Edexcel History AS Level Route F: Searching for rights and freedoms in the twentieth century

Overview

The twentieth century saw the expectations and aspirations of ordinary people increase tremendously. In particular, the experience of two world wars led people to question the political, social and economic environment around them. Alongside this, technological advancements and the development of mass communication provided the means to experience a better quality of life and to the rapid spread of political, social and cultural ideas. In some countries this would lead to communist-inspired revolution from below — as in Russia and China — although not necessarily ending in the equality and security originally envisaged. In others, existing political and social structures attempted to adapt to these desires. In the USA, and indeed in Britain, the quest for political, social and economic advancement saw reforms to existing structures. In those countries which had become subject to the rule of nineteenth-century European empires, people sought to overthrow political domination and discrimination, bringing an end to imperial rule in India and apartheid in South Africa. Route F focuses on the experiences of people fighting for rights and freedoms in the USA, India and South Africa.

The options in Route F are linked by the common theme of a search for rights, freedoms and greater equality during the twentieth century. In the USA, the quest for political, social and economic advancement mainly looked to reform existing structures. In India and South Africa, this quest led to more radical outcomes, bringing an end to imperial rule in India and the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Studying two different countries allows students to develop a greater understanding of both similarities and differences in the search for greater rights, freedoms and equality in the twentieth-century world (although students will not be required to answer comparative questions that link the breadth and the chosen depth option).

In this route, students study:

In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96

*and either* India, c1914–48: the road to independence

*or* South Africa, 1948–94: from apartheid state to ‘rainbow nation’.

Paper 1, Option 1F: In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96

Overview

This option comprises a study of the dramatic political, economic and social transformation of the USA in the twentieth century, an era which saw the USA challenged by the consequences of political, economic and social inequalities at home while maintaining its position as a world superpower.

In 1917, the USA entered the First World War as the fastest growing economy in the world and with the potential to become a leading world power. By the end of 1918, America had ended the war as the world’s ‘top nation’. Until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1941, the USA was reluctant to become the world’s policeman — the policy of isolationism — but was more willing to encourage the spread of its political, economic and cultural values: democracy, capitalism and mass popular entertainment. After 1945, as the USA and the USSR pursued the Cold War, the USA aggressively promoted these values as one of the world’s two superpowers. The USA was, and is, a country of contradictions. Radical revolutionaries had fought for independence from Britain in the 1770s but conservative conformity was the prevailing political attitude. The ‘American Dream’ was of security and prosperity but equality of opportunity often meant ‘rugged individualism’: sorting out one’s own problems. Meanwhile ethnic minorities, women, the poor, social minorities and radicals often struggled to be heard in the ‘land of the free’. The history of the USA in the twentieth century can be seen as the history of ordinary Americans trying to come to terms with these contradictions.

In the 1920s, America experienced both ‘boom’ and ‘bust’. Non-interventionist Republican presidents allowed the economy to expand with little regulation. Many Americans flourished but few farmers, African Americans and immigrants prospered. After the Wall Street Crash in 1929, most Americans were hit by a decade of the Great Depression and those who were already poor suffered most. The majority of voters put their trust in President Roosevelt, who promised a New Deal to save the country, but it was probably his decision to enter the Second World War that bailed America out.

Post-1945 America experienced an unparalleled prosperity which saw the creation of an affluent white middle-class. In the 1960s, this led to resentment from those who were excluded — the search for civil rights — and, perhaps most surprisingly, backlash from the youth who had benefited most: counter-culture. President Johnson’s ‘Great Society’ programme did try to help the poor but he was undermined by the disaster that was the Vietnam War.

Many Americans hoped that the 1970s would bring greater stability. However, despite continued superpower status and the advance of American popular culture, it only brought further challenges. Conservative America hoped that President Nixon would bring stability but he resigned amid scandal and corruption. Neither Republican nor Democrat presidents were able to deal effectively with either social tensions or economic downturn.

In the next decade the tensions did not go away, but 1980 ushered in 12 years of more confident Republican rule. Ronald Reagan’s presidency (1980–88) was just as controversial as Margaret Thatcher’s in Britain but President Clinton’s first term in office (1992–96) was heavily influenced by its political and economic conservatism. However, social and cultural values continued to polarise even more. Even today, ‘Obama-care’ may have introduced health insurance for more Americans than ever before, but ultra-conservative republicanism is also thriving.

The option is divided into the following four themes, though students need to appreciate the linkages between themes, as questions may target the content of more than one.

Theme 1: The changing political environment, 1917–80

Theme 2: The quest for civil rights, 1917–80

Theme 3: Society and culture in change, 1917–80

Theme 4: The changing quality of life, 1917–80

The historical interpretations focus is: What impact did the Reagan presidency (1981–89) have on the USA in the years 1981–96?

Content guidance

This section provides additional guidance on the specification content. It should be remembered that the official specification is the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

Themes

The four themes identified require students to have an overview of political, social and economic change and aspects of cultural change across the time period.

Students need to have knowledge of the specified themes and be able to analyse and evaluate cause, consequence, key features and change and make comparisons over and within the period studied in dealing with factors which brought about change.

**Theme 1: The changing political environment, 1917**–**80**

In studying Theme 1 students will need to understand the changing political climate from US entry into the First World War to Reagan’s election. Detailed knowledge of individual presidential policies is not required but students should have an understanding of general policy initiatives undertaken by presidents and their underlying political influences. Students should be aware of the changing styles of presidential leadership across the period. They should also understand the effect that American involvement in war had on the general political environment and presidential government.

**Theme 2: The quest for civil rights, 1917**–**80**

In studying Theme 2 students will consider the struggle for minority rights in the years 1917–80, with particular reference to African-American civil rights. Students should understand the political, social and economic situation for African Americans across the period. They should be aware of the changing nature and pattern of campaigning and be able to identify relevant examples. Students should have knowledge of major federal civil rights legislation and an understanding of their impact, but do not need detailed knowledge of their passage or specific clauses. They should be aware of the influence of the African-American struggle on the search for non-African-American minority rights, but also understand the distinct reasons for campaigning by other minorities.

**Theme 3: Society and culture in change, 1917**–**80**

In studying Theme 3 students will study selected aspects of society and culture which were both transformed and transforming in the years 1917–80. Students should also be aware that experiences of women and migrants were part of the quest for rights and freedoms studied in Theme 2. Students should understand the patterns of change across the period and that women had differing experiences. They should be aware of both the extent to which the USA was a migrant nation and the diversity of the immigrant experience. Students should have an understanding of the extent to which popular culture and broadcast news both reflected and influenced society, and be able to identify relevant examples.

**Theme 4: The changing quality of life, 1917**–**80**

In studying Theme 4 students will consider the extent to which the quality of life in the USA in the years 1917–80 was affected by the economic environment and increasing aspiration. Detailed knowledge of economic policies and measures are not required but students should be aware of the patterns of economic change and their effects on living standards. They should also be aware of the benefits and gains across the period and that different social groups had differing experiences. Students should have an understanding of the extent to which developments in leisure and travel affected the quality of life, and identify relevant examples.

Historical interpretations: What impact did the Reagan presidency (1981–89) have on the USA in the years 1981–96?

This topic focuses on the debate concerning the nature and effect of Ronald Reagan’s presidency from 1980 to 1988, and the consequences of his two terms in office to the presidential election of 1992. Students will need to know the main features of Reaganomics and his aims to reduce the role of federal government. They will need to be aware of his conservative social values and the influence of the Religious Right in the 1980s. Students will need to consider the extent to which Reagan’s economic policies were successfully implemented and the extent to which economic problems were overcome. They should also be aware of Reagan’s economic legacy in the years to 1996. Students will need to consider the extent and impact of cutbacks in federal government and the extent and effectiveness of deregulation policies. Students should also consider the extent to which Reagan’s social values influenced social change and affected the advancement of women and of African Americans and other minority groups. They should understand the extent to which Reagan’s policies affected the both the nature of US electoral politics and the public perception of the role of the President up to 1996. Students should understand the nature of the debate on the extent to which Reagan’s presidency changed US politics. They should be aware of the impact of the ‘Iran-Contra affair’ on attitudes towards the Reagan presidency. Students should be aware of the impact of the Reagan legacy on the period 1989–96 with regard to continuity and change in policies and general trends.

Resources and references

You will be provided with a copy of the core text book titled: Edexcel AS/A Level History, Paper 1&2: Searching for Rights and Freedoms in the 20th Century Student Book + Activebook (Edexcel GCE History 2015), however you may wish to purchase your own copy to enable you to highlight parts of the text and make annotations.

In the table below is a wider reading list as well as some recommended films. Many of them will be used to supplement the text book in certain themes of the unit. Please do not be overwhelmed by the list. You are not expected to read every single book cover to cover, certain chapters within the books will be relevant to particular themes. Your teacher can help guide you with this.

It is recommended you read as much as you can around the subject, starting now! Evidence shows that students who receive the top grades in History are those who read widely around the topic, and do not just use the text book.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Resource** | **Type** |
| Robin Bunce and Laura Gallagher, *Edexcel AS History, Unit 1: Pursuing Life and Liberty: Equality in the USA, 1945–1968* (Pearson, 2009) | Textbook |
| Peter Clements, *Prosperity Depression and the New Deal Third Edition*, Access to History (Hodder Education, 2005) | Textbook |
| David Mauk and John Oakland, *American Civilization* (Routledge, sixth edition, 2014) | Textbook |
| Derrick Murphy, Kathryn Cooper and Mark Waldron, *The United States 1776–1992* (Collins, 2001) | Textbook |
| Vivienne Sanders, *Civil Rights in the USA, 1945–1968*, Access to History (Hodder Education, 2008) | Textbook |
| Doug and Susan Willoughby, *The USA 1917–45*, Heinemann Advanced History (Heinemann, 2000) | Textbook |
| Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (Penguin, 2001) | General text |
| Eric Rauchway, *The Great Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2008) | General introductory text |
| Robert J McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2003) | General introductory text |
| Maldwyn A Jones, *The Limits of Liberty* (Oxford University Press, 1995) | Academic |
| History Channel  [www.history.co.uk](http://www.history.co.uk) | Website |
| *The Black Power Mixtape 1967–1975* (2011) | Documentary |
| BBC (1995)  *People’s Century*  Several of the episodes concern America, including:  Episode 5, *On the Line*, which looks at mass production and the Great Depression.  Episode 6, *Great Escape*, which looks at Hollywood in the 1920s.  Episode 7, *Breadline* deals with the Great Depression.  Episodes 11, 12, 15 and 22 look at different aspects of the Cold War.  Episode 16 looks at the mass media in the post war world.  Episode 17 looks at the civil rights struggle.  Episode 21 looks at the radicalisation of the struggle for black rights and the counterculture.  Episode 22 considers women’s rights.  Episode 26 looks at Reaganism. | Documentary |
| PBS (1994)  *American Experience* | TV series |
| PBS (2006)  *The March of the Bonus Army* | TV movie |
| PBS (2005)  *DR: A Presidency Revealed* | Documentary |
| PBS (1993)  *The Great Depression* | TV series |
| PBS (1990)  *Eyes on the Prize*  Season 1 and Season 2 | Documentary series |
| *The Woman on Pier 13* (1950)  Also known as *I Married a Communist* | Film |
| *It* (1927)  Stars Clara Bow | Film |
| *The Wild Party* (1929)  Stars Clara Bow | Film |
| *The Crowd* (1928) | Film |
| *The Roaring Twenties* (1939) | Film |
| *Birth of a Nation* (1915) | Film |
| *Shaft* (1971) | Film |
| National Archives  A collection of source documents that relate to protests, racial tension and the state and federal government response to calls for equal rights for black Americans in the 1950s and 1960s: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/topics/civil-rights.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/topics/civil-rights.htm)  Section on Martin Luther King with documents: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/heroesvillains/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/heroesvillains/) | Website |

Paper 2, Option 2F.2: South Africa, 1948–94: from apartheid state to ‘rainbow nation’

Overview

This option comprises a study of South Africa during its transition from white minority rule in 1948 to the free elections of 1994; a long, and at times, dramatic process in which South Africa was transformed from an apartheid state into a multi-racial democracy: a ‘rainbow nation’.

The years 1948–94 saw the emergence of one of the great figures of the twentieth century: Nelson Mandela. His story of discrimination, resistance and imprisonment, followed by release and election as the President of South Africa in many ways mirrors the story of South Africa itself. However, the history of South Africa is a complicated one.

South Africa covers an enormous territory: from the Cape of Good Hope in the south to the Limpopo River in the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east. Consequently, the indigenous African population is made up of a wide variety of ethnic and tribal groups, including the San, the Xhosa and the Zulus, with many different languages. Added to this there are three other recognised major racial groups: whites, coloureds (mixed ethnic origin) and Asians/Indians.

In 1652 when the first Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape, their attempts to force the local African communities to work for them failed. This led both to an aggressive campaign against indigenous Africans as the Dutch moved inland and to the importation of slaves from the Far East (in the nineteenth century, labourers would also be brought over from India). This in turn led to discrimination and the beginnings of a society based on racial divisions.

British involvement in India led to a desire to take over the Cape from the Dutch. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, they were formally given control. This led to another layer of tension, between the British and the descendants of the original Dutch settlers: known as Boers or Afrikaners. In 1834, after the British had abolished slavery, groups of Boers began to move north — *trek* — into territory as yet unclaimed by Europeans.

This would begin 70 years of conflict in which the British, the Boers and various African tribes would all fight each other for control of the territory. When diamonds, and then gold, were found inland as well, a further dimension was added to the conflict. By 1902, the British were the predominant power but the events of the Second Boer War (1899–1902) led to compromise with the Afrikaners and the continuation of discrimination against ‘non-whites’.

In 1910, the white population was given self-determination: the right to control their own domestic matters. In 1948, as Africans across the continent clamoured for independence and majority rule, the white minority Afrikaner National Party won control of the country, promising to enforce ‘apartheid’. Apartheid was a policy of systematic racial discrimination and segregation in every area of life: work, education, health, public transport, shopping and entertainment, even sitting on a beach. This was a system so complex that each racial group mentioned above was treated in a different way; a system which continued in some form until 1994.

This is why the history of 1948–94 being studied in Option 2F.2 is not just the straightforward progression that the story of Nelson Mandela may at first seem. It explains why the struggle to gain majority rule took nearly 50 years, why African nationalists were often bitterly divided, why the years 1990–94 were particularly traumatic and why the ‘rainbow nation’ still has many political, social and economic problems today.

The option is divided into the following four topics, though students need to appreciate the linkages between topics, as questions may target the content of more than one topic.

Topic 1. The response to apartheid, c1948–59

Topic 2. Radicalisation of resistance and the consolidation of National Party power, 1960–68

Topic 3. Redefining resistance and challenges to National Party power, 1968–83

Topic 4. The end of apartheid and the creation of the ‘rainbow nation’, 1984–94

Content guidance

This section provides additional guidance on the specification content. It should be remembered that the official specification is the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

**Overview**

The focus of this unit is primarily on the nature and success of political resistance to the Afrikaner apartheid regime, and the reasons for the gradual demise of this regime in the years 1948–94. Students need to understand that, although the majority of opponents were supporters of African nationalism, the complex racial politics of South Africa meant that political opposition was not exclusively African or nationalist.

Students will be required to place documentary extracts in their historical context, but the knowledge they will need to have will be central to that specified in the topics.

Although the unit topics are clarified separately below, students need to appreciate the linkages between them since questions, including document questions, may be set which target the content of more than one topic. For example, students might draw on elements from Topics 3 and 4 to show understanding of the reasons for the failure of the National Party to maintain power or they might draw on content from Topics 1, 2, 3 and 4 to consider the changes in the resistance methods used by political opponents across the whole period.

**Topic 1: The response to apartheid, c1948–59**

The topic covers the introduction of the apartheid regime after the election of the National Party in 1948 and the initial development of organised peaceful resistance. Students should understand the complex racial make-up of South African society and be aware that apartheid was the codification and extension of discriminatory policies initially established under direct British rule. They should be aware of the relationship of the Union of South Africa with Britain in 1948.

Students should understand the social, economic and political impact of the Second World War on support for the National Party and the ‘laager’ mentality created by international pressure for reform and growing anti-colonialism in the post-war period.

Students do not need detailed knowledge of individual apartheid laws but should be aware of how key laws collectively created official segregation of the different races in South Africa politically, socially, economically, culturally and territorially.

Students should be aware that there were a variety of political organisations resisting apartheid throughout the period of which the African National Congress, although the most significant, was just one. They should also understand the role played by women and youth in resisting apartheid throughout the period of the whole option.

**Topic 2: Radicalisation of resistance and the consolidation of National Party power, 1960–68**

The topic covers the period in which Afrikaner Nationalists broke away from British influence completely with the creation of a republic and extended their control further, and African nationalism responded with the move towards an armed struggle.

Students should be aware that from 1961 most non-white political parties were banned and of the consequence of this on their ability to organise politically. Students should also be aware of the extent of government control and political suppression, and the limitations on guerrilla activity within South Africa, despite the commitment to an armed struggle by the ANC and PAC.

**Topic 3: Redefining resistance and challenges to National Party power, 1968–83**

The topic covers a period of apparent decline for traditional African nationalism and the strength of Afrikaner nationalism. However, students should understand the impact of the demise of Black Consciousness and the death of Steve Biko and the reasons for the revival of the African National Congress. They should also be aware of the effects of external and domestic pressures on National Party power.

Students should be aware that Black Consciousness was a key feature of African nationalism in the early 1970s and understand the role of Steve Biko in mobilising young people.

Students should be aware of both the economic and psychological costs to white South Africa of the commitment to defend the borders of South Africa against African nationalism to the north. They should be aware of the impact of the collapse of Portuguese rule in southern Africa in 1974 and the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980.

**Topic 4: The end of apartheid and the creation of the ‘rainbow nation’, 1984–94**

The topic covers the period in which a concerted effort to destabilise the townships and the internal economy combined with international pressure resulted in the collapse of apartheid and the creation of a non-racial constitution and government for South Africa. Students should understand the relationship between the United Democratic Front and the ANC. Students should understand that the UDF used a variety of protest strategies, including economic.

Students should be aware of the economic cost to South Africa of international isolation and the impact of sporting and cultural boycotts on different elements of South African society.

The period from the release of Nelson Mandela to the elections of 1994 is one of complex political activity. Students do not need to have detailed knowledge of either the constitutional negotiations or the divisions within African nationalism, but should be aware of the extent to which these delayed and influenced the final agreement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Type |
| Nelson Mandela, The Long Walk to Freedom (Abacus, 2013) | Memoir |
| Tony Pinchuk, Mandela for beginners (Icon, 1994) | General text |
| Christopher Culpin, South Africa 1948–1995: a depth study (Hodder Education, 2000)  Martin Roberts, South Africa 1948–1994: the Rise and Fall of Apartheid (Longman, 2001)  Rosemary Mulholland, South Africa 1948–1994 (Cambridge University Press, 1997) | GCSE level textbooks |
| Nadine Gordimer, Telling Times: Writing and Living, 1950–2008 (Bloomsbury, 2011)  Rian Malan, My Traitor’s Heart (Vintage, 1991)  Donald Woods, Biko (Henry Holt, 1996) | Wider reading |
| Truth and reconciliation commission:  www.justice.gov.za/trc | Website |
| South Africa History online:  www.sahistory.org.za | Website |
| ANC website:  [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za) | Website |
| Digital Innovation South Africa:  <http://disa.ukzn.ac.za> | Website |
| Aluka  Digital library of resources from and about Africa:  www.aluka.org | Website |
| Cry Freedom (1987)  Invictus (2010)  Mandela (2014) | Films |

Students should be aware of the intensity and extent of violence experienced both as a result of government action and political disagreement during the years   
1990–94.