

# APUSH UNIT 5 REVIEW GUIDE (1844-1877)

For Students Preparing for the AP® United States History Exam



**10-17%**

of the APUSH exam

The fifth unit of the AP® United States History (APUSH) course focuses on the period from 1844 to 1877, from the election of James K. Polk through the conclusion of the Reconstruction era.

This unit is eligible to be assessed on every portion of the exam (including the DBQ).

## MANIFEST DESTINY AND WESTWARD EXPANSION



John Gast's famous painting, *American Progress* (1872), offers an unambivalent celebration of the westward expansion from a nineteenth-century perspective.

The Louisiana Purchase opened new lands for Americans to move west and settle across the Mississippi River. Some Americans (mostly from the South) chose to settle in **Texas**, which was then a part of Mexico. When Texas declared its independence in 1836 and petitioned to join the United States through **annexation**, President Andrew Jackson was skeptical of taking on a territory that would ignite debates about slavery at home and risk a war with Mexico. However, by the 1840s, many Americans were convinced that it was the **Manifest Destiny** (obvious God-given purpose) of the United States to expand across North America all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

When **James K. Polk** won the 1844 presidential election on an expansionist platform, the road was cleared for the dream of Manifest Destiny to become a reality. In 1845, Congress annexed Texas through a joint resolution. A year later, the United States declared war on Mexico, ushering in a new era of intense sectional conflict.

## THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

The **Mexican-American War** began in 1846 after the United States annexed Texas and resolved to defend disputed land claims all the way to the Rio Grande. Militarily, the war resulted in a decisive victory for the United States, with US troops occupying Mexico City. The United States forced Mexico to cede its northern territories in return for \$15 million.

The **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** (1848) offered few protections to Mexicans and American Indians who lived in the ceded territory. Mexicans who chose to remain in the Mexican Cession were granted US citizenship, but the federal government did not always honor their property claims. The **Apache**, **Navajo**, and other Southwestern tribes fought unsuccessfully to hold onto their ancestral lands before being forced onto **reservations**.



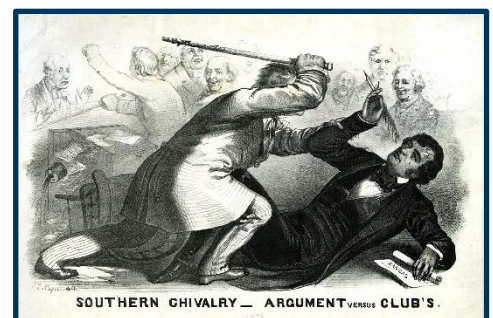
The Mexican Cession of 1848

## THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

The Mexican-American War ignited fresh debates about slavery. **Free Soilers**, who opposed slavery in the West (but not in the South), supported the **Wilmot Proviso**, which proposed to ban slavery in the entire Mexican Cession. Southern politicians wanted to open the newly-acquired territory to slavery. When settlers in California proposed to enter the Union as a free state, Congress was deadlocked until Henry Clay put together a compromise. Clay's **Compromise of 1850** admitted California as a free state in return for passing the **Fugitive Slave Act of 1850**, which made it easier for Southern slaveholders to recover their so-called "property" in Northern free states. The compromise also established **popular sovereignty** (letting settlers vote to decide the status of slavery) in the Mexican Cession.

## THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR

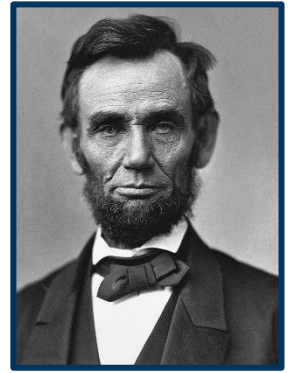
The 1850s set the stage for the Civil War. After the Democrats won the 1852 election, Congress passed the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**, which established popular sovereignty in areas that the Missouri Compromise had previously closed to slavery. The Kansas-Nebraska Act led to the formation of the **Republican Party**, which opposed the further expansion of slavery. Violence erupted both in Kansas and in Congress, with **John Brown** killing proslavery settlers in Kansas and Preston Brooks caning Charles Sumner in the US Senate. When the Supreme Court's **Dred Scott** (1857) decision opened all federal territories to slavery, the Republican Party gained momentum in the North, resulting in the election of **Abraham Lincoln** as president in 1860. After Lincoln was elected, South Carolina and other states in the Deep South **seceded** from the Union and formed the **Confederate States of America**.



This political cartoon depicts the caning of Charles Sumner from the perspective of Northerners, who saw Preston Brooks's actions as utterly barbaric.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

Lincoln responded firmly to secession, believing that the seceded states had violated the Constitution. In the early years of the Civil War, he stated that his only objective in the war was to preserve the Union. He was convinced that the Union's advantages in manpower, manufacturing, and money would result in a quick victory. However, after Confederate forces commanded by **Robert E. Lee** scored several victories in the critical theater of Virginia, Lincoln reconsidered his position. After the Union achieved a strategic victory at the Battle of **Antietam**, Lincoln unveiled the **Emancipation Proclamation**, which pronounced enslaved people in Confederate-held areas "then, thenceforward, and forever free." The proclamation was a game changer for the North. It opened the door for recruitment of African American troops and torpedoed the Confederacy's efforts to gain recognition and support from European powers.



Abraham Lincoln's wartime leadership led to both the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery.

The Union's victory in the Battle of **Gettysburg** was a decisive turning point in the war. The Confederacy, lacking the forces to take the initiative, shifted to a defensive strategy. President Lincoln used his **Gettysburg Address** to frame the Union cause as a struggle for the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. In the war's final year, Lincoln entrusted **Ulysses S. Grant** and **William T. Sherman** with ensuring the Confederacy's final defeat.

### UNIT TIMELINE

- **1845** Texas is annexed by a joint resolution of Congress.
- **1846** The United States declares war on Mexico.
- **1848** The United States gains the Mexican Cession by treaty.
- **1850** Congress passes the Compromise of 1850.
- **1854** The Kansas-Nebraska Act reignites conflict.
- **1857** The Supreme Court issues the contentious *Dred Scott* decision.
- **1860** Abraham Lincoln is elected president, resulting in secession.
- **1863** The Emancipation Proclamation goes into effect.
- The Union Army defeats Confederate forces at Gettysburg.
- **1865** The 13th Amendment abolishes slavery.
- **1877** Rutherford B. Hayes is declared the winner of the 1876 election, ending Reconstruction.

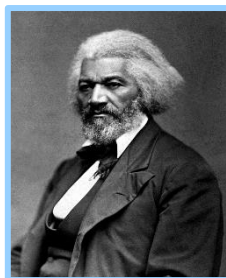
### PRESIDENTIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Even while still in the thick of the war, Lincoln was already thinking about **Reconstruction** (putting the Union back together). Believing secession to be illegal, he saw Reconstruction as an extension of the president's power to pardon individuals for crimes committed against the United States. Lincoln's **Ten Percent Plan** allowed Southern states to form Union-friendly state governments after ten percent of the state's voters swore a loyalty oath to the United States and agreed to accept emancipation. The following year, Lincoln began campaigning for the passage of the **Thirteenth Amendment**, which abolished slavery throughout the United States.

### RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Some members of Lincoln's party, known as **Radical Republicans**, believed that Lincoln's Reconstruction plan was too lenient toward former Confederates and did not do enough to protect the rights of African Americans in the South. After Lincoln was assassinated, Radical leaders in Congress passed the **Reconstruction Acts**, which divided the former Confederate states into military districts and established a process for their reentry into the Union. The Radicals directed the successful ratifications of the **Fourteenth** and **Fifteenth Amendments**, which guaranteed birthright citizenship and equal rights for African Americans and prohibited voter discrimination based on race (while maintaining voter discrimination based on sex).

### THE FAILURE OF RECONSTRUCTION



Frederick Douglass was disappointed by the ultimate failure of Reconstruction.

Although Congress passed legislation during Reconstruction to protect African Americans' constitutional rights and empower federal authorities combat vigilante organizations (such as the **Ku Klux Klan**), no legislation provided a way for recently freed blacks (or poor whites) in the South to purchase their own land. Most Southern farmers who didn't own land worked as **sharecroppers**, owing a portion of their crops each year to landowners as rent.

In the 1870s, Northern voters grew more concerned about the economy and political corruption, and they lost enthusiasm for Reconstruction. One by one, Southern state governments restored white Democrats to office and passed **Jim Crow** laws, which enforced racial segregation and disenfranchised black voters through poll taxes and literacy tests. The Supreme Court ruled in **Plessy v. Ferguson** (1896) that segregation did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment based on the "separate but equal" doctrine. *Plessy* would later be overturned by *Brown v. Board* (1954).