

# Texas A&M University (TAMU) HIST105 History of the United States Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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## Questions

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1. What was the primary conflict of the Cold War?
  - A. The arms race
  - B. The ideological struggle between capitalism and communism
  - C. Colonial independence movements
  - D. World War III
  
2. What was the primary purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?
  - A. To promote civil rights
  - B. To draft soldiers into the Union Army
  - C. To free enslaved people in the Confederacy
  - D. To establish peace negotiations
  
3. Who was the Governor of New York that had John Peter Zenger arrested for libel?
  - A. William Cosby
  - B. George Clinton
  - C. Thomas Dongan
  - D. John Montague
  
4. What major claim did the British establish in North America?
  - A. The Eastern Coast Colonies
  - B. The Great Plains
  - C. The Pacific Northwest
  - D. The Gulf Coast
  
5. What was a primary conflict in the Thirty Years' War?
  - A. A struggle for territory in the Americas
  - B. A civil war within England
  - C. Religious conflict between the Protestant Union and the Catholic League
  - D. A global war involving all European powers

6. What was the purpose of the encomienda system in the Spanish colonies?
- A. To trade goods with Native Americans
  - B. To establish peace treaties with other kingdoms
  - C. To provide cheap labor and Christianize Indigenous populations
  - D. To promote cultural exchange
7. What was the goal of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
- A. To establish voting rights for women
  - B. To eliminate barriers to voting for African Americans
  - C. To require ID for all voters
  - D. To increase the voting age to 21
8. What significant legislation was passed in 1707 that impacted the structure of governance within the British Empire?
- A. Act of Union 1707
  - B. Intolerable Acts
  - C. Stamp Act
  - D. Navigation Act
9. What was the main focus of the Progressive Movement in the early 20th century?
- A. Corporate deregulation and free market policies
  - B. Social reforms including labor rights, women's suffrage, and business regulation
  - C. The promotion of isolationist foreign policies
  - D. To maintain traditional social structures
10. What was a significant consequence of Spanish colonial policies in the Americas?
- A. The promotion of Indigenous cultural practices
  - B. The establishment of a system of coerced labor
  - C. The spread of democracy in Indigenous tribes
  - D. The decline of Spanish influence in the region

## Answers

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1. B
2. C
3. A
4. A
5. C
6. C
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. B

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## Explanations

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## 1. What was the primary conflict of the Cold War?

- A. The arms race
- B. The ideological struggle between capitalism and communism
- C. Colonial independence movements
- D. World War III

The primary conflict of the Cold War was rooted in the ideological struggle between capitalism, represented by the United States and its allies, and communism, represented by the Soviet Union and its allies. This confrontation was not merely about military superiority or geopolitical control; it was fundamentally about opposing philosophies of governance and economic organization. Capitalism advocates for private ownership, free markets, and individual freedoms, while communism advocates for collective ownership, state control, and seeks to eliminate class structures. This ideological divide shaped global diplomacy, influencing conflicts, such as the Korean War and the Vietnam War, and the formation of military alliances like NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The rivalry extended beyond military might to include cultural, technological, and economic dimensions, culminating in episodes like the space race. While the arms race was a significant aspect of the Cold War and related to the tensions of this ideological struggle, it was essentially a manifestation of the deeper conflict between the two systems. Colonial independence movements, while occurring during the same period, were not the central conflict of the Cold War but often intersected with it, as newly independent nations navigated the pressures from both capitalist and communist influences. The prospect of World War III was a fear that loomed during the Cold War due to the nuclear

## 2. What was the primary purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?

- A. To promote civil rights
- B. To draft soldiers into the Union Army
- C. To free enslaved people in the Confederacy
- D. To establish peace negotiations

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, primarily aimed to free enslaved people in the Confederate states. It declared that all persons held as slaves in the rebellious states were to be set free. This executive order was a strategic wartime measure, intended not only to promote freedom but also to weaken the Confederacy's ability to sustain its war effort, as enslaved people constituted a significant labor force supporting the Southern economy. By freeing enslaved individuals in the Confederacy, the proclamation also paved the way for black men to join the Union Army and Navy, further bolstering the Union's military strength. Although it did not immediately free all enslaved people in the United States, it marked a turning point in the Civil War, shifting the focus toward the broader goal of ending slavery. This foundational step laid the groundwork for future legislation, such as the Thirteenth Amendment, which ultimately abolished slavery in the United States. The other options, such as promoting civil rights or establishing peace negotiations, were not the direct goals of the Emancipation Proclamation at that time, though the act did contribute to the larger movement toward civil rights in the post-war era. Drafting soldiers into the Union

3. Who was the Governor of New York that had John Peter Zenger arrested for libel?

- A. William Cosby
- B. George Clinton
- C. Thomas Dongan
- D. John Montague

The Governor of New York who had John Peter Zenger arrested for libel was William Cosby. This incident occurred in the early 18th century and is significant in American history because it raised important questions about freedom of the press and the definition of libel. Zenger was a printer and journalist who published articles critical of Governor Cosby's administration. His subsequent arrest for libel became a landmark case for the principle of free speech, as Zenger's defense argued that truthful statements should not be considered libelous, thereby laying groundwork for later First Amendment protections in the United States. The other individuals mentioned were not associated with this pivotal event in journalistic history. George Clinton served as governor later and had different challenges during his tenure, Thomas Dongan was a governor in the late 17th century known for his more positive relations with the colony's settlers, and John Montague does not have notable connections to New York governance during the period concerning Zenger's trial.

4. What major claim did the British establish in North America?

- A. The Eastern Coast Colonies
- B. The Great Plains
- C. The Pacific Northwest
- D. The Gulf Coast

The correct answer highlights the significant territorial claim the British made when they established their colonies primarily along the Eastern Coast of North America. This region became the foundation for early British settlement and expansion in North America, beginning with colonies like Jamestown in Virginia and Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Eastern Coast offered access to vital resources, trade routes, and agricultural land, which played a crucial role in the economic and social development of British North America. The British claims were not limited to just establishing settlements; they also laid the groundwork for the eventual emergence of the United States. This area would host the first thirteen colonies, which became instrumental in the larger geopolitical narrative of the continent, including conflicts with Indigenous populations and European powers. In contrast, while the Great Plains, Pacific Northwest, and Gulf Coast are important regions in North America's history, they were either not claimed by the British at the same time or became significant later under different circumstances. For example, the vast Great Plains were primarily explored later and were less populated by European settlers initially. Similarly, the Pacific Northwest and Gulf Coast saw different colonial powers, such as the Spanish and French, taking more dominant roles in their early development.

5. What was a primary conflict in the Thirty Years' War?

- A. A struggle for territory in the Americas
- B. A civil war within England
- C. Religious conflict between the Protestant Union and the Catholic League
- D. A global war involving all European powers

The Thirty Years' War, which took place from 1618 to 1648, was primarily driven by deep-seated religious conflicts between Protestant and Catholic states within the Holy Roman Empire. The war began when tensions escalated between the Protestant Union, consisting of various Protestant states and territories, and the Catholic League, formed in response to the Protestant movement. This struggle for dominance and control reflected not just religious differences, but also the political ambitions of various leaders, as both sides sought to assert their influence over the governance of the region. While territorial disputes and broader European tensions did emerge as the war progressed, at its core, the conflict was a pivotal moment in the Protestant Reformation, showcasing how religion influenced political power dynamics in Europe. The outcome ultimately led to significant changes in the balance of power and religious freedom in the region, solidifying the division between Protestant and Catholic territories. This highlights the crucial role that religion played in shaping not only the course of the war but also the future of European politics.

6. What was the purpose of the encomienda system in the Spanish colonies?

- A. To trade goods with Native Americans
- B. To establish peace treaties with other kingdoms
- C. To provide cheap labor and Christianize Indigenous populations
- D. To promote cultural exchange

The encomienda system was designed primarily to provide cheap labor and facilitate the Christianization of Indigenous populations in the Spanish colonies. This system allowed Spanish colonizers to demand tribute and labor from the Indigenous people in exchange for protection and the promise to convert them to Christianity. By organizing Indigenous labor in this way, the Spanish aimed to exploit the resources of the colonies while simultaneously fulfilling their religious mission to spread Christianity. This arrangement significantly impacted the Indigenous communities, as it often led to harsh working conditions and exploitation under the guise of protection and evangelization. The encomienda system was a reflection of the broader colonial policies of the Spanish Empire, emphasizing economic gain, conversion efforts, and control over Indigenous populations.

7. What was the goal of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

- A. To establish voting rights for women
- B. To eliminate barriers to voting for African Americans
- C. To require ID for all voters
- D. To increase the voting age to 21

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was primarily aimed at eliminating barriers that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote, particularly in the southern states where discriminatory practices were prevalent. Before the act, various mechanisms such as literacy tests, poll taxes, and other forms of intimidation were used to disenfranchise Black voters. The legislation sought to enforce the voting rights guaranteed by the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. By prohibiting discrimination in voting based on race, the act was a crucial step toward achieving equality in the electoral process and helping to ensure that all citizens, regardless of race, had the opportunity to participate in democracy. The act also provided for federal oversight and monitoring of voter registration and elections in regions with a history of discriminatory practices, further solidifying its intent to safeguard voting rights for African Americans.

8. What significant legislation was passed in 1707 that impacted the structure of governance within the British Empire?

- A. Act of Union 1707
- B. Intolerable Acts
- C. Stamp Act
- D. Navigation Act

The Act of Union 1707 was a critical piece of legislation that united the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland into a single kingdom known as Great Britain. This act established a centralized parliament in Westminster, effectively altering the governance structure within the British Empire. Before the Act of Union, England and Scotland operated under separate parliaments and legal systems, despite sharing a monarch since the Union of the Crowns in 1603. The Act of Union was motivated by a combination of political, economic, and security concerns, particularly after the War of the Spanish Succession. By bringing the two nations together, it aimed to stabilize the region, enhance economic cooperation, and strengthen the British presence in global affairs. The unification provided by the Act allowed for a more cohesive approach to both domestic and foreign policy and laid the groundwork for the expansion of British influence and governance in the Americas and elsewhere. Thus, the Act of Union 1707 significantly impacted the structure of governance within the British Empire by establishing a more centralized authority and creating a new political entity.

9. What was the main focus of the Progressive Movement in the early 20th century?

- A. Corporate deregulation and free market policies
- B. Social reforms including labor rights, women's suffrage, and business regulation
- C. The promotion of isolationist foreign policies
- D. To maintain traditional social structures

The Progressive Movement in the early 20th century primarily emphasized social reforms aimed at addressing the various issues stemming from industrialization, urbanization, and social inequality. Activists within this movement championed labor rights, advocating for better wages, safer working conditions, and reduced working hours, particularly for women and children who were often exploited in factories. Additionally, the movement played a significant role in advancing women's suffrage, pushing for the right to vote, which culminated in the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Another critical aspect of the Progressive Movement was the push for business regulation. Progressives sought to curb the power of large corporations and monopolies, promoting antitrust laws to foster competition and protect consumers. This reformist attitude was a reaction to the perceived failings of capitalism during that era. In summary, the movement was multifaceted and sought not only to improve conditions for workers and expand democratic rights but also to regulate the business practices that many believed were harmful to society and the economy. This emphasis on social progress and reform distinguishes the Progressive Movement as a pivotal moment in American history.

10. What was a significant consequence of Spanish colonial policies in the Americas?

- A. The promotion of Indigenous cultural practices
- B. The establishment of a system of coerced labor
- C. The spread of democracy in Indigenous tribes
- D. The decline of Spanish influence in the region

The establishment of a system of coerced labor stands out as a significant consequence of Spanish colonial policies in the Americas. When the Spanish colonized large regions, they implemented systems such as the *encomienda* and later the *hacienda* system, which effectively allowed European settlers to extract labor from Indigenous populations. This coercive labor system forced Native Americans to work in mines and plantations under harsh conditions, leading to severe depopulation due to overwork and introduced diseases. This practice was justified by the Spanish under the guise of "civilizing" the Indigenous people and converting them to Christianity, but it ultimately aimed at maximizing profits from the exploitation of New World resources. The impact of these policies not only disrupted Indigenous societies but also laid the foundation for social and economic structures that persisted long after the colonial period. The consequences of this labor system have had lasting effects on the social fabric and economic conditions of many Latin American countries.