

Texas A&M University (TAMU)

HIST106 Practice Exam 1 (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

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1. Which act provided land to settlers willing to develop the American West?
 - A. The Homestead Act
 - B. The Land Grant Act
 - C. The Morrill Act
 - D. The Dawes Act
2. What was the goal of the Dawes Severalty Act regarding Native American land?
 - A. To promote collective land ownership
 - B. To encourage communal customs among tribes
 - C. To provide individual parcels of land and promote private property
 - D. To expand the land reserve for tribal use
3. Which event in 1963 highlighted the struggle for civil rights in the United States?
 - A. The March on Washington
 - B. The Montgomery Bus Boycott
 - C. The Stonewall Riots
 - D. The Voting Rights Act
4. How did the cotton gin impact the Southern economy?
 - A. It reduced the need for slave labor
 - B. It greatly increased the efficiency of cotton production
 - C. It encouraged industrialization in the South
 - D. It decreased the reliance on cash crops
5. Which factor contributed significantly to the cattle industry's decline?
 - A. Overproduction of beef
 - B. Lack of consumer interest
 - C. Insufficient grazing land due to overcrowding
 - D. Government regulations on cattle ranching

6. What characterizes the Gilded Age?
- A. Stagnation in economic growth and social equality.
 - B. Rapid economic growth and significant social issues.
 - C. Decreased industrialization and increase in agricultural focus.
 - D. Enhanced worker protections and rights.
7. What was Watergate?
- A. A political scandal involving tax evasion.
 - B. A scandal related to health care policies.
 - C. A political scandal involving a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and the subsequent cover-up.
 - D. A foreign policy blunder in Southeast Asia.
8. Who was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence?
- A. George Washington
 - B. Benjamin Franklin
 - C. Thomas Jefferson
 - D. John Adams
9. What was the main focus of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War?
- A. Expansion of military forces
 - B. Containment of communism
 - C. Promotion of free trade
 - D. Support for colonial independence
10. What characterized the Cold War period?
- A. A harmonious relationship between the USA and the USSR
 - B. A period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, characterized by ideological conflict, arms races, and proxy wars
 - C. The establishment of a global democracy
 - D. Characterized by rapid economic growth in both the USA and USSR

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which act provided land to settlers willing to develop the American West?

A. The Homestead Act

B. The Land Grant Act

C. The Morrill Act

D. The Dawes Act

The Homestead Act is the legislation that provided land to settlers willing to develop the American West. Enacted in 1862, this act allowed individuals to claim 160 acres of public land, provided they met certain conditions, such as building a dwelling and cultivating the land for a minimum of five years. This initiative was designed to encourage westward expansion and settlement in the United States, making land accessible to a larger population, including newly arrived immigrants and those seeking opportunities away from crowded eastern cities. The other acts, while important in their own contexts, did not focus on providing land for general settlement in the same way. The Land Grant Act primarily aimed to support agricultural and mechanical colleges by granting them land, while the Morrill Act supported education in practical fields. The Dawes Act sought to assimilate Native Americans into American society by allotting them individual plots of land, which ultimately impacted tribal lands adversely and aimed at a different societal structure than that of the Homestead Act.

2. What was the goal of the Dawes Severalty Act regarding Native American land?

A. To promote collective land ownership

B. To encourage communal customs among tribes

C. To provide individual parcels of land and promote private property

D. To expand the land reserve for tribal use

The Dawes Severalty Act, enacted in 1887, aimed primarily to assimilate Native Americans into American society by promoting individual land ownership. The act sought to break up tribal landholdings and allocate individual parcels to Native American families. By providing each family with a specific amount of land, the government intended to encourage the adoption of Western agricultural practices and the concept of private property. This shift was seen as a way to integrate Native Americans into the broader economic framework of the United States, moving them away from communal and tribal land customs toward individualistic ownership. The underlying belief was that by making land ownership personal and private, Native Americans would become more self-sufficient and adopt American cultural values, thereby facilitating their assimilation into mainstream society. Thus, the emphasis of the Dawes Act on individual land ownership is what makes this answer correct.

3. Which event in 1963 highlighted the struggle for civil rights in the United States?

- A. The March on Washington
- B. The Montgomery Bus Boycott
- C. The Stonewall Riots
- D. The Voting Rights Act

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, held on August 28, 1963, is a significant event that highlighted the struggle for civil rights in the United States. This massive demonstration brought together over 250,000 people at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech. The march aimed to advocate for civil and economic rights for African Americans, showcasing the necessity for change in legislation and societal attitudes regarding racism and inequality. The event was pivotal in raising public awareness about the civil rights movement and garnered national and international attention. It represented a unified front among different civil rights organizations and created a platform for leaders to express their demands for racial equality, job opportunities, and desegregation, ultimately influencing legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The other events listed, while significant in their own right, occurred at different points in history or focused on different aspects of civil rights. The Montgomery Bus Boycott took place primarily in 1955-1956, laying the groundwork for the civil rights movement but not in 1963. The Stonewall Riots in 1969 spotlighted the fight for

4. How did the cotton gin impact the Southern economy?

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The cotton gin had a profound impact on the Southern economy by greatly increasing the efficiency of cotton production. Invented by Eli Whitney in 1793, the cotton gin mechanized the process of separating cotton fibers from their seeds, a task that had been labor-intensive and time-consuming when done by hand. This innovation allowed for a much larger volume of cotton to be processed in a shorter amount of time. As a result, Southern planters could cultivate and process cotton on a massive scale, leading to a significant increase in cotton production. Cotton quickly became the dominant cash crop in the region, fueling the economy and establishing the South as a critical player in the world cotton market. This increased efficiency led to greater profitability for southern farmers, enabling them to expand their operations, invest more in land and slaves, and ultimately solidifying the reliance on cotton as the backbone of the Southern economy. This transformation contributed to the entrenchment of slavery in the South, as the demand for labor to cultivate and harvest this lucrative crop grew, while also affecting social and economic structures throughout the region. As cotton production soared, the Southern economy became increasingly dependent on this single crop, which had lasting implications for its development and the future of the United States.

5. Which factor contributed significantly to the cattle industry's decline?

- A. Overproduction of beef
- B. Lack of consumer interest
- C. Insufficient grazing land due to overcrowding
- D. Government regulations on cattle ranching

The decline of the cattle industry can be significantly attributed to insufficient grazing land due to overcrowding. At its peak, the cattle industry experienced an expansion that led to an overstocking of cattle on the ranges. This overpopulation of cattle resulted in overgrazing, which degraded the land and made it unable to support livestock effectively. The depletion of grazing resources not only harmed the ranchers' ability to sustain their herds but also contributed to a broader environmental crisis. While overproduction of beef did play a role in the industry's dynamics, it was primarily the ecological limitations and the inability of the land to support the cattle that led to serious repercussions. Consumer interest fluctuated based on pricing and availability, and while government regulations can impact agricultural sectors, they were not the foremost reason for the decline compared to the direct environmental challenges posed by overcrowding. Thus, the strain on available grazing land due to overcrowding emerged as a pivotal factor leading to the industry's downturn.

6. What characterizes the Gilded Age?

- A. Stagnation in economic growth and social equality.
- B. Rapid economic growth and significant social issues.
- C. Decreased industrialization and increase in agricultural focus.
- D. Enhanced worker protections and rights.

The Gilded Age, which spanned from the 1870s to the early 1900s, is characterized by rapid economic growth alongside significant social issues. This period witnessed an explosion of industrialization, with the rise of factories, railroads, and urban centers contributing to an unprecedented economic expansion. While the economy thrived, producing vast wealth for industrialists and entrepreneurs, it also exposed deep social problems, including extreme poverty, labor exploitation, and corrupt political practices. During this time, the disparity between the wealthy elite and the working class became stark, leading to social unrest and the emergence of labor movements advocating for workers' rights and better conditions. These issues highlighted the contrast between the glittery facade of prosperity and the underlying struggles of many Americans, hence the term "Gilded" suggesting something shiny on the outside but flawed underneath. This dynamic captures the essence of the Gilded Age, making the choice reflecting rapid economic growth and significant social issues the most accurate characterization of the period.

7. What was Watergate?

- A. A political scandal involving tax evasion.
- B. A scandal related to health care policies.
- C. A political scandal involving a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and the subsequent cover-up.
- D. A foreign policy blunder in Southeast Asia.

Watergate refers to a significant political scandal in the United States that came to prominence in the early 1970s. The scandal began with a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters, located in the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C., on June 17, 1972. This break-in was orchestrated by members of President Richard Nixon's administration, who sought to spy on and gather intelligence about their political opponents. The implications of Watergate expanded beyond the initial break-in. Following the incident, a series of revelations occurred that uncovered attempts by high-ranking officials to cover up their involvement in the break-in and obstruct the investigation. This led to a major constitutional crisis and widespread public disillusionment with the government. The scandal ultimately culminated in the resignation of President Nixon in 1974, marking a significant moment in American political history and a shift in public trust towards government institutions. The other options do not accurately describe Watergate. It was not primarily about tax evasion, health care policies, or a foreign policy issue in Southeast Asia. The Watergate scandal is specifically recognized for its connection to political corruption and the abuse of power within the highest levels of government.

8. Who was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence?

- A. George Washington
- B. Benjamin Franklin
- C. Thomas Jefferson
- D. John Adams

The primary author of the Declaration of Independence was Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was selected to draft the document by the Continental Congress in June 1776, primarily due to his renowned skill in writing and his articulate expression of Enlightenment ideals, including the principles of natural rights and the social contract theory. His composition, which eloquently expressed the colonies' grievances against British rule and articulated the fundamental right to self-governance, laid the philosophical foundation for the United States. While other notable figures like John Adams and Benjamin Franklin played significant roles in the revolutionary movement and contributed to the debate surrounding independence, it was Jefferson who penned the draft that would become a cornerstone of American democracy. The declaration, adopted on July 4, 1776, not only proclaimed independence but also framed the aspirations of a new nation built on the ideals of liberty and equality.

9. What was the main focus of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War?

- A. Expansion of military forces
- B. Containment of communism
- C. Promotion of free trade
- D. Support for colonial independence

The main focus of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was the containment of communism. This strategy emerged in response to the perceived threat of Soviet influence and the spread of communist ideology around the globe, particularly after World War II. The United States aimed to prevent the expansion of communism into countries that were not already under its sway, which shaped various aspects of foreign policy including military interventions, alliances, and economic aid. The containment policy influenced significant events, such as the Truman Doctrine, which committed the U.S. to support nations resisting communism, and the Marshall Plan, which sought to rebuild European economies to deter communist influence. Additionally, conflicts like the Korean War and the Vietnam War were directly linked to the strategies employed to contain communism. By focusing on this containment approach, the United States sought to maintain a balance of power and safeguard democratic nations from communist takeover. Other options, although they played roles in specific contexts, did not encompass the overarching strategy that defined U.S. foreign policy during this period.

10. What characterized the Cold War period?

- A. A harmonious relationship between the USA and the USSR
- B. A period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, characterized by ideological conflict, arms races, and proxy wars
- C. The establishment of a global democracy
- D. Characterized by rapid economic growth in both the USA and USSR

The Cold War period is best characterized by a significant geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, which emerged after World War II and lasted for several decades. This rivalry was not just a simple contest for power; it had profound ideological underpinnings, with the U.S. promoting capitalism and democracy while the USSR defended communism and a state-controlled economy. Throughout this time, the two superpowers engaged in an arms race, resulting in massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons and advanced military technology, leading to a precarious balance of power known as mutually assured destruction. Additionally, the Cold War saw numerous proxy wars, where both nations supported opposing sides in conflicts around the world, such as in Korea and Vietnam, effectively spreading their ideological struggle beyond their borders. The other options do not accurately encapsulate the essence of the Cold War. A harmonious relationship between the USA and the USSR would negate the very definition of the Cold War, while the ideas of a global democracy or rapid economic growth in both countries overlook the realities of political repression and economic hardships that characterized the Soviet Union during this time. Thus, the option that identifies the core characteristics of ideological conflict, arms races, and proxy wars is the most fitting for the Cold War period.