**Fall U.S. History Research Paper Topics**

As you begin the process of selecting a topic for your research paper, think about which topics might be interesting to you to investigate. First, think about what you enjoy reading about or what hobbies you have? Are you interested in learning about art? Sports? Social Movements? Politics? Economics? Locate the theme you are most interested in and then scan through the following lists of topics. Pick a topic that sounds intriguing or one that you find yourself immediately starting to ask questions about. Remember that the best topics for research are often the ones that you do not know as much about. Do some preliminary research by looking up the topic in your textbook and online. Try to locate three reliable sources (other than wikipedia) that can provide you with information about the topic. If the sources lead you to ask more questions and give you ideas of where to look next, then write your topic proposal. Otherwise, go back to the drawing board and pick a new topic. If you would like to write about a topic that is not listed below, you must get approval from your teacher.

*Are you interested in....?*

**Culture and the Arts/Music**

**...then you might be interested in researching:**

The Paintings of Samuel F.B. Morse: Linking America to Europe by art instead of wires

The Music of Aaron Copland: American nationalism from a communist perspective?

The Impact of the Federal Writers Project / Federal Theater Project The History of Collection of “Indigenous Art” and how the concept of art collection changed during the 20th century

The Hudson River School and Romanticism in American Art

Frank Capra and Film during the Great Depression and WWII

Jacob Riis and the Muckraking Movement

Dorothea Lange and Photography during the Great Depression

The Significance of the Apollo Theater during the Harlem Renaissance

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in San Francisco

The All American Girls Professional Baseball League during WWII

Mark Twain: Humor, Politics, and American Literature

**Political and Economic History ...then you might be interested in researching:**

The Gaspee Affair and the Significance of Foreign Relations during the American Revolution

Transatlantic Thought: The Enlightenment and the Declaration of Independence

The Revolutionary War and the Foundations of American Diplomacy

The Role of the Federalist v. Antifederalist Papers in the creation of the United States Constitution

John Marshall and the early Supreme Court

The Development of the Free Soil Party

The impact of the Dred Scott Decision on the Civil War

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

The History of the Suspension of Habeas Corpus in U.S. History

A Study of revisionist history of Reconstruction - who “wrote” the history of Reconstruction during the Jim Crow Era and how was that history revised by the 1970s and 1980s?

The Role of Taylorism in the Development of the U.S. Economy

The Growth and Changes in the AFL, Knights of Labor, and the CIO

The Boss System

The Scopes Trial

The Marshall Plan and the Berlin Airlift

The Development of Immigration Policies through the 19th and 20th centuries

**Environmental and Architectural History**

**...then you might be interested in researching:**

Frederick Law Olmstead and the greening of American cities

Louis Sullivan and the skyscraper

The Dam at Hetch Hetchy: Pinchot and Muir’s battle over the definition of conservation

The Erie Canal

How reform of zoning laws affected the development of Skyscrapers and the built environment in New York and Chicago

The impact of electricity and air conditioning in architectural design in large cities

Robert Moses and “Slum Clearance” politics in NYC

Controversy over the Panama Canal

John Muir and the creation of National Parks

Conflicts between the development of Chinatown and Japantown in Seattle, Washington

**War and Peace**

**...then you might be interested in researching:**

Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates

The Alamo

Battle of Little Big Horn

The Watts Riots

“Vietnamization”

Iranian Hostage Crisis

Camp David Accords

**Social Movements History**

**...then you might be interested in researching:**

The Beecher Family vs. Slavery

John Dewey: Making the classroom a training ground for democratic living

Jane Addams and Hull House

The Stonewall Riots

The Pullman Strike / Haymarket - Labor Movements

 The Granger Movement

Cesar Chavez

The Eugenics Movement

**Multicultural History**

**...then you might be interested in researching:**

Susan B. Anthony: Gender and sexual orientation at the turn of the 20th century

Fort Ross: A cultural crossroads in early California

Immigration and Railroad Development

The *Amistad* affair

The Ghost Dances and Wounded Knee

Slavery, Family Nativism and the “Know-Nothings”

Development of Women’s Colleges

Historically Black Universities in the U.S.

The history of abolition before the Civil War - looking at Manumission laws in various states in the North or West

Triangle Shirtwaist Fire and issues of Gender in Labor Reform

The Negro Leagues in Baseball

**Biography**

**...then you might be interested in researching:**

**Edward Beale**: Had important role in establishing California, famously associated with Kit Carson during the Battle of Los Angeles, first to report to the east coast that gold had been found, made 6 cross-country trips in order to share important news, later became superintendent of Indian Affairs

**Salmon Chase:** started as lawyer for escaped slaves, led both the Liberty Party and the Free Soil Party, Senator of Ohio, Governor of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for the trial of Jefferson Davis and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson

**Sojourner Truth:** an escaped slave who became an advocate for abolition and women’s rights, most famous for her “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech at the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention in 1851.

**Julius and Ethel Rosenberg:** American communists who were convicted as Russian spies and executed in 1953, a decision that is still controversial today.

**Alger Hiss:** an American lawyer, author, lecturer, and government official who was involved in the creation of the United Nations. In 1948 he was accused of being a Soviet spy, although it was difficult to prove and Hiss was ultimately convicted of perjury in 1950. However, Hiss maintained to his death that he was innocent of the espionage charges, a claim that has yet to be proved decisively one way or another.

**William Jennings Bryan:** an influential American politician in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the most liberal voices in the Democratic party, he represented Nebraska in the US Congress, ran for president on multiple occasions, and served as Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson (a position he ultimately resigned in protest). An excellent orator, Bryan was also a proponent of popular democracy, opposed to railroads, and a major player in the Scopes trial.

**Henry Clay:** “the Great Compromiser.” Considered one of the greatest senators of all time, Clay was an influential member of Congress in the early 19th century, partaking in several of the most important debates of the time and orchestrating several of the compromises that delayed civil war.

**Ida B. Wells:** an African-American author and journalist, Wells’ outspoken opposition to lynching marked her as an leader for civil rights, women’s rights, and women’s suffrage during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Eugene V. Debs:** was an American union leader, influential political activist, and one of the leading American socialists of the 20th century. Debs was the socialist party’s candidate for president in multiple elections, even once running his campaign from jail, where he was serving time for his involvement in the American Railway Union’s strike at the Pullman Palace Car Company.

**Margaret Sanger** - the founder of the modern birth control movement, Sanger was an outspoken advocate for sex education and providing women with access to contraception. She opened the first birth control clinic in the US, an organization which ultimately became Planned Parenthood.

**Medgar Evers** - an American civil rights activist that also served as a field officer in the NAACP, Edgars was a central figure in the desegregation of the University of Mississippi. A martyr for civil rights, his death at the hands of the white supremacist group, the White Citizen’s Council, in 1963, was as a national tragedy that helped galvanize the civil rights movement around the country.

**George Wallace**: pro-segregationist governor of Alabama who was an influential player is several of the key civil rights cases and incidents in the state during the height of the civil rights movement.

**Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.:** one of the most influential justices in the history of the Supreme Court, Holmes’ written opinions throughout his tenure on the bench helped to define the direction of the court in the early 20th century. Admired for his well-articulated opinions, in particular when he was in the dissenting minority, Holmes was nicknamed “the Great Dissenter,” and his practical approach to the law has had lasting effects on American jurisprudence to this day.