessment. Our high-quality teaching support helps to maximise teaching time and enables teachers to engage learners of all backgrounds and abilities.

We aim to provide the following support for each Cambridge qualification:

- Syllabus
- Specimen question papers and mark schemes
- Specimen paper answers
- Schemes of Work
- Example candidate responses
- Past papers and mark schemes
- Principal examiner reports for teachers

These resources are available on the School Support Hub at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support, our secure online site for Cambridge teachers. Your exams officer can provide you with a login.

Additional teaching & learning resources are also available for many syllabuses and vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus. These can include ready-built lesson materials, digital resources and multimedia for the classroom and homework, guidance on assessment and much more. Beyond the resources available on the Schools Support Hub, a wide range of endorsed textbooks and associated teaching and learning support are available from Cambridge at www.cambridge.org/education and from other publishers. Resources vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus.

You can also contact our global Cambridge community or talk to a senior examiner on our discussion forums.

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey:

- **Introduction courses** – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications. For teachers who are new to Cambridge programmes or new to a specific syllabus.
- **Focus on Teaching courses** – These are for teachers who want to explore a specific area of teaching and learning within a syllabus or programme.
- **Focus on Assessment courses** – These are for teachers who want to understand the assessment of a syllabus in greater depth.
- **Marking workshops** – These workshops help you become more familiar with what examiners are looking for, and provide an opportunity to raise questions and share your experiences of the syllabus.
- **Enrichment Professional Development** – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops. Each workshop focuses on a specific area of teaching and learning practice.
- **Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs)** – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practicing teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

For more information visit www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-for-teachers

Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.
Find out more at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide



2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

You can deliver some of the aims using suitable local historical examples.

The aims are to enable students to:

- expand their knowledge and understanding of key historical factors and events leading to the creation of the US as a nation
- expand their knowledge and understanding of the chronology and order of events of the history of the US from the 1400s to 1877
- develop their interest in the past and an understanding of the collective efforts and achievements that have shaped our present
- build confidence in working with historical concepts such as similarity and difference, cause and consequence, change and continuity, and significance
- appreciate the nature and diversity of historical sources available, and how historians use them
- discover a wide variety of approaches to different aspects of history
- develop independent thinking and make informed judgements on historical issues
- develop an understanding of diverse perspectives from people living in different places, in different time periods, and with different ideas
- build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills for further study of history.

We are an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

Candidates study the content in Papers 1 and 2.

Paper 1 – Historical Sources

Paper 1 has one topic:

- 1 The American Civil War and Reconstruction, 1846–77.

Candidates also study historical sources skills.

Paper 2 – Outline Study

Paper 2 has four topics:

- 2 Indigenous Societies, European Colonization, and the Atlantic World, c.1400s–c.1800
- 3 The American Revolution and the Emergence of a New Nation, c.1765–c.1815
- 4 A Changing New Nation, c.1820–c.1850
- 5 The Impacts of Expansion, c.1800–77.

Candidates also develop extended writing skills.

School feedback: ‘Cambridge International AS & A Levels prepare students well for university because they’ve learnt to go into a subject in considerable depth. There’s that ability to really understand the depth and richness and the detail of a subject. It’s a wonderful preparation for what they are going to face at university.’

Feedback from: US Higher Education Advisory Council

Assessment overview

Candidates take Papers 1 and 2.

Paper 1

Historical Sources 1 hour 15 minutes
40 marks

Candidates answer **one** mandatory two-part historical sources question.

Candidates answer both parts of the question.

The question is based on the Paper 1 content.

Externally assessed

40% of the AS Level

Paper 2

Outline Study 1 hour 45 minutes
60 marks

Candidates answer **two** two-part questions from a choice of four questions.

Candidates answer both parts of the questions they have chosen.

Questions are based on the Paper 2 content.

Externally assessed

60% of the AS Level

Information on availability is in the **Before you start section**.

Candidates are eligible for grades a–e.

We are working towards digital delivery of assessments for this syllabus in the future.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Historical knowledge

Candidates should be able to:

Recall, select and use appropriate historical knowledge.

AO2 Historical explanation, analysis and judgement

Candidates should be able to:

- Identify, explain and analyse the past using historical concepts:
 - cause and consequence
 - change and continuity
 - significance.
- Explain and analyse connections between different aspects of the past.
- Reach a judgement.

AO3 Historical sources

Candidates should be able to:

Understand, analyse, evaluate and interpret a range of historical sources in context.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in AS Level %
AO1 Historical knowledge	40
AO2 Historical explanation, analysis and judgement	30
AO3 Historical sources	30
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Historical knowledge	25	50
AO2 Historical explanation, analysis and judgement	0	50
AO3 Historical sources	75	0
Total	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge, and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background, and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

Candidates study the subject content for Papers 1 and 2.

You can teach the content of Papers 1 and 2 in any order you prefer. Teachers can teach Paper 2 before Paper 1 if they wish to teach the content in chronological order.

Where "including" is used in the syllabus subject content, learners must study everything in the list. Where examples are given (denoted by "e.g.") these are for illustrative purposes only. You can choose other relevant examples to use with your learners.

Paper 1 – Historical Sources

Introduction

The teaching of the content for Paper 1 should be delivered through the use of historical sources throughout. Historical sources skills should be integrated into the teaching of the entire content, and not just added at the end of the teaching of the topic.

It is recommended that half the teaching time is spent on teaching the specified subject content for Paper 1 and the other half on teaching the historical sources skills required. However, best practice would be to incorporate the two elements so that they are taught side by side.

Paper 1 is worth 40% of the overall AS Level and is designed to be taught in 70 guided learning hours.

The content for Paper 1 is Topic 1 The American Civil War and Reconstruction, 1846–77.

1 The American Civil War and Reconstruction, 1846–77

Topic 1 focuses on three key questions:

- 1 How and why did sectional divisions widen between 1846 and 1861, resulting in the American Civil War?
- 2 How far did the Civil War transform the lives of Americans?
- 3 What were the aims of Reconstruction and how successful was it?

1.1 How and why did sectional divisions widen between 1846 and 1861, resulting in the American Civil War?

- The impact of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny on sectionalism
 - Debate over the lands of the Mexican Cession
 - The Calhoun Doctrine and states' rights
 - The Compromise of 1850
 - The Kansas–Nebraska Act and Bleeding Kansas
- Increasing political prominence of the debate over slavery during the 1850s
 - Debate over the Fugitive Slave Act and reactions to it
 - Reactions to the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
 - Formation of the Republican Party
 - The impacts of the Dred Scott decision
 - The Lincoln–Douglas debates
- Increasing radicalism on both sides of the debate over slavery
 - John Brown and Harpers Ferry
 - Radical abolitionism (including the influence of William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and the Liberty Party)
 - Radical proslavery groups (including Fire-Eaters)
- The outbreak of the American Civil War
 - The presidential election of 1860
 - First wave of secession and the formation of the Confederacy
 - Reactions to the Battle of Fort Sumter
 - Second wave of secession.

1.2 How far did the Civil War transform the lives of Americans?

- Overview of the course of the Civil War
 - Changes in military strategies throughout the war
 - Key battles (e.g., Antietam, September 1862; Gettysburg, July 1863; Siege of Vicksburg, May–July 1863; and Atlanta, July 1864)
 - Reasons for Union victory (including industrial capacity, increased manpower, infrastructure, and military leadership)
 - Destruction of the South and human loss
 - Situation in the North and the South at the end of the war
- Americans and the military experience
 - Daily experiences of soldiers in the North and South
 - Contributions and experiences of African American soldiers
 - Women’s military contributions in the Civil War (e.g., experiences of women of different ethnicities, women’s contributions to military camps, women as nurses, women as spies, and women as soldiers)
 - Hispanic American military contributions to both sides
 - Indigenous peoples and the Civil War (e.g., indigenous soldiers, indigenous alliances with the Union and the Confederacy, the split in the Cherokee Nation over alliances, and loss of territory following the war)
- Race relations and the Civil War
 - Race riots and racial tensions in the North and Southwest
 - Pressure from enslaved persons, abolitionists, and Congress to eliminate slavery
 - Lincoln’s motivations for the Emancipation Proclamation
 - The impacts of the Emancipation Proclamation
 - Life in contraband camps
- Economic and social impacts of the Civil War
 - Class conflicts
 - Resistance to conscription
 - Bread riots, inflation, and shortages in the South
 - Changes in gender roles on the homefronts.

1.3 What were the aims of Reconstruction and how successful was it?

- The early years of Reconstruction and its effects
 - Congressional focus on development of the west (including the passage of the Homestead Act, 1862, and the Pacific Railway Act, 1862)
 - The Reconstruction approaches of Lincoln and Johnson
 - Use of Black Codes
 - Johnson’s opposition to Congressional plans and pardoning of former Confederates
- Radical Reconstruction and its effects (also known as Congressional Reconstruction), 1867–72
 - Reconstruction Amendments
 - Military Reconstruction Acts
 - Impeachment charges against Johnson
- Social and economic changes in the South during Reconstruction
 - Rebuilding the infrastructure and economy
 - “Carpetbaggers” and “scalawags”
 - Impacts of the Freedmen’s Bureau
 - African American political participation
 - Systems that limited African American prosperity (including sharecropping and the convict leasing system)
- Reasons for the decline of Reconstruction
 - Southern political resistance and domestic terrorism (e.g., literacy tests, grandfather clauses, poll taxes, and the Ku Klux Klan)
 - High costs and economic instability
 - Role of the Compromise of 1877
 - Weakening of Reconstruction by the Supreme Court (including the Slaughter-House Cases, 1873; *U.S. v. Reese*, 1876; and *U.S. v. Cruickshank*, 1876)
 - The memory of Reconstruction in the South (e.g., the “Lost Cause” and “Southern Myth”).

Paper 2 – Outline Study

Introduction

Paper 2 is worth 60% of the overall AS Level and is designed to be taught in 110 guided learning hours.

Paper 2 has four topics:

- Topic 2 Indigenous Societies, European Colonization, and the Atlantic World, c.1400s–c.1800
- Topic 3 The American Revolution and the Emergence of a New Nation, c.1765–c.1815
- Topic 4 A Changing New Nation, c.1820–c.1850
- Topic 5 The Impacts of Expansion, c.1800–77.

2 Indigenous Societies, European Colonization, and the Atlantic World, c.1400s–c.1800

Topic 2 focuses on three key questions:

- 1 How and why did indigenous peoples and Europeans impact each other in North America?
- 2 Why did distinct colonial societies and economies develop in North America?
- 3 How and why did the Atlantic World shape the British colonies in North America?

2.1 How and why did indigenous peoples and Europeans impact each other in North America?

- Regional groups of indigenous peoples across North America and their lifestyles prior to the arrival of Europeans
 - Groups of eastern North America and the Great Lakes
 - Groups of the Great Basin and the Plains
 - Groups of the Southeast
 - Groups of the Southwest
 - Groups of the Pacific Coast
- Causes and impacts of indigenous alliances with other indigenous peoples and with Europeans
 - Powhatan Chiefdoms
 - Formation of the Iroquois Confederacy
 - Iroquois Confederacy alliance with the British
 - Algonquin-speaking tribes allied with the French and/or Spanish
- Causes and impacts of conflicts between indigenous peoples and Europeans
 - Iroquois Wars, also known as the “Beaver Wars”, 1603–1701
 - Pequot War, 1636–38
 - Metacom’s War, 1675–78
 - Bacon’s Rebellion, 1676–77
 - Pueblo Revolt, 1680
- Cultural and material exchanges between indigenous peoples and Europeans
 - Transculturation between indigenous peoples and Europeans (e.g., use of horses and exchange of glass beads)
 - Loss of indigenous territories to European powers
 - Spread of disease amongst indigenous populations.

2.2 Why did distinct colonial societies and economies develop in North America?

- Motivations for European colonization of the Americas
 - The establishment of trade routes
 - Accessing natural resources
 - National power and wealth
 - Religious impulses
- European claims to North American territory
 - Role of the early explorers (e.g., Juan Ponce de León, Giovanni da Verrazzano, Jacques Cartier, Hernando de Soto, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, and Henry Hudson)
 - Spanish settlements (including New Spain and Florida)
 - French settlements (including Louisiana and New France)
 - British settlements (including British America)
- Comparison of political power structures, economic systems, and race relations between the European colonies
 - British colonies
 - French colonies
 - Spanish colonies
 - Dutch colonies
- Regional distinctions in demographic makeup, economic structures, and political structures in British America
 - Northern colonies
 - Middle colonies
 - Southern colonies.

2.3 How and why did the Atlantic World shape the British colonies in North America?

- Mercantilism and salutary neglect
 - Navigation Acts, 1651–73
 - Restraining Acts, 1699–1750
 - Economic importance of Triangular Trade
- Intellectual transatlantic exchanges in the British colonies
 - The ideas of the Enlightenment
 - Importance of transatlantic print culture
 - The First Great Awakening, 1730s–1740s
 - Anglicization
- The trafficking of enslaved people from Africa in the Atlantic World
 - Impacts of the development of plantation agriculture
 - The African slave trade and the middle passage
 - The development of race-based chattel slavery
- The experiences of enslaved peoples
 - The development of distinct communities among enslaved people (e.g., Gullah Geechee and Maroon communities)
 - Daily lives of people enslaved on plantations
 - Resistance and rebellions (e.g., the Stono Rebellion, 1739).

3 The American Revolution and the Emergence of a New Nation, c.1765–c.1815

Topic 3 focuses on three key questions:

- 1 Why did the Patriots desire independence from Great Britain?
- 2 How and why did different groups of people support the Patriots during the American Revolution, 1776–83?
- 3 Why did political parties emerge in the US after the American Revolution and how did they evolve in the early-nineteenth century?

3.1 Why did the Patriots desire independence from Great Britain?

- Impacts of the French and Indian War, 1754–63
 - Land gains from the British victory in the war
 - The Proclamation Line of 1763
 - British finances
 - Colonists' opinions of the British army following the war
- End of salutary neglect and the impact of new laws
 - New laws in 1764–65 (including the Sugar Act, 1764; the Currency Act, 1764; the Quartering Act, 1765; and the Stamp Act, 1765)
 - The Townshend Acts, 1767
 - The Tea Act, the Boston Tea Party, and the Intolerable Acts, 1773–74
 - The First Continental Congress, 1774, and the initial meetings of the Second Continental Congress, 1775–76
- Ideological roots of the American Revolution
 - The influence of Enlightenment ideas about natural rights and the social contract (including John Locke and his *Treatise on Civil Government*)
 - Developing American identity
 - The influence of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, 1776
- The ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence
 - The preamble and the reasons for wanting independence
 - The declaration of natural and unalienable rights
 - The list of grievances
 - The declaration that the colonies are now independent from Great Britain.

3.2 How and why did different groups of people support the Patriots during the American Revolution, 1776–83?

- Motivations for and impacts of military participation of African Americans
 - Patriotism amongst the African American population
 - Importance of opportunities to gain freedom for enslaved men
 - Military roles of African American men
 - Long-term treatment of African American veterans (e.g., pensions, voting rights in certain states, and eventual ban from military service)
- Role of women in the American Revolution
 - Homespun and Boycotts
 - Women as nurses
 - Daughters of Liberty
 - Republican Motherhood
 - Contributions of African American women
- Motivations for and impacts of military participation of foreign nations
 - Desires of Spain and France to regain lands lost to Britain in previous conflicts
 - Conflict between Britain and the Netherlands
 - Benefits for the Patriot cause (e.g., assistance from the French army and navy, supply of Dutch weapons, provision of Spanish gold, and distraction of British forces)
- Indigenous groups' alliances in the Revolutionary War and impact of American victory on indigenous people's lands
 - Desire of indigenous groups to retain control over their lands
 - The division of the Iroquois Confederacy
 - Indigenous peoples' roles in the war effort (e.g., roles as scouts, soldiers, and diplomats)
 - Loss of indigenous lands following the peace settlement.

3.3 Why did political parties emerge in the US after the American Revolution and how did they evolve in the early-nineteenth century?

- The emergence of divisions in the debates surrounding the creation of the US Constitution
 - The Articles of Confederation and their weaknesses
 - Debates at the Annapolis Convention, 1786, and the Constitutional Convention, 1787
 - The Virginia Plan v. the New Jersey Plan and The Great Compromise
 - Debates over slavery, the Three-Fifths' Compromise, and the Slave Trade Clause
 - Debates over ratification and the addition of a Bill of Rights (including the views of the Antifederalists and the Federalists, 1787–91)
- The development of formal political parties
 - Leadership of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson
 - Ideologies and policies of the Federalist Party
 - Ideologies and policies of the Democratic Republican Party
- Major political issues of the “Federalist Era” of the 1790s
 - Debate over liberty v. order
 - Debate over responses to the Whiskey Rebellion
 - Impacts of the Alien and Sedition Acts
 - Debate over the US’s reactions to the French Revolution
- Major political issues of the “Age of Jefferson”, 1800–15
 - Impressment/violations of American neutrality
 - The Louisiana Purchase, 1803
 - The Marshall Court
 - The War of 1812, 1812–15.

4 A Changing New Nation, c.1820–c.1850

Topic 4 focuses on three key questions:

- 1 How and why did politics in the US change from 1820 to 1850?
- 2 Why did a wave of reform movements emerge in the antebellum period from 1820 to 1850 and how successful were they?
- 3 Why did the debate over slavery intensify from 1820 to 1850?

4.1 How and why did politics in the US change from 1820 to 1850?

- The emergence of the “Era of the Common Man”
 - Spread of universal white manhood suffrage laws
 - Revisions of state constitutions to exclude women and free African Americans from voting
 - Changes in political campaign tactics to appeal to new voters
- Presidential policies of Andrew Jackson
 - The Bank War
 - Use of veto
 - Patronage
 - The Nullification Crisis
- Key ideas and political issues of the Democrats and Whigs
 - Debates over internal improvements (including Henry Clay’s American System)
 - Debates over federal v. state power
 - Debates over tariffs
 - Debates regarding territorial expansion
- Role of third parties, 1820–50
 - Anti-Masonic Party
 - Liberty Party
 - Nativists and the Know-Nothing Party
 - Free Soil Party.

4.2 Why did a wave of reform movements emerge in the antebellum period from 1820 to 1850 and how successful were they?

- Influence of the Second Great Awakening
 - The emergence of new religious denominations
 - The importance of evangelical ideas (including free will and the availability of salvation to all people)
 - The spread of evangelical ideas through camp meetings and revivals
- Growth of transcendentalism and utopian societies
 - The importance of criticisms of the social changes caused by the Market Revolution
 - The influence of key figures (including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller)
 - Attempts to build new societies (e.g., Brook Farm, the Shakers, and New Harmony)
- Women's rights
 - Increasing activism of women and connections of women's rights with other movements
 - Ambitions to improve women's legal and political status (e.g., laws to permit women to own property, laws to allow married women to testify in court, the ability for women to initiate lawsuits, and end to inferior pay for female teachers)
 - Demands for women's suffrage (including the Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions)
- Temperance
 - The influence of religious desires to improve society's moral condition
 - The Saratoga Springs meeting and the formation of the American Temperance Union, 1826
 - Proposals for temperance laws.

4.3 Why did the debate over slavery intensify from 1820 to 1850?

- Growing popularity of abolitionism
 - Importance of African Americans to the abolitionist movement
 - Influence of the Second Great Awakening on abolitionism
 - Importance of women to the abolitionist movement
 - Role of abolitionist newspapers and autobiographies of formerly enslaved people
 - Significance of potential expansion of slavery into new territories
- Arguments of the abolitionists
 - Religious and moral opposition
 - Philosophical links to Enlightenment ideas about natural rights and how enslavement violated those rights
 - The economic argument that slavery undermined the value of wage labor
 - Debates amongst abolitionists about how to achieve their goals
- Arguments used by supporters of slavery
 - Importance of slavery to Southern culture
 - Emphasis on the significance of enslaved labor in regional and national economies
 - Assertion that slavery was a property right protected by the Constitution
 - Religious justifications.

5 The Impacts of Expansion, c.1800–77

Topic 5 focuses on three key questions:

- 1 Why and how did the Market Revolution impact the US economy and society from 1820 to 1850?
- 2 Why did westward expansion impact US politics and culture in the mid-nineteenth century?
- 3 How and why did US expansionism impact indigenous peoples from 1815 to 1877?

5.1 Why and how did the Market Revolution impact the US economy and society from 1820 to 1850?

- Uneven process of industrialization and infrastructure development
 - Development of railways, roads, and canals
 - Regional differences in development
 - The role of cotton in regional, national, and global economies
- Impacts of the Market Revolution on US society
 - Changes in ideas about individual self-sufficiency
 - The changing role of women in the workplace
 - Increases in the overall standard of living
 - Role of class differences
- Causes of and impacts of immigration and migration in the antebellum period
 - Origins of immigrants
 - Reasons for and impacts of migration to the west (including Manifest Destiny, the Gold Rush, job opportunities, increased speed of transportation, federal policies, and cheap land)
 - Problems that emerged in cities
 - Rise of nativism and local anti-immigrant laws (e.g., anti-Chinese attitudes and anti-immigrant policies in California).

5.2 Why did westward expansion impact US politics and culture in the mid-nineteenth century?

- Political debates and the acquisition of new territories
 - Debates over the acquisition of Florida, 1819
 - Debates over the annexation of Texas, 1845
 - Debates about involvement in the Mexican–American War, 1846–48
 - Debates about the acquisition of Oregon, 1848
- Impact on the political system (practical application of the US Constitution) and the balance of sectional interests
 - The concept of the balance of power in Congress
 - The Missouri Compromise, 1820
 - Lands gained in the Mexican–American War’s potential to upset the balance of power
- Experiences of frontier migration
 - The challenges of the Oregon Trail
 - The cultural climate of the Gold Rush
 - Clashes between settlers and indigenous peoples
 - Treatment of people of Hispanic heritage following the Mexican–American War
 - Treatment of peoples of Asian heritage.

5.3 How and why did US expansionism impact indigenous peoples from 1815 to 1877?

- Causes of and impacts of the Seminole Wars
 - Conflict in Spanish Florida, 1817–18
 - Treaty of Payne’s Landing, 1832
 - The Second and Third Seminole Wars, 1835–58
 - Black Seminoles
- The Indian Removal Act and its impacts
 - Motivations for passage of the act
 - Legal challenges (including *Cherokee Nation v. State of Georgia*, 1831, and *Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832)
 - The Trail of Tears, 1838–39
- The deterioration of indigenous homelands, power, and rights
 - Key federal policies and the creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1824, and the 1851 Indian Appropriations Act
 - Impacts of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad on indigenous peoples
 - The impacts of the reservation system
 - Americanization and boarding schools
- Causes and impacts of conflict on the Plains
 - Sand Creek Massacre, 1864
 - Red Cloud’s War, 1866–68
 - Red River War, 1874–75
 - Great Sioux War, 1876–77.

4 Details of the assessment

Candidates take Papers 1 and 2.

Paper 1 – Historical Sources

Written paper, 1 hour 15 minutes, 40 marks

Candidates answer a two-part mandatory question based on the subject content for Paper 1.

The question has four sources with a range of types of sources, including at least three written sources and up to one visual source. The visual source could, for example, be a cartoon, a photograph or a poster.

The word count for the four sources in each question is a maximum of 600 words.

The Paper 1 question is worth 40 marks and is divided into two parts:

- Part (a) 15 marks requiring candidates to comment on similarities and differences between two of the sources in relation to a given topic.
- Part (b) 25 marks requiring candidates to use all four sources and their knowledge of the period to address how far the sources support a given statement.

Candidates must answer **both** the (a) and (b) parts of the question.

Paper 1 tests the following assessment objectives:

- AO1 Historical knowledge: 25%
- AO3 Historical sources: 75%

Part (a) questions

Part (a) questions are worth 15 marks. For example:

Read Sources **B** and **C**. Compare these two sources as evidence about the behavior of women during the Civil War. [15]

Part (a) questions are focused on a comparison between two of the sources. It requires candidates to compare the two sources to show similarities and differences with support from the sources, and to use contextual understanding and/or source evaluation to explain why these similarities/differences exist.

The command word 'Compare' is used for Part (a) questions. Candidates need to identify/comment on similarities and differences.

Candidates need to comment on **both** the similarities **and** differences.

Part (a) questions are marked using the Paper 1 Table A marking grid published in the specimen Paper 1 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/8101 and our School Support Hub.

The Paper 1 Table A marking grid should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for the Part (a) 15-mark question in the mark scheme.

Part (b) questions

Part (b) questions are worth 25 marks.

Part (b) questions ask candidates to use all the four sources and their knowledge of the period to address ‘how far/to what extent’ the sources support a given statement. For example:

Read **all** of the sources. “Food shortages were the most significant problem faced by civilians during the Civil War.” How far do the sources support this view? [25]

Part (b) questions use the command phrases ‘How far do the sources support/agree with this view? / To what extent do the sources support/agree with this view?’ Candidates need to consider how the sources both support and challenge the statement, providing evidence for both sides of the argument. The ‘how far/to what extent’ element of the question also needs to be addressed through consideration of the extent of the support and challenge.

Candidates need to explain how they are linking their response and arguments to the given statement/question.

Answers should not describe the content of the sources, but rather should construct an argument that considers both the given and alternative perspectives in response to the question.

Part (b) questions are marked using the Paper 1 Table B marking grid published in the specimen Paper 1 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/8101 and our School Support Hub.

The Paper 1 Table B marking grid should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for the Part (b) 25-mark question in the mark scheme.

Paper 2 – Outline Study

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes, 60 marks

Candidates answer **two** questions from a choice of four. Candidates answer all the parts of the chosen questions.

Questions are based on the subject content for Paper 2.

Paper 2 has four questions. There is one question per subject content topic.

- Question 1 tests content in Topic 2 Indigenous Societies, European Colonization, and the Atlantic World, c.1400s–c.1800.
- Question 2 tests content in Topic 3 The American Revolution and the Emergence of a New Nation, c.1765–c.1815.
- Question 3 tests content in Topic 4 A Changing New Nation, c.1820–c.1850.
- Question 4 tests content in Topic 5 The Impacts of Expansion, c.1800–77.

Each question is worth 30 marks and is divided into two parts:

- Part (a) 10 marks requiring explanation/connection between historical causes.
- Part (b) 20 marks requiring explanation of the given and alternative perspectives and a comparative judgement.

Candidates must answer **both** the (a) and (b) parts of the chosen questions.

Paper 2 tests the following assessment objectives:

- AO1 Historical knowledge: 50%
- AO2 Historical explanation, analysis and judgement: 50%

Part (a) questions

Part (a) questions are worth 10 marks. For example:

Explain why different groups of Europeans created settlements in the Americas. [10]

Part (a) questions require candidates to provide causal explanations of the event/action/outcome given in the question.

Candidates are required to state factors and then provide explanations of how these led to the given event/action/outcome. These explanations should be supported by specific and relevant information.

The command phrase 'Explain why' is used for Part (a) questions. Candidates need to set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and support with relevant evidence.

Part (a) questions are marked using the Paper 2 Table A marking grid published in the specimen Paper 2 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/8101 and our School Support Hub.

The Paper 2 Table A marking grid should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for each Part (a) 10-mark question in the mark scheme.

Part (b) questions

Part (b) questions are worth 20 marks. For example:

How far was Manifest Destiny the main factor that drove westward expansion? [20]

Part (b) questions require candidates to provide an argument that considers both the perspective given in the question and alternative perspectives, analysing why one might be stronger than the other.

Part (b) questions use the command phrases:

- ‘To what extent ...?’ Candidates need to explain the perspective stated in the question before explaining alternative perspectives for the given issue. The extent of the agreement and disagreement should also be addressed.
- ‘How far do you agree with this view? /To what extent do you agree with this view?’ Candidates need to explain why they agree with the given statement before considering other perspectives providing alternative views. ‘How far’ / ‘To what extent’ also needs to be addressed through consideration of the extent of the agreement and disagreement.
- ‘How far was ... successful/unsuccessful?’ Candidates need to explain why they agree with the given statement before providing alternative perspectives. Candidates will also need to address the extent of success or unsuccessfulness.
- ‘How far was ... the key factor/the main reason ...?’ Candidates need to explain the impact that the given reason had on the stated event before considering alternative perspectives. The extent of the impact of the perspectives should also be addressed.
- ‘How successful/how important was ...?’ Candidates should explain the success or importance of the factor stated in the question before considering alternative perspectives. The extent of the success/ importance of the different perspectives should also be addressed.

Part (b) questions are marked using the Paper 2 Table B marking grid published in the specimen Paper 2 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/8101 and our School Support Hub.

The Paper 2 Table B marking grid should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for each Part (b) 20-mark question in the mark scheme.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exams. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Compare	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and/or how and support with relevant evidence

The command word 'Compare' is used in the assessment in Paper 1 Part (a) questions. In their responses candidates are required to comment on both similarities **and** differences.

Phrases such as 'How far do the sources support/agree with this view?' / 'To what extent do the sources support/agree with this view?' may be used in the assessment in Paper 1 Part (b) questions.

The command word 'Explain' is used in the assessment in Paper 2 Part (a) questions. 'Explain' is followed by why, i.e. 'Explain why ...'.

Phrases such as 'To what extent ...?', 'How far do you agree with this view?', 'To what extent do you agree with this view?', 'How far was ... successful/unsuccessful?', 'How far was ... the key factor/the main reason ...?' and 'How successful/how important was ...?' may also be used in the assessment in Paper 2 Part (b) questions.

For additional guidance on the use of the command words and phrases in the assessment see the information on Papers 1 and 2 in this Section 4 Details of assessment.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have completed a course in history equivalent to Cambridge IGCSE™ or Cambridge O Level.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge International AS Level syllabuses to require about 180 guided learning hours for each Cambridge International AS Level. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. Find your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone. This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/8101

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge International AS & A Level European History (9981)
- Cambridge International AS & A Level International History (9982)
- Cambridge International AS & A Level History (9489) (not available to centres in the US)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Group awards: Cambridge AICE Diploma

Cambridge AICE Diploma (Advanced International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge International AS & A Level. It encourages schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge AICE Diploma at www.cambridgeinternational.org/aice

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has access to this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable.

Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Retakes

Candidates can retake Cambridge International AS Level as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes

To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series.

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge we recognise that our candidates have highly diverse socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and may also have a variety of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability (SEND), religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity.

We follow accessible design principles to make our syllabuses and assessment materials as accessible and inclusive as possible. We review language accessibility, visual resources, question layout and the contexts used in questions. Using this approach means that we give all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Access arrangements

Our design principles aim to make sure our assessment materials are accessible for all candidates. To further minimise barriers faced by candidates with SEND, illness or injury, we offer a range of access arrangements and modified papers. This is the principal way in which we comply with our duty to make 'reasonable adjustments', as guided by the UK Equality Act 2010.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to taking an assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working. This is explained in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

- For Cambridge to approve an access arrangement, we need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment and does not affect the security or integrity of the assessment.
- Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Centres are expected to check the availability of access arrangements and modified question papers at the start of the course. All applications should be made by the deadlines published in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Contact us at the start of the course to find out if we can approve an access arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades a, b, c, d or e indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International AS Level. 'a' is the highest and 'e' is the lowest grade.

'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for the lowest grade (e). 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge International AS Level is shown as General Certificate of Education, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE AS Level).

School feedback: 'Cambridge International A Levels are the 'gold standard' qualification. They are based on rigorous, academic syllabuses that are accessible to students from a wide range of abilities yet have the capacity to stretch our most able.'

Feedback from: Director of Studies, Auckland Grammar School, New Zealand

How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Changes to this syllabus for 2027, 2028 and 2029

This syllabus is new for first examination in 2027.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to availability

- This Cambridge International AS Level US History to 1877 (8101) syllabus and the Cambridge International AS Level US History since 1877 (8102) syllabus replace the Cambridge International AS & A Level History (9489) syllabus for schools in the United States.
- The last assessment of the Cambridge International AS & A Level History (9489) syllabus in the United States is November 2026.
- From June 2027, candidates should enter for this new Cambridge International AS Level US History to 1877 (8101) syllabus and/or the Cambridge International AS Level US History since 1877 (8102) syllabus.
- Candidates in the United States interested in studying European or International History can enter for the new Cambridge International AS & A Level European History (9981) and the Cambridge International AS & A Level International History (9982) syllabuses available from assessment in 2027.

In addition to reading the syllabus, you should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials. The specimen papers will help your students become familiar with exam requirements and command words in questions. The specimen mark schemes show how students should answer questions to meet the assessment objectives.

Syllabuses and specimen materials represent the final authority on the content and structure of all of our assessments.

With a Customer Services team available 24 hours a day, 6 days a week, and dedicated regional teams supporting schools in 160 countries, we understand your local context and are here to guide you so you can provide your learners with everything they need to prepare for Cambridge International AS & A Level.

Quality management



We are committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international education programmes and qualifications for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/about-us/our-standards/

School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We are always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we are not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

Cambridge International Education, The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 (0)1223 553554 email: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org