

American option, Depth study 2: The USA, 1944–92

Candidates who make valid links between themes will be credited where material is relevant to the question.

Theme 1: The late 1940s and 1950s

Key questions

Why and how were the late 1940s and 1950s a time of economic prosperity?

Content

- US economic developments, 1945–60
- The growth of consumerism
- The role of federal government's economic policies
- The impact of full employment on industrial growth

How far did society change in the late 1940s and the 1950s?

- Impact of the aftermath of the Second World War on various social groups including women
- Changing patterns of urbanisation and of migration patterns across the USA
- Growth of a distinct youth culture, e.g. teenagers
- Increased social mobility

How far were the late 1940s and 1950s a time of party political stability?

- Reasons for Truman's election in 1948
- The challenge of McCarthyism and the Red Scare

- Reasons for Eisenhower's election victories in 1952 and 1956
 - Eisenhower's domestic policies
- How effective was the civil rights movement in the 1950s?
- Impact of key civil rights groups including the NAACP and SCLC
 - The role of leading African Americans
 - The response of the peoples and governments of Southern states
 - The responses of federal institutions, i.e. Congress, President and Supreme Court

Theme 2: The 1960s and the 1970s

Key questions

Why and how did the USA experience a deteriorating economic situation in the 1960s and 1970s?

Content

- Economic impact of involvement in Vietnam
- Failure of post-war economic doctrines
- The impact of external challenges including foreign competition, oil crises of 1973 and 1979 and the Cold War
- Stagflation

How great were the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s?

- Changes in the social class system
- Growth and impact of feminism
- Impact of the counter-culture movement
- Growth and impact of the gay rights movement,
e.g. Stonewall 1969

How far were the 1960s and 1970s a time of party political instability?

- Domestic policies of the various Presidents:

Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter

- Impact of the Vietnam War on party politics

- The rise and fall of the 'imperial presidency'

including Nixon and Watergate

- Role and impact of the mass media

How far did the position of ethnic minorities improve in the 1960s and 1970s?

- The responses of federal institutions, Civil Rights

Act 1964

- The role of civil rights leaders and groups, e.g.

Martin Luther King Jr, SNCC, CORE, La Raza and

American Indian Movement (AIM)

- The growth and impact of the Black Power

movement

- Reasons for, and impact of, Affirmative Action