

# Understanding the modern world

## 1A America, 1840–1895: Expansion and consolidation



This period study focuses on the development of America during a turbulent half century of change. It was a period of expansion and consolidation – the expansion to the west and securing the United States as a nation.

You will study the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of these two developments and the role ideas played in bringing about change. You will also look at the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change and the impact the developments had on them.

Below is a list of topics that we will study. This will be an important document for when you revise

### Part one: Expansion: opportunities and challenges

- The geography of North America: attitudes to the Great American Desert; the belief in 'Manifest Destiny'.
- Why the early settlers went west and the challenges they faced:
- Who the early settlers were - Brigham Young and the Mormons; the pioneer migrant farmers, the journey west; the miners.
- Dealing with a different culture: the Plains Indians' way of life; early American Government policy towards the Plains Indians; the Permanent Indian Frontier; a changing relationship with the Plains Indians.

### Part two: Conflict across America

- Increasing conflict on the Plains: the Fort Laramie Treaty (1851) and the failure of the policy of concentration; the Indian Wars (1862–1867): reasons for and consequences of the Wars; Sand Creek Massacre; Fetterman's Trap.
- The background to the American Civil War: differences between North and South, issues of slavery, westward expansion and free states abolitionism; breakdown of the Missouri Compromise, John Brown, the roles of Lincoln and Jefferson Davis; the social and economic impact of the American Civil War on civilian populations.
- Coming to terms with the Mormons: the Mountain Meadow Massacre and its aftermath.

### Part three: Consolidation: forging the nation

- The aftermath of the American Civil War: the 13th Amendment; Civil Rights Act; reconstruction in the South, 1866–1877; carpetbaggers; the balance of Federal and State powers.
- The continued settlement of the west: the Homesteaders, reasons for going west; government actions and laws; land and railroads; farming problems and solutions.
- The resolution of 'the Indian problem' after 1865: the small reservations policy; attitudes to the native Americans; Battle of the Little Big Horn; The Dawes Act; Battle of Wounded Knee; the closing of the frontier and its impact on native Americans.

Revision:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/shp/americanwest/>