**The Making of a Superpower:**

**USA 1865-1975**







**Breadth Study Topic Guide**

**1K The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975**

This option allows students to study in breadth issues of change, continuity, cause and consequence in this period through the following key questions:

* How did government, political authority and political parties change and develop?
* In what ways did the economy and society of the USA change and develop?
* How did the role of the USA in world affairs change?
* How important were ideas and ideology?
* How united was the USA during this period?
* How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

**Year 12: from Civil War to World War, 1865–1920**

**The Era of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1890**

* The weaknesses of Federal Government: Johnson, Grant and the failure of Radical Reconstruction
* The politics of the Gilded Age and the era of weak presidents; political corruption
* Social, regional and ethnic divisions: divisions within and between North, South and West; the position of African-Americans
* Economic growth and the rise of corporations: railways; oil; developments in agriculture; urbanisation
* Laissez-faire dominance and consequences; the impact of the ending of the frontier
* The limits of foreign engagement and continuation of isolationism: the continuation of the Monroe Doctrine; territorial consolidation (Alaska) and tensions over Canada

**Populism, progressivism and imperialism, 1890–1920**

* Political tensions and divisions: the reaction against Big Business at national and state level
* The ideas and influence of Bryan, Roosevelt and Taft; Populism, Progressivism and Wilson’s New Freedom
* Economic change and developments: the rise of US dominance as an economic and industrial power and the consequences of this
* Social developments: mass immigration and urbanisation and their consequences; the position of African-Americans
* Foreign affairs: imperialism; engagement in international affairs; Spain and the Philippines; the Panama Canal; the First World War, neutrality and entry
* The USA by 1920: economic power; social and ethnic divisions; political reaction and renewed isolationism

**Year 13: Crises and the rise to World Power, 1920–1975**

**Crisis of identity, 1920–1945**

* Domestic politics: Harding, Coolidge and Republican conservatism; Hoover and the Depression
* FD Roosevelt and the New Deals: conflict of ideas over the role of the Federal Government
* The economy: boom to bust and recovery; structural weaknesses and the impact of the New Deals and the Second World War on economic recovery
* Social and cultural developments: ‘the Jazz Age’ in the 1920s; new social values and the role of women; the failure of prohibition and its significance; social impact of the Depression and the Second World War
* Social, regional and ethnic divisions: countryside versus city; divisions between North, West and South; African-Americans and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan
* The USA and international relations: the extent of isolationism; FDR and the end of isolationism and the Second World War

**The Superpower, 1945–1975**

* Domestic politics: Truman, Eisenhower and post-war reconstruction
* Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon; New Frontier; the Great Society; Nixon and Republican revival
* Economic change and developments: the rise of the consumer society and economic boom
* Ideological, social, regional and ethnic divisions: McCarthyism; civil rights; youth culture; protest and the mass media
* The USA and international relations: the Cold War and relations with the USSR and China; the Vietnam War
* The USA by 1975: its place as a Superpower; the limits of social cohesion; new cultural developments, including the role of women and the position of African-American

**Section A Practice Questions**

**Reconstruction & the Gilded Age 1865-1890:**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from Dories Kearns Goodwin, author of *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, in a televised interview 2006:**

What Lincoln might have done after the war- that is the big unknown question of history. Had he lived, would the Reconstruction have been different? How would he have treated the South? How would he have ensured that black Americans had rights, even as he brought the South back to the Union? Everybody wonders – if Lincoln hadn’t been killed, would things be different? Dying just as the war was about to be won, not having to deal with Reconstruction and all the messy problems of peace probably kept Lincoln’s reputation intact. Some say the country would have been better off with him dealing with Reconstruction than with Andrew Johnson. It would have been better to have Lincoln with that great sense of empathy towards the South, and the determination to protect the rights of black Americans. If we had a better Reconstruction era, and if what followed it had been less deadly, maybe the whole country would be better off today.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from ‘To Begin the Nation Anew: Congress, Citizenship and Civil Rights after the Civil War’ by Robert J. Kaczorowski in *American Historical Review* (Oxford University Press, 1987)**

The civil rights legislation after the Civil War defined the fundamental rights of citizens as rights belonging to all US citizens, recognised by the Constitution and laws of the United States. Although the states were still expected to continue in their traditional function of securing civil rights, their authority was to be shared with Congress and the federal courts. Because federal law was supreme, Congress and the federal courts could overrule all state authority over personal rights. The civil rights amendments and the laws of Reconstruction represented a constitutional revolution and a new American federalism centred on national authority and national institutions. But in the 1870s the Supreme Court rejected the revolutionary constitutionalism of the congressional Republicans. The Court read into the thirteenth and fourteenth Amendments the theory of states’ rights promoted by conservative Democrats.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* by Edward L. Ayers (Oxford University Press, 1992)**

The Democratic Redeemers defined themselves, in large part, by what they were not. Unlike the Republicans, the Redeemers were not interested in a biracial coalition. The Democrats would not seriously consider black needs, would not invert the racial hierarchy by allowing blacks to hold offices for which whites longed. Unlike the Republicans too, the Redeemers would not sue the state government as an active agent of change. Democrats scoffed not only at Republican support for railroads and other businesses, but also at Republican initiatives in schools, orphanages, prisons and asylums. Democrats assured landowning farmers that the party would roll back taxes. The Democrats saw themselves as the proponents of common sense, honesty and caution where the Republicans offered foolishness, corruption and impetuosity. The Democrats explained away their own violence and fraud, both of which soon dwarfed Reconstruction, as fighting fire with fire.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in Extracts 1, 2 and 3 are in relation to the end of Reconstruction and its consequences.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from *The Transformation* *of American Society 1870-1890* by John A. Garratty (Harper, 1968)**

The American political system, which seemed to contemporaries corrupt and so archaically inefficient as to be incapable of deal effectively with current needs, was undergoing important alterations, the effects of which would only become clear in the next century. Many Americans of that time were more impressed by the confusion and waste resulting from the speed and pervasiveness of the changes that were taking place than by the constructive achievements of the era, and many later historians have adopted this point of view. To such persons, this was a **Gilded Age**, ruthlessly materialistic, selfishly individualistic, fraudulent, hypocritical, coarse. This view of the era is myopic more than false. In proper focus the constructive achievements of the period appear far more significant.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *Rebirth of a nation: the Making of Modern America 1877-1920* by Jackson Lears (Harper, 2009)**

Twelve years after Appomattox, the formal end of Reconstruction marked the beginning of sectional reconciliation – but only the beginning. Recently freed slaves and their Radical republican allies had been determined to implement revolutionary change in the Southern social order; white Southerners especially among the propertied classes, had been equally determined to resist it. Reconstruction politics was the area where the social meanings of the war were fought out. By the spring of 1877, in most parts of the Confederacy, the issue was no longer in doubt: the Northern army of occupation was withdrawn from Southern soil; the recently freed slaves were left largely if not entirely to the mercy of their former masters. In public discourse, the primary meaning of the Civil War became Reunion not Emancipation.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *American Populism*: *A Social History 1877-1898,* by Robert C, McMath (Hill & Wang, 1993)**

In the long sweep of American history, the year 1877 marks important endings and beginnings. In April, newly inaugurated President Rutherford B. Hayes signalled his intention to no longer to use federal troops in protecting the rights of African-Americans in the South. The United States’ halfway revolution in race relations was seemingly at an end. Scarcely three months later President Hayes rushed other federal troops to Martinsburg, West Virginia, in a futile effort to quell a railroad strike that threatened to spread nationwide. At the very moment when tensions between northern and southern whites were easing (at the expense of African-Americans), the Great Strike of 1877 ushered in an era that would divide Americans along lines of wealth and occupation for the next two decades.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the end of Reconstruction and its consequences.**

**Extract A**

***The Uprooted* by Oscar Handlin (Atlantic Little Brown 1951)**

The old (European) conditions of living could not survive in the new conditions of space. Ways long taken for granted in the village adjusted slowly and painfully to density of population in the cities, to disorder in the towns and to distance on the farms. The adjustment was the means of creating the new communities within which these people would live. Although the great mass of immigrants spent out their days in the great cities, there was always an unorganised quality to settlement in such places that left a permanent impress upon every fresh arrival. Chance was so large an element in the course of migration, it left little room for planning. Consequently the earliest concentrations of the foreign-born were in the chain of Atlantic seaports: Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans and most of all New York, the unrivalled mart of Europe’s commerce with America. For the same reasons, later concentrations appeared at the inland termini, the points of exchange between lake, river or lake traffic – Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and St. Louis.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* by E.L Ayers (Oxford University Press, 1992)**

The Southern landscape of 1880 bore the signs of the preceding twenty tears. Symmetrical rows of slave cabins had been knocked into a jumble of tenant shacks. Fields grew wild because it did not pay to farm them. Black people bitterly recalled the broken promises of land from the Yankees and broken promises of help from their former masters and mistresses. Everyone labored under the burdens of the depression that had hobbled the 1870s. Men talked of the bloodshed that had brought Reconstruction to an end a few years before. Signs of a New South appeared as well, shoved up against sings of the old. At every crossroad, it seemed, merchants put up stores of pre-cut lumber. Hundreds of new towns proudly displayed raw red brick buildings and at least a block or two of wooden sidewalks. Investors began to put money into sawmills, textile factories and coal mines. Railroads connected the landscape, cutting into clay banks, winding their way through wet mountain forests. Enthusiastic young editors talked of a new South.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *West from Appomattox* by Heather Cox Richardson (Yale University Press, 2007)**

By 1896, mainstream Americans had a clear vision of a world in which hardworking individualists could rise together, protected by an activist government that curbed business and organised labor – as well as any other group trying to harness government – also protected the individualist family. This vision drew from both the Northern and Southern traditional views of American republicanism, filtered through the racial and industrial turmoil of the past three decades. From the North came the idea that any American could improve his lot; from the South came the idea that those who had done so should control the government. In Lincoln’s America, everyone could rise to economic security, but by 1896 this openness had been revised. Mainstream Americans had come to believe that many would fail, that this was their own fault, and that they should be isolated from power before they destroyed society.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to social change in America in the years 1865 to 1890.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from *The Transformation* *of American Society 1870-1890* by John A. Garratty (Harper, 1968)**

Few periods in the history of any nation saw such rapid and startling changes as those which occurred in the United States in the decades of the 1870s and 1880s. During those years, what we think of as modern American civilization was born. Industrialisation was pushing society in new directions. The economy was revolutionised; manufacturing expanded at a fantastic rate and took on many fundamentally new characteristics, but agriculture changed almost as radically. And economic change was accompanied by drastic adjustments in how men lived and how they conceptualised their relationships to one another.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *American Populism* by William F. Holmes (D.C. Heath, 1994)**

During the quarter century following the Civil War, the American economy experienced one of the most profound periods of change in its history. Industrial expansion and the rise of big business changed the faces of the nation’s cities, but the countryside also underwent a fundamental transformation. The expansion of railroads throughout the South and West ended the isolation of rural communities, drawing more and more inhabitants from subsistence farming into a highly commercial agricultural system. The change brought rural people into a complex set of market relations with merchants, commodities dealers, and railroads. In the new system, farmers confronted rising operating costs, falling commodity prices, high railroad rates and inadequate credit facilities. The persistence of these problems eroded the farmers’ status as every year a growing number of them lost ownership of their lands and became farm laborers and tenants.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *rebirth of a Nation: the Making of Modern America 1877-1920* by Jackson Lears (Harper Collins, 2009)**

The decades after the Civil War saw the emergence of a free-wheeling entrepreneurial society, where capital was unregulated by government and government was manipulated by businessmen to serve their own ends. Crafty speculators became figures of public fascination and secret admiration – Jay Cooke, the lounger; Jim Fisk, the spender; Jay Gould, the plotter. The great trust builders of the middle and later nineteenth century – Cornelius Vanderbilt, Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller – enjoyed greater respectability, but they too were little more than freebooting robber barons. They squeezed competitors dry, smashed unions and bribed legislatures wholesale. Concentrated capital was responsible only to itself, a raw power that influenced every branch of government at every level. Money talked – not for the first time in American politics but more authoritatively than ever before.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the economic development of the United States in the years 1865 to 1890.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from *Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations since 1776* by George Herring (Oxford University Press, 2008)**

In the case of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, Americans remained reluctant to acquire territory populated by alien races. Thus, although opportunities presented themselves, Seward’s purchase of Alaska was the only major acquisition during Reconstruction. This does not mean that expansionist sentiment did not exist, or that foreign policy was not important in these years. On the contrary, the Civil War in many ways confirmed the importance of foreign policy to the survival of the Republic. An expansionist vision persisted, especially in the persons of Seward and his successor Hamilton Fish. If there were few new acquisitions, Seward and Fish nonetheless resumed the push to the Caribbean and the Pacific initiated in the 1850s and 1850s, charting the course of a new empire and taking the first steps towards its realisation. Those historians who view the post-war years as a great a great hiatus between two eras of expansion miss the essential continuity of America’s outward thrust.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *rebirth of a Nation: the Making of Modern America 1877-1920* by Jackson Lears (Harper Collins, 2009)**

Imperialists emphasized the continuity between Indian wars and war for empire. The westward march of Protestant Christianity could not be stopped at the water’s edge. This was the core of the imperialist claim to historical legitimacy. Still, war for overseas empire did indeed mark a departure from important republican traditions – the Founding Fathers’ distrust of concentrated executive power, government centralisation and standing armies, not to mention their commitment to popular sovereignty and government by consent. With respect to Native Americans, these ideals were honoured in propaganda rather than in practice.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *From the Old Diplomacy to the new: 1865-1900* by Robert Beisner (Harlan Davidson, 1986)**

American foreign policy had changed significantly by the early nineties. Officials now thought of the United States as a major, even imperial power. It did not matter that what policymakers saw were often mirages. Previously wedded to noninterventionism, Americans now put their oar in waters everywhere – in Samoa, Chile, Brazil, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and China. Symbolic of the change is the Asiatic Squadron of the United States navy, which had three obsolete ships on station in 1889 but patrolled forty-two by 1902. And it was more than symbolic that while no US troops were serving outside the national boundaries in 1870, in 1880, or in 1890, they were fighting, standing guard, and even performing the duties of government in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and China by 1900. A new day had dawned.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to US foreign policy in the years 1865 to 1890.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from Frederick Jackson Turner’s address to the American Historical Association, 1893.**

The most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy. The frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organisation based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produced antipathy to control and particularly to any direct control. This frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind; that masterful grasp of material things; that restless nervous energy; that dominant individualism – these are the traits of the frontier. But never again will such gifts of free land offer themselves. Now, four centuries after the discovery of the America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution. The frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *America’s Frontier Heritage* by Ray Allen Billington (Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1966)**

Basically, frontier individualism stemmed from the belief that all men were equal (excluding Negroes, Indians, Orientals and other minority groups) and that all should have a chance to prove their personal capabilities without restraint from society. This seemed fair in a land of plenty, where superabundant opportunity allowed each to rise or fall to his proper level as long as governments did not meddle. Faith in the equality of men was the common creed of the West. Only an understanding of the depth of this belief can reveal the true nature of social democracy on successive frontiers. To European visitors, this was the most unique feature of Western life and thought: the attitude that set that region apart from Europe or the East. “There is nothing in America”. Wrote one, “that strikes a foreigner so much as the real republican equality existing in the Western States which border on the wilderness”.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* by Patricia Nelson Limerick (Norton, 1987)**

In the popular imagination, the frontier froze as a biracial confrontation between 'whites' and 'Indians'. More complex questions of race relations seemed to be the terrain of other regions' histories. The history of relations between blacks and whites was centred in the South, while 'ethnic conflict' suggested the crowded cities of the Northeast, coping with floods of immigrants. As the blacks moved north and European immigrants crossed the Atlantic, new populations put the adaptability of American society to the test. Could 'native Americans of northern European stock' tolerate these 'others'? Was it better to deal with them through assimilation or exclusion? How could old-stock Americans defend their valued 'purity' against these foreign threats? These are familiar themes in the history of the Southern and North-eastern United States, but ethnic conflict was not exclusive to the East. Western America shared in the transplanted diversity of Europe. Expansion involved people of every background: English, Irish, Cornish, Scottish, French, German, Portuguese, Scandinavian, Greek and Russian. To that diversity the West added a persistent population of Indians, with a multitude of languages and cultures; an established Hispanic population, as well as one of later Mexican immigrants; Asians; black people; and Mormons.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the importance of the frontier in late nineteenth-century America.**

**Populism, progressivism and imperialism, 1890–1920**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America by Michael McGerr (Oxford University Press, 2005)**

(The early twentieth century) was a satisfying period of public success for reformers. One progressive cause after another had taken shape in new laws and regulatory bodies. The term progressive itself had emerged into Common political usage in 1909 and 1910. More than ever, politicians eagerly wrapped themselves in the progressive mantle. Challenging his hapless successor, William Howard Taft, for the presidency in 1912, Theodore Roosevelt ran under the banner of the new National Progressive Party. Roosevelt lost the election, but the victor, Woodrow Wilson, trumpeted his own progressivism; his legislative program, the New Freedom, substantially advanced the progressive agenda. 'The middle class is the dominant power expressing itself through the Progressives, and through the Wilson administration', Walter Lippmann happily observed. 'The middle class has put the 'Money Power' on the defensive. Big business is losing its control of the government.' Wilson's triumphant re-election in 1916 seemed to bring the ultimate victory closer still.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives, Vol. II by Gerald Grob & George Billias (Free Press, 1985)**

To New Left historians the Progressive movement was anything but a reform movement. In one of the most significant studies of early-twentieth-century American history Gabriel Kolko argued that both major parties shared a common ideology and set of values. This ideology what Kolko called political capitalism sought the elimination of a growing competition in the economy. Political capitalism, he noted, 'redirected the radical potential of mass grievances and aspirations'; rather than federal regulation of business the norm became regulation for business. Between 1900 and 1916 a unique synthesis of economics and capitalism occurred. Progressivism, argued Kolko, 'was initially a movement for the political rationalisation of business and industrial conditions, a movement that operated on the assumption that the general welfare of the community could best be served by satisfying the concrete needs of business'.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *Makers of the American Century*, Martin Walker (Vintage, 2000)**

Woodrow Wilson’s first term saw the most sweeping series of reforms – of American industry, society, finance and working practices – of any administration before him. Only Roosevelt’s New Deal would achieve a greater transformation in the way that elected government imposed itself on American lives. Wilson introduced the income tax and established governance over national finances with the establishment of the Federal Reserve Board. He legalised the labour unions and the right to strike. He established the Federal Trade Commission, with powers to regulate businesses and enforce competition. He gave teeth to the antitrust laws, authorised the eight-hour day for railroad workers, and established a national board to extend cheap loans to farmers. He outlawed child labour, imposed minimum standards of employment security for seamen, and cut the tariff, as he had promised. Above all, in this blaze of reformist energy, he managed to persuade the American people that they were part of a great and noble project.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the impact of Progressivism in America.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from *The Limits of Liberty* by Maldwyn Jones (Oxford University Press, 1980)**

The main basis of industrialisation was abundant natural resources. Possessing huge deposits of coal, iron, lead copper, giant petroleum fields and great timber forests, the United States was largely self-sufficient in essential raw materials. Territorial expansion, population growth, and the improvement of transportation and communications system combined to create a continental domestic market. Government support for business, manifesting itself in tariffs, railroads and banking, and in judicial support for corporations, created a climate in which industrial capitalism could flourish. Immigration provided an almost inexhaustible supply of cheap labour as well as technical ability.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *Rebirth of a Nation: the Making of Modern America 1877-1920* by Jackson Lears (Harper, 2009)**

The mass poverty of the 1890s had nothing to do with morality or immorality of the jobless and everything to do with the structural weaknesses of the Gilded Age economy. The collapse of the 1890s had been developing for decades. It expressed the fundamental flaws of an economy based on unregulated capital markets and entrepreneurial frenzy. National Cordage – the rope-making company whose failure sparked the panic – was a characteristic Gilded Age enterprise: an overextended company built on a rickety network of promissory notes (to repay debt) and gentlemen’s agreements (to restrict competition). Railroads were as mismanaged as rope manufacturing and as vulnerable to tremors in the business cycle – and with far more calamitous consequences for the economy as a whole.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *Main Currents in Modern American History* by Gabriel Kolko (Pantheon, 1984)**

Despite conventional wisdom to the contrary, American capitalism over the half-century after the Civil War did not concentrate to the extent sufficient to impose mastery over the fate of finance and most industries, without depending on a political solution. There was of course, an immense growth in the size of individual firms, many of which by 1900 were truly big businesses, and Wall Street did in fact vastly multiply its financial activity; but large size is not tantamount to control. This explains the economic motivations behind political efforts to regulate the economy. The half-century after 1870 saw by far the most rapid growth in manufacturing and mining industries that the United States has ever experienced, during which time new hubs of financial and economic power emerged; but without the existence of a dominating centralised financial and capital control such as virtually all historians later erroneously attributed to Wall Street.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to US economic growth in the years 1890-1917.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from West from Appomattox: the Reconstruction of America after the Civil War by Heather Cox Richardson (Yale University Press, 2007)**

By 1896, mainstream Americans had a clear vision of a world in which hardworking individualists could rise together, protected by an activist government that curbed business and organised labor — as well as any other group trying to harness government — and also protected the individualist family. This vision drew from both the northern and southern traditional views of American republicanism, filtered through the racial and industrial turmoil of the past three decades. From the North came the idea that any American could improve his lot; from the South came the idea that those who had done so should control the government. In Lincoln's America, everyone could rise to economic security, but by 1896 this openness had been revised. Mainstream Americans had come to believe that many would fail, that this was their own fault, and that they should be isolated from power before they destroyed society.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from 'Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City' by Roy Rosenzweig in *Ethnic Enclaves and the Workers' Saloon (*Houghton Mifflin, 1983)**

What explains the strong ties between the working class and the saloon? Most simply, it effectively met the needs of workers. Public toilets, food, warmth, clean water, meeting space, check-cashing services and newspapers often otherwise unavailable to workers in the late nineteenth century city - could be found free of charge in the saloon. Often the saloon served as a communications centre, a place where workers picked up their mail, heard the local political gossip, or learned of openings in their trade. Different types of saloon emphasised different features and functions. The 'occupational saloon', which drew on a particular trade or factory, for example, promoted its free lunch and its check-cashing services. Ethnic saloons, which attracted more of an evening business, provided a centre for such immigrant communal celebrations as weddings and holidays as well as a meeting place for fraternal orders and gangs. The neighbourhood saloon might attract a local multi-ethnic working- class crowd and provide a constituency for small-time local politicians.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America* by Michael McGerr (Oxford University Press, 2003)**

(Some people) wanted the complete exclusion of people different from themselves. Not content to let immigrants live apart in their urban enclaves, these Americans, including some progressives, advocated immigration restriction, a wall built around the United States. Immigration restriction was difficult to achieve, however. The United States had a long history of ambivalence towards immigrants, but it had an equally long history of their acceptance. Naturally, immigrants and their children wanted immigration to continue. So did businessmen eager for cheap and plentiful labor. Many native- born Americans had long been confident that immigrants could be assimilated into the national life. But many Americans' confidence in assimilation was breaking down amid the myriad social divisions of the early twentieth century.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to immigration to the United States during the years 1890-1914.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from *From The Old Diplomacy To The New 1865—1900* by Robert Beisner (Harlan Davidson, 1996)**

William McKinley was elected president on a platform calling for a strong navy, a strong Monroe Doctrine, "the eventual withdrawal of the European powers from this western hemisphere", independence for Cuba, control over Hawaii, purchase of the Virgin Islands, and the "ultimate union of all English-speaking parts of the continent by the free consent of its inhabitants". Hovering over the new president's shoulder was a clique of eager imperialists: Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, Captain Alfred T. Mahan, Senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Cushman K. Davis, writer Brooks Adams and others. They were determined to implement what Lodge called "the large policy", aimed at making the United States "the indisputably dominant power in the western hemisphere, possessed of a great navy, owning and controlling an Isthmian canal, holding naval bases in the Caribbean and the Pacific, and contesting with the great powers for naval and commercial supremacy of the Pacific Ocean and the Far East".

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Makers of the American Century by Martin Walker (Viking, 2000)**

(For Theodore Roosevelt) the wide world, the great race among the Great Powers, was to be the new canvas for American visions of new horizons for American energy. But Americans, still introspective, still suspicious of the merits and the costs of foreign quarrels, were not easily persuaded. The wide oceans themselves provided adequate security for the young nation, and the isolationist current remained powerful enough to deter activist foreign policy presidents until the 1940s. Roosevelt's genius was to turn isolationist sentiment to his advantage. He argued that the security of isolation could be upheld only by regional expansion, by fortifying the protective moats with advance posts in Hawaii and the Philippines and by building the Panama Canal. Roosevelt promoted America's expansion as a series of defensive measures.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *From Colony to Superpower* by George Herring (Oxford University Press, 2008)**

Filled with good intentions, Americans took a much more active role in the world after 1901. Even in the implementation of colonial policies, they saw themselves charting a new course. Theodore Roosevelt embodied the American spirit of his era. He served in a time of peace when the United States was not threatened and there was no major crisis. He exemplified the best and the worst of his country's tradition. Recognising that the nation's new position brought responsibilities as well as benefits and that international involvement served its interests, Roosevelt took unprecedented initiatives in the process demonstrating the president's capacity to be a world leader. He began to modernise the instruments of US power. His practical idealism helped end a war in Asia and prevent war in Europe, each of which served US needs. In Central America and the Caribbean, on the other hand, Roosevelt and Taft displayed the narrowness of vision and disdain for other peoples that had afflicted US foreign policy from the birth of the republic.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the impact of Theodore Roosevelt on American foreign policy.**

**Year 13: Crises and the rise to World Power, 1920–1975
Crises and Identity 1920-1945**

**Extract A**

***Adapted from The Presidents: the Transformation of the American Presidency from Theodore Roosevelt to Barack Obama by Stephen Graubard (Penguin, 2009)***

Warren Harding came to the White House with many assets, including his election by an overwhelming majority and a Congress dominated by Republicans. A handsome president, good-humoured and outgoing, he ought to have achieved a great deal, but his liabilities outweighed his assets. Harding's failure to be more innovative cannot be attributed simply to his provincial Ohio upbringing or the limits of his administrative experience. When one considers the sheer novelty and difficulty of the country's post-war problems, including those he refused to acknowledge, it is scarcely surprising he accomplished so little.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from America: Empire of Liberty by David Reynolds (Penguin, 2009)**

In 1928 the presidential election itself became the main arena for America's culture wars. The Democratic candidate was Al Smith of New York, who had made his name as a spokesman for Irish-Americans, championing the cause of downtrodden workers and maintaining a reputation for probity despite being part of the Tammany Hall political machine. With the Republicans campaigning on their record of peace and prosperity — 'A Car in Every Garage and a Chicken in Every Pot' — any Democratic candidate in 1928 would have found it hard going. But Smith's Catholic faith and his antagonism to Prohibition lost him votes in much of rural Protestant America. The propaganda against Smith was ferocious. On the other hand, he won the support of millions of urban, ethnic workers who had never voted Democrat before. With hindsight, although Smith lost, the 1928 election signalled the start of a fundamental shift in US politics; the days of Republican dominance and boom-time prosperity were now numbered.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* by Piers Brendon (Jonathan Cape, 2000)**

By mid-1932, Herbert Hoover was the most unpopular president since

Rutherford B. Hayes had occupied the White House 50 gears previously. He had fostered so many illusions about the imminent return of prosperity that, amid the wreckage of millions of lives, nothing was left but disillusionment. Hoover had failed to meet the greatest peacetime crisis in the Republic's history. Whatever he felt, he had expressed no real emotion about the country's plight. Yet by the end of his presidency Hoover was spending unprecedented sums on public works. They were too little and too late but the President got no credit for them anyway. He had ceased to carry conviction. During the election campaign he alienated voters by his lacklustre style and his obvious dislike of crowds.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the end of Republican dominance.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from America by Alistair Cooke (Book Club Associates, 1976)**

In effect, Roosevelt signed a check in the government's name for several billion invisible dollars. What strikes me about him now is the triumphant contradiction between his genial manner and his extraordinary tough hide. He would make up to anyone he needed, a labor leader in one state, a conservative Republican in another. He would overlook the race bigotry of a Senator in a southern state where he wanted to do something for the poor white farmers. And on behalf of what he called first 'the forgotten man' and then 'the little man', he allied himself with corrupt city governments, in Memphis, Jersey City, Chicago, because — as he once privately said — 'they may be sons of bitches but they are our sons of bitches'. Not since Lincoln had there been such an artful manipulator of the good, the bad, and the bewildered in between. I believe he saved the capitalist system by deliberately forgetting to balance the books, by transferring the gorgeous resources of credit from the bankers to the government.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from The American Century by Harold Evans (Jonathan Cape/Pimlico, 2000)**

Statistically, the New Deal did no more than soften the worst impact of the Great Depression, before the Second World War bore everything before it. But FDR did not fail his trust. He did not become a dictator. He took less executive power than Congress was willing to cede to him. He steered straight into the turbulent currents of democratic debate. The doors of the White House were open to opinion of nearly every stripe. FDR listened, and he took the nation with him as he revolutionised the role of the federal government, the structure of American society and the attitudes toward poverty and sickness. The new United States forged during the Great Depression would not prove immune to demagoguery, corruption, complacency, class and racial hatred, and the other eternal problems that affect every major society. It would prove, however, that democratic solutions were not merely possible in a great society but inescapable.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *New Deal Or Raw Deal? How FDR's Economic Legacy Has Damaged America* by Burton Folsom (Threshold, 2008)**

If we study the political abilities of Franklin Roosevelt in the first half of his second term, we see a poor performance. He began with a landslide mandate for the New Deal and almost four-to-one margins in both houses of Congress. He was popular within his party, incumbents cultivated his favor, and he had almost destroyed his opposition. True, the Supreme Court had struck down some of his programs, but the margins were often five to four and Roosevelt was clearly going to get his way soon to replace some of the elderly justices. No president in one hundred years had such an opportunity to achieve his political program. Instead of pursuing ideas, however, or a plan of recovery, he pursued power -- he gambled the second term of his presidency on his ability to push through an unpopular plan to pack the Supreme Court. Granted, Roosevelt could be a shrewd and smooth politician, but his anger and vindictiveness overrode his political judgement.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in Extracts 1, 2 and 3 are in relation to Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal Policies.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from American History: A Very Short Introduction by Paul Boger (Oxford University Press, 2012)**

The quarter century from 1920 to 1945 transformed America. In 1920 the United States, while an industrial powerhouse, remained a provincial society on the margins of world affairs. By 1945, in a war-shattered world, its domestic affairs re-shaped by the New Deal of the 1930s, America stood preeminent. In these same years, intellectuals, social thinkers, and cultural creators challenged their predecessors' moral certainties to forge a modern, cosmopolitan society.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from *The American Century* by Harold Evans (Jonathan Cape, 1998)**

The longing to retreat behind the oceans and back in time to an earlier, simpler, small-town America was a natural reaction to the disillusioning experience of the First World War and the disquieting revolution in morals it produced, filtering across the country from the great Eastern cities. In a fit of collective amnesia, mainstream America forgot that many of the previous fifty years had seen panics end depressions, bitter class, racial, ethnic, religious and rural- urban divisions; that America could not cut itself off from the rest of the world in pursuit of a mythical past, or abandon its throbbing metropolises. The disillusions led directly to the dangerous revival of the Ku Klux Klan as an organization of white, native-born Protestants that would do something about the Catholics, Jews, foreigners and blacks perceived as hostile to the values of an older America.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from The New Deal: the Depression Years 1933—1940 by Anthony J. Badger (Palgrave Macmillan, 1989)**

World War II was the juggernaut that ran over America. The war opened up for the first time for most Americans the possibility of affluence rather than subsistence. For city dwellers, full employment and high wages offered the chance that they might be able to own their own homes. For farmers, war- time prosperity suggested that at the end of the war they might be able to enjoy the consumer goods that rural electrification was making available to them. For businessmen, the war opened up undreamt-of profitability, restored leaders of large corporations to public esteem and respectability, and removed most threats of government regulation. For blacks, the labour shortages in the defence industries and the armed forces eventually broke down some discriminatory barriers. Seen through the lens of the war, the New Deal's overall function appears as a holding operation for American society: a series of measures that enabled the people to survive the Depression and hold on until World War II opened up new possibilities.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to social change in America between the two world wars.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from David Dimbleby and David Reynolds, An Ocean Apart, 1988**

Extract A President Franklin D Roosevelt wanted to break the isolationist mould. Although he had lost faith in the League of Nations, Roosevelt still believed that the United States should use its influence in the cause of world peace. That was not only a moral duty, he believed, but also a matter of self-interest. In 1937 he compared war to an infectious disease whose spread could only be prevented by putting the aggressors in ‘quarantine’ through diplomatic isolation or economic sanctions. Practical politics, however, made it difficult to implement any such remedies. The Congress was isolationist by conviction, not wanting to involve America in another war or even to take any action entailing the risk of war. The Neutrality Act of 1935 was designed to prevent the economic entanglements of trade and loans that had helped drag America into the Great War. Roosevelt himself shared these anxieties. ‘I have seen war. I hate war’, he insisted in 1936. FDR was also acutely sensitive to political realities, having watched the disintegration of Wilson’s policies in the confrontation with Congress in 1919. For Roosevelt, diplomacy had to be tailored to the public mood.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Piers Brendon, The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s, 2000**

Franklin Roosevelt seemed the only pilot who could weather the rising international storm. Disillusioned voters, it is true, suspected Roosevelt of looking for opportunities abroad to disguise his domestic failures. One critic, John Haynes Holmes asked: “Is it not inevitable that the President, in good old dictatorial fashion, will take us into war to cover up the mess at home?” Unquestionably, Roosevelt saw the political advantages of persuading Americans that ‘dangers within are less to be feared than dangers without’. He also appreciated the advantages of rearmament: the demand for munitions boosted business confidence. As totalitarian aggression threatened to engulf both Europe and Asia, Roosevelt’s emphasis on the external menace to the United States seemed reasonable. Isolationists disagreed. At all costs, they believed, the New World should steer clear of the Old, with its monsters and demons, war-makers and war debtors, totalitarians and imperialists. As early as 1934, the President had warned that America must either prepare to meet the challenge of the rearming dictators or face ‘another period of long night such as the Dark Ages’. Thus the isolationists had some justification for seeing him as an instinctive internationalist.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from Richard Overy, The Road to War, 1989**

In the 1930s American leaders returned to some of the more fundamental principles of American foreign policy, which had been compromised by intervention in Europe in 1917 and by the economic squabbles of the 1920s. They were the values expressed by Cordell Hull: ‘a primary interest in peace with justice, in economic well-being with stability and conditions of order under the law’. There were principles here on which most Americans could agree; to promote them the United States should avoid ‘foreign entanglements’, any kind of alliance or association outside the Western hemisphere. Instead the United States should act as a moral force in the world, stimulating an open and co-operative diplomacy, encouraging peaceful change where necessary, discouraging aggression. This is what Roosevelt called ‘the good neighbour policy’. It sprang from a very moral, democratic view of the world; America encouraged the weak against the strong, condemned tyranny and reproached warmongers.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to US isolationism between the wars.**

**Extract A**

***Freedom From Fear* by David M. Kennedy (Oxford University Press, 1999)**

The young Americans who went off to war in 1941 came home to a different
country. The war had shaken the American people loose and freed them from a decade of economic and social paralysis. The war had flung them around their country and into new forms of life. It was a war that so richly delivered on the promises of the wartime advertisers and politicians that it nearly banished the memory of the Great Depression. At the end of the depressed Thirties, nearly half of white families and almost 90 per cent of black families still lived in poverty. By the war's end unemployment was negligible. Small wonder that Americans chose to remember it as the Good War.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000 by Adam Fairclough (Penguin, 2002)**

As world War II drew to an end, blacks were well aware that America's political future was up for grabs. They had chalked up gains but had achieved no great breakthrough. The basic pattern of race relations remained intact. Southern whites seemed bent on maintaining racial segregation. At a conference in Chicago, Mordecai Johnson, the president of Howard University, warned that far from the South being democratized and liberalized by the North, the North was in danger of succumbing to the South's 'diseased suggestions'. Charles Houston (special counsel for the NAACP) was more sanguine. The black soldiers who returned from fighting, he predicted, would introduce a new element into the equation. 'For the first time in the history of the United States, you will have a generation of young Negroes with a world point of view'. Yet the question remained: would the democratic idealism of the Second World War carry over into peacetime? Or would history repeat itself and 1946, like 1919, bring the destruction of black hopes?

**Extract C**

**Adapted from Makers of the American Century by Martin Walker (Vintage, 2001)**

Roosevelt had found an isolationist nation in desperate crisis and left it a world power, a nation with a thriving free-enterprise economy, and a modern state, first among equals in a new United Nations system that seemed the best hope that such a war would never come again. Above all, he had presided over an America that had discovered a complete faith in itself, its abilities, and its free institutions to face any challenge and to surmount any obstacle that destiny might bring.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the view that American society had changed for the better by 1945 as a result of the ‘Good War’.**

**The Superpower 1945-1975**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from Present Tense: the United States Since 1945 by Michael Schaller, Elizabeth Scharff and Robert Schulzinger (Houghton Mifflin, 1996)**

After the Republicans captured both houses of Congress in the mid-term elections of 1946, they looked forward confidently to winning the White House in 1948. In a way, the late President Roosevelt helped them, for whatever Truman's merits might have been, he inevitably suffered from comparison to his predecessor. Roosevelt had been a master coalition builder, establishing what is still known as the Roosevelt or New Deal coalition. After 1948, now president by election, Truman tried to emerge from Roosevelt's shadow. He proclaimed his own reform program, the Fair Deal. Few of these measures came to a vote in Congress. The enduring coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats blocked them. Thus, the Fair Deal remained more of a promise than a reality. Nevertheless, Truman's proposals did set a social agenda for later administrations, and in this sense they were more influential than politicians at the time could guess.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from The Presidents: The Transformation of the American Presidency from Theodore Roosevelt to Barack Obama by Stephen Graubard (Penguin, 2009)**

Eisenhower, the famed military alliance-builder in World War II failed as a civilian. His Kansas-bred belief in frugality, exacerbated by his Army-induced exaggeration of the values of an organized hierarchical staff, blinded him to anything that might be mistaken for a social vision. Reared in a military ghetto, given housing and a guaranteed income by the federal government, things that were denied to tens of millions who had to weather the Depression, he lost touch with the Kansas world he was born into. His intimate association with the very rich, his constant attendance on them on the golf links, were insignificant blemishes besides one other, rarely mentioned: his isolation from men able to instruct him, those in a position to offer constructive criticism of his policies. Neither a saviour nor a creator, he was, quite simply, a five-star general out of his depth in the White House.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from Eisenhower: The White House Years b Jim Newton (Anchor, 2011)**

Eisenhower took Nixon's defeat personally, called it the worst of his life. To his brother Milton, Ike confided that he felt the last eight years of his life 'had gone down the drain'. Eisenhower rebounded but Nixon fell into a deep gloom. He sulked through November and December while the country thrilled to its president-elect, his stylish wife, and their adorable children. Near the ends of the year, Ike summoned Nixon to discuss the future of the party and Eisenhower's role in it. The conversation was constructive until the two men began to reflect on the campaign. Nixon was bitter. Up to that point in his career, Nixon had a fairly commendable record on civil rights and had paid some price for it among conservatives. When he resumed his quest for the presidency in 1968, he would pursue it through the so-called Southern strategy. The goal was to break the Democratic Party's hold on the South by allying the Republican Party with the forces of racism. The Southern strategy might well be said to have been born that day in Eisenhower's White House.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the American presidency between 1940 and 1960.**

**Extract A**

**G. Herring, From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations Since 1776, 2008**

Eisenhower’s stock has risen markedly in recent years. No longer dismissed as an intellectual lightweight and political babe-in-the-woods, he is generally recognised as a self-assured and prudent leader who understood politics and, having seen war at first hand, appreciated the limits of military power. Despite frequent crises and the recurrent threat of war, he managed to keep the peace during his time in office. He worked out with the European allies and the Soviet Union the basis for a viable if by no means perfect settlement in Europe; Berlin, of course, the exception, the foundation for what the historian John Lewis Gaddis has called the “Long Peace”. He avoided open-ended military commitments and took the first hesitant steps toward nuclear arms limitations. Even during the post-Sputnik hysteria, he remained calm and kept the military budget under some semblance of control.

**Extract B**

**J. Newton, Eisenhower: The White House Years, 2012**

President Eisenhower was determined that Americans should enjoy the fruits of their freedom and he set out to wean the nation from its addiction to crisis. Americans, he believed, would only fully secure the blessings of their liberty if allowed to pursue it with tranquillity. More than any man of his era, Eisenhower gave Americans that chance. He won the future of the West on the battlefields of Europe and then nurtured it as president, patiently making progress, steadfastly confronting the great menace of his era, Soviet Communism, without resort to global confrontation. Eisenhower was the first American president to have access to atomic weapons and not use them. He refrained when they might have ended the Korean War, when they might have saved the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu, when they might have repelled Chinese aggression against Taiwan or Soviet threats to Berlin. We can only wonder how humanity’s course would have been different had Eisenhower acceded to those who believed America would have been best served by use of the weapons under his control.

**Extract C**

**S Graubard, The Presidents, 2009**

While some blamed his bombastic and self-righteous secretary of state for the errors made, Eisenhower as much as Dulles, ignored the opportunities offered, starting with the death of Stalin and continuing into Khrushchev’s ascendancy. He neglected to develop a Middle East policy that took account of what had changed after Britain had left that troubled scene and was as ideological in misunderstanding Communist China as those who prattled on about how the Democrats lost China. He never understood the Europe he pretended to know and failed utterly to comprehend how his policies were influencing both Adenauer and De Gaulle. As a man who knew war and detested it, he kept the country at peace and this was his signal achievement, but it was secured at a heavy price: the creation of the illusion that the United States could be the world’s policeman, keeping totalitarian forces at bay everywhere.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the achievements of Dwight Eisenhower.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from 'The Rise of the "Silent Majority"' by Jonathan Rieder in The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order 1930—1980 (Princeton University Press, 1989)**

The New Deal Order collapsed in the 1960s. Baldly put, in need of qualification, this is the key truth, the essential condition, of our recent political life. The popular coalition that sustained the New Deal through post-war prosperity and McCarthyism burst into its constituent shards. The early gears of the decade sounded a note of high liberal promise. By the end of the decade, liberalism was in full rout, with the Democratic Party embroiled in internal warfare and the Republicans ascendant. By the late 1960s, the issues of race, Vietnam, and life- style had changed the political climate of the entire nation, not just of the South. Restive forces had broken free of the party restraints that once enveloped them. With that institutional breakdown, there emerged a new civic culture, or, more precisely, a culture of incivility. Tensions between rival groups now yielded to outright feuding, and unabashed denunciation replaced private grumbling.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream by Doris Kearns Goodwin (St Martin's Griffin, 1991)**

Lyndon Johnson dominated public life in Washington to such an extent that the Cabinet was his Cabinet, the Great Society his program, the Congress his instrument. But the man in the center when things are good remains the man in the center when things go bad, and the resources technology provides are often illusory, substituting the sense of control for real control. Thus the war in Vietnam became Lyndon Johnson's war; he personally was dropping the bombs, disrupting the economy, making prices rise, setting back the progress of black and poor. Obviously, neither image — villain or hero — is valid; historical circumstances and institutional conditions were vital to both success in the Great Society and failure in Vietnam. And this understanding is of more than intellectual interest, for exaggeration of the President's personal powers (both self-induced and media propelled) is an inevitable source of frustration as the President's actions invariably fall short of expectations, producing a destructive cycle for the man, the office and the nation.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from Makers of the American Century by Martin Walker (Chatto Windus, 2000)**

[Nixon's] was an American life that had come full circle. The self-improvement, self-reliance, and utter determination that took him from the ranks of the respectable poor to the presidency carried with it a fatal flaw. Like so many of his class and generation who benefited from the long boom of the 1950s and 1960s, the success once achieved proved hollow. Driven by some internal demon, Nixon always pushed for more. In Vietnam he wanted peace with honour and at least some spurious claim to victory. In the 1972 election victory was not enough; McGovern had to be crushed. In the Watergate cover-up, an early admission of error and responsibility was never an option; he wanted a blameless innocence. Instead he plumbed a shame deeper than that of any American politician, a humiliation only moderately redeemed by time and effort and a new acknowledgment of his diplomatic gifts. There was an inherent sadness to a man so self-controlled that he went walking on the beach in a suit and laced-up shoes, a sadness that accompanied an inner meanness of spirit that, in office, betrayed all the rest.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to the American presidency between 1960 and 1974.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from Grand Expectations: The United States 1945-1974 by James T. Patterson Oxford University Press, 1996)**

Economic growth was indeed the most decisive force in the shaping of attitudes and expectations in the post-war era. The prosperity of the period broadened gradually in the late 1940s, accelerated in the 1950s, and soared to unimaginable heights in the 1960s. By almost any standards of measurement the post-war economic power and affluence of the United States were indeed amazing. With 7 per cent of the world's population in the late 1940s, America possessed 42 per cent of the world's income and accounted for half of the world's manufacturing output. American workers produced 57 per cent of the planet's steel, 43 per cent of electricity, 62 per cent of oil, 80 per cent of automobiles. Dominating the international economy like a colossus, it had three-quarters of the world's gold supplies. Per capita income in the United States in mid-1949, at $1450, was much higher than in the next most prosperous group of nations. Social stability also seemed fairly well assured for Americans in the post-war era.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Main Currents in Modern American History by Gabriel Kolko (Pantheon, 1984)**

The military budget became the sponge which absorbed excess industrial capacity, thereby putting a floor under the capitalist economy. The Pentagon's annual 8 to 10 per cent of GNP provided the critical break-even point of economic stimulus that made the rest of the economy viable. As a multiplier stimulating business, defense spending exceeded virtually all others. By 1967, defense contractors were using $15 billion in government-owned property to realise some of the highest profits on their own investment in recorded United States history. It was the big-business sector that benefited most from the new bonanza. California was by far the greatest recipient of contracts, but New York and eventually Texas were almost as dependent on military contracts.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from *Present Tense: the United States Since 1945* by Michael Schaller, Virginia Scharff & Robert Schulzinger (Houghton Mifflin, 1996)**

The behaviour of the US economy in the 1970s defied the expectations of nearly all conventional economists. Inflation, the scourge of the Great Society, stubbornly hovered at around 6 per cent. Still worse, unemployment rose steadily, from 3.8 per cent in 1968 to over 6 per cent in 1971. According to orthodox economic theories, prices should decline, or at least not rise when workers lose their jobs. Experts in the early seventies could describe stagflation, but they could not explain it. In later years economists identified some of the reasons for it: the baby boomers had begun to reach maturity and were thus spending more on consumer goods; there was an increased proportion of entry-level workers in the work force; the United States faced increased competition from revived economies of Germany and Japan; the Vietnam War had had an inflationary effect on the economy. But even if economists and government officials had seen these problems clearly at the time, they could have done little about them.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to post-war prosperity in the United States.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v Gore by James T. Patterson (Oxford University Press, 2007)**

Watergate, divisions over race and gender and economic distress, caused many Americans in 1974 to fear the passing of what they had imagined as the golden age of American history that had followed World War ll. The cherished American Dream of upward social mobility, sustained for many people in those prosperous years by vigorous economic growth, seemed endangered. Americans who fell prey to fears such as these were a bit too quick to dwell on the troubles of the country. Many disgruntled Americans in 1974, and later, practised a form of selective amnesia, which blotted from their consciousness some of the blights that had afflicted the nation in the 1950s -- among them constitutionally protected racial segregation, a Red Scare that launched angry assaults on civil liberties, blatant religious intolerance, and systematic discrimination against women. Shaken by the problems of the 1970s, they appeared to believe that almost everything about the post-war years between 1945 and the assassination of President Kennedy had been better than the present.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991 by Eric Hobsbawm (Abacus, 1998)**

The rise of a specific and extraordinarily powerful youth culture indicated a profound change in the relation between the generations. Youth, as a self- conscious group stretching from puberty — which in developed countries occurred several years earlier than in previous generations — to the middle twenties, now became an independent social agent. The most dramatic political developments, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, were the mobilizations of the age-band which... made the fortunes of the record industry, 75-80 per cent of whose output — namely rock music — was sold almost wholly to customers between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five ... The membership of youth is always changing — a student 'generation' notoriously lasts a bare three or four years — its ranks are always being re-filled. The emergence of the adolescent as self-conscious social actor was increasingly recognized, enthusiastically by the manufacturers of consumer goods, sometimes less willingly by his or her seniors, as they found the space expanding between those who were willing to accept the label 'child' and those who insisted on that of 'adult'.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from ‘The Failure and Success of the New Radicalism’ by Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin in *The Rise and Fall of the New World Order,* S. Fraser & G. Gerstle (eds.) (Princeton University Press, 1989)**

When the sixties were over, it seemed to many former activists that they had accomplished nothing. Yet it is striking that while 'nothing' was accomplished by the New Left in its short life, everything was different afterward. America certainly became a more politically and culturally contentious society because of what happened in the 1960s — and in some ways it became a more just, open and egalitarian one. The New Left was shaped by and came to embody a profound dislocation in American culture; in the end it had more impact on the ideas that Americans had about themselves and their society than on the structures of power that governed their lives. Young radicals articulated a critique of 'everyday life' in the United States, which was, in time, taken up by millions of people who had little idea of where those ideas originated. In the course of the sixties and seventies, many Americans came to recognise and reject the prevalence of racial sexual discrimination, to ask new questions about the legitimacy of established institutions and authority, and to oppose military adventures abroad.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to social and cultural developments in the USA between 1945 and 1975.**

**Extract A**

**Adapted from Grand Expectations: The United States 1945—1974 by James T. Patterson (Oxford University Press, 1996)**

In coping with the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1948, Truman's foreign policies went through three interrelated phases. The first, lasting until early 1946, exposed a good deal of floundering and inconsistency as Truman sought to find himself The second, dominant through to the end of 1946, revealed a little more floundering and uncertainty but also a stiffening of purpose. Although Truman and his advisers still hoped to ameliorate gathering tensions, they made only half-hearted efforts to accommodate the Soviets, or even to negotiate seriously with them. In the third phase, clear by February 1947, the administration hit on a more consistent, clearly articulated policy: containment. The essential stance of the United States for the next forty years, the quest for containment entailed high expectations. It was the most important legacy of the Truman administration.

**Extract B**

**Adapted from Colossus: the Rise and Fall of the American Empire by Niall Ferguson (Penguin, 2005)**

Why was it that the vastly richer Americans had to settle for such a high proportion of 'ties' (notably Korea) and outright defeats (notably Cuba and Vietnam) in a contest they might have been expected nearly always to win? There are four answers to this question. The first is geographical: the United States had to reach much farther than the Soviet Union in all the theatres of strategic competition. The second is a matter of military technology: the Soviet Union was prepared to build an even bigger arsenal than the Americans, so the balance of nuclear advantage swung against the United States. Thirdly, as an empire based on consent, the United States had much less power over its allies than the Soviet Union did over its satellites, most obviously in Europe, where the Russians did not shrink from putting tanks in the streets to enforce their will. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, American policy makers had to take much more notice of their own citizens' views than did their Soviet counterparts.

**Extract C**

**Adapted from The Cold War by John Lewis Gaddis (Penguin, 2005)**

President Nixon had come into office in January 1969, determined to extricate the United States from the Vietnam War, to regain the initiative in the Cold War, and to restore the authority of government at home. As the November 1972 election campaign drew to a close, he could credibly claim to have achieved the first two objectives, and to be well on the way to accomplishing the third. A peace settlement with North Vietnam was, as Kissinger put it, 'at hand'. A slow but steady withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam, together with the elimination of the military draft, had taken the steam out of domestic anti-war protests. And with his 'opening' to China, Nixon had placed the United States in the enviable position of being able to play off its Cold War adversaries against one another. He had, earlier that year, become the first American president to visit both Beijing and Moscow. He could exert 'leverage' — always a good thing to have in international relations — by 'tilting' as needed toward the Soviet Union or China, who were by then so hostile to each other that they competed for Washington's favor.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to American policy during the Cold War.**

**Extract A**

**From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations Since 1776 by George Herring (Oxford University Press, 2008)**

US foreign policy experienced greater domestic shocks in the 1970s than at any other time since the 1930s. By easing the most obvious threats to the nation's security, Nixon's agreements with the Soviet Union and steps towards reconciliation with China cut away at support for continuing Cold War sacrifices and commitments. As the Vietnam War dragged on, costs skyrocketed and the domestic debate raged, Americans became increasingly wary of overseas entanglements. Polls taken shortly before the fall of Saigon produced the stunning revelation that a majority was willing to send troops abroad only to defend Canada. "Vietnam has left a rancid aftertaste that clings to almost every mention of direct military intervention", the columnist David Broder observed in March 1975. Spiralling economic problems reinforced already strong tendencies to turn inward. Cold War expenditures had sustained a period of unprecedented economic expansion, but by the early 1970s that bubble had burst. The Vietnam War triggered runaway inflation; the 1973 Arab oil embargo - an economic Pearl Harbor — triggered an energy crisis.

**Extract B**

**Main Currents in Modern American History by Gabriel Kolko (Pantheon, 1976)**

'National obligations', 'dominoes' and 'treaty obligations' caused the United States to persist with the Indochina debacle long after it was plainly apparent it had lost that war and would lose much more elsewhere if it continued with its folly. However rationally motivated the origins of these doctrines were in terms of rationalizing the expansion of imperialism, by 1975 they became a menace insofar as they forced objectives on the United States that far exceeded its capacity to attain. "The American Destiny", "dominoes" and "credibility" which the Secretaries of State and Defense and the President continued to cite at the beginning of 1975, despite the fact that they could no longer always convince either Congress or the press with such verbiage, revealed only that the conventional wisdom of thirty years had become increasingly self-destructive to a system that was structurally incapable of veering from its collision course.

**Extract C**

**Vietnam: The Necessary War by Michael Lind (Free Press, 1999)**

The realist critique of the Vietnam War remains very popular today. It permits ageing veterans of the Sixties Left, embarrassed by their former support for Ho Chi Minh's vicious dictatorship and their denunciations of American presidents as war criminals or their avoidance of the draft, to claim they were right to oppose the war, even if their rationale was mistaken. But there was, and is, a realist case in favour of the Vietnam War. The fact that the United States was defeated in Vietnam does not necessarily discredit the strategic logic that inspired US commitment to South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and their Southeast Asian neighbours. The failure of American policy in Indochina mag have resulted from inappropriate military tactics, or the characteristics of the North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese societies and governments, or the support provided to Hanoi by the Soviet Union and China, or the peculiarities of American political culture — or by a combination of all these factors. The case that Indochina was worth a limited American war of some kind, particularly in the circumstances of the Cold War in the 1960s, is compelling.

**Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these extracts are in relation to America’s position in the world by 1975.**

**Generic mark scheme for section B**

***Target: AO1 Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level /5** | **Descriptor** | **Mark /25** |
| L5 | Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. | 21-25 |
| L4 | Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. | 16-20 |
| L3 | The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. | 11-15 |
| L2 | The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. | 6-10 |
| L1 | The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. | 1-5 |

**Student Friendly AO1 (Classic Essay) Mark-Scheme**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skills** | **Understanding** | **Communication** | **Evidence** | **Argument** |
| Aspects | A …of the question | B …of key features and issues | C. Organisation | D. Communication | E. Range of information | F. Specificity/accuracy/relevance of information  | G. Interpretation/Analysis | H. Evaluation/Judgement |
| **L5** | A **good** **understanding** of the demands of the question | A **good** understanding of key features and issues... with some **conceptual** awareness | **Well**-organised | **Effectively** communicated | A **range**… of supporting information | **Clear and specific** supporting information | Some **conceptual** awareness … **analytical** in style | Range of direct comment leading to a **substantiated** judgement |
| **L4** | **An** **understanding** of the question | An awareness of **some** of the key issues **and** features | **Effectively** organised | **Adequate** communication skills | A **range** of… information | **Largely accurate** information… **some** generalisation | Analytical comment in relation to the question… **some** generalisation | Display some **balance**… Judgements will be **limited** and only **partially substantiated** |
| **L3** | **Some** understanding of the **full** demands of the question… may be **limited** in scope | Understanding of **some** key features **and/or** issues | **Adequately** organised | ... | There will be **appropriate** information …may be **limited** in scope | May contain **inaccuracy / irrelevance** | **Some comment** in relation to the question |
| **L2** | Descriptive or partial… **some awareness** of the q., but a **failure to grasp its full demands** … may be **very limited** in scope | Understanding of **some** key features **and/or** issues | **Some attempt** to convey material in an organised way | Communication skills may be **limited** | **Some** appropriate information… Statements **mostly unsupported**… may be **very limited** in scope | May contain **inaccuracy / irrelevance**… Statements **mostly** **generalist** | **Descriptive**… **some**, but **limited**, comment in relation to the question… Statements, for the most part, **unsupported and generalist** |
| **L1** | The question has **not been properly** understood | ... | **Limited** organisational skills | **Limited** communication skills | Information is **extremely** limited… **unsupported** comment | The information conveyedis **irrelevant** | There may be some **unsupported, vague or generalist** comment  |
| **Student Checklist**  |
| A. Understanding of the question | Do you grasp what the question is asking? Do you understand every word? Have you dealt explicitly with the key words? Have you quoted key words? Have you dealt with all key claims / assumptions / possible interpretations? |
| B. Understanding of key features / issues | Look at the topic: what ‘parts’ does it break down into (periods, themes)? (*Features*) Consider the claim or issue in the question: what are the different views to do with this? What are the key debates/uncertainties around this? (*Issues)* |
| C. Organisation | Have you an introduction which deals with the key concepts in the question; states your approach; and states your answer? Have you a conclusion? Have you properly paragraphed your answer: one theme or point per paragraph? |
| D. Communication | Have you spelled and punctuated correctly? Have you used correct grammar? Is your expression clear, appropriate, and varied? Have you used technical historical vocabulary? Have you avoided slang? Is your writing legible? |
| E. Range (breadth) of information | Have you provided evidence from a range of dates across the relevant time period? Have you provided more than one example for your points? Have you considered evidence of different types? Is there a lot of evidence throughout? |
| F. Accuracy/relevance of information | Is the evidence / information you give accurate and relevant? Have you been as specific and detailed as you can? (Detail does not mean lengthy descriptions but well-chosen precise facts.) Is it well chosen to support your points? |
| G. Interpretation / analysis | Do you actually draw conclusions from your evidence rather than just reciting it? Do your points ‘add up to’ your answer? Does your evidence ‘add up to’ your points? Are you clear how your argument and points work and flow? |
| H. Evaluation / judgement | Is your answer strong *but* balanced? Have you considered more than one view, but given clear reasons for *selecting* your view *and* *rejecting* others? Are your overall judgement and all sub-judgements fully supported (substantiated)? |

**Section B Practice Questions**

**Reconstruction 1865-77 & The Gilded Age 1877-90**

‘The end of Reconstruction by 1877 was due to the violence of the Southern segregationists.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The main reason for Westward expansion 1865-77, was “Manifest Destiny”.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘Settlement of the West in the years 1865 to 1890 was a triumph of American democracy’. Assess the validity of this view.

‘The railroads were the key to the expansion of the American economy in the years 1865 to 1890.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The main reason for the growth in the US economy from 1865-77 was the improvements in transport.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘In the years 1865 to 1890, the Democratic Party was fatally weakened by the consequences of the defeat of the South in the Civil War’. Assess the validity of this view.

To what extent had the weaknesses of federal government in 1865 been overcome by 1890?

‘In the years 1865 to 1890 America was a deeply divided country’. Assess the validity of this view.

‘Between the end of the Civil War and 1890, the position of African Americans in the United States significantly improved.’ Assess the validity of this view.

**Populism, Progressivism and Imperialism**

‘In the years 1888 to 1900, the Democratic Party was badly weakened by the rise of Populism.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The political dominance of the Republican Party in the years 1890 to 1912 was due to the internal divisions of its opponents’. Assess the validity of this view.

‘Throughout the period from 1890 to 1920, the dominant influence on American politics was the immense power and influence of big business.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘Big business, not big government, was the reason for the dynamic growth of the American economy in the years 1890-1918.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘In the years 1890 to 1914, American society changed dramatically.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘Between 1890 and 1920, the foreign policy of the United States continued to be dominated by isolationism.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘In 1865 the United States was a bitterly divided country; by the end of the First World War America was a confident and harmonious nation.’ Assess the validity of this view.

**Crisis of Identity, 1920-1945**

‘The policies of US presidents had very little impact on the boom, bust and recovery of the American economy in the years 1920 to 1945.’ Assess the validity of this view.

To what extent was American prosperity in the years 1900 to 1929 ‘superficial and fragile’?

‘Between 1920 and 1941 American Society was divided badly.’ Assess the validity of this view.

To what extent, by 1941, had the New Deal policies of Franklin Roosevelt overcome the economic problems he inherited from his Republican predecessors?

**The Superpower 1945-1975**

‘In the years 1945 to 1974, the Democratic Party was mortally weakened by its internal divisions’. Assess the validity of this view.

‘American prosperity during the long post-war boom was due to high government spending.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘Between 1945 and 1968 it became clear that the United States was a deeply divided nation.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘Between 1941 and 1975 the United States experienced a social revolution.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The US policy of containment of Communism proved costly and unsuccessful in the years 1947 to 1975.’ Assess the validity of this view.

**Thematic, Cross Period ‘Straddlers’**

‘It was mass immigration that brought about the rapid expansion of the American economy in the years c1880 to 1914.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The Republican Party dominated American politics in the years 1868 to 1912 because it was the party of big business.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The onset of the Great Depression in the years 1929-1932 was due to the pro-business policies promoted by the Republicans since 1896.’ Assess the validity of this view.

'US involvement in the First and Second World Wars caused fundamental changes in American society between 1917 and 1945.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The reasons why the United States joined a world war in 1941 were remarkably similar to the reasons why they joined an earlier world war in 1917.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘From 1932 to 1960, the Republican party was badly out of touch with the American people.’ Assess the validity of this view.

‘The disasters that met the United States in South East Asia between 1968 and 1975 resulted from the confused and contradictory aims of American foreign policy ever since 1920’. Assess the validity of this view.

**Additional Research List:**

**Books**

M Adams, The Best War Ever, Johns Hopkins UP, 1993

P Boyer, American History: A Very Short Introduction, OUP, 2012

C Calhoun (ed.), The Gilded Age, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007

P Clements, Prosperity, Depression and the New Deal, Hodder, 2005

D Carter, The Politics of Rage, OUP, 1996

S Cashman, America in the Gilded Age, NYU Press, 1993

R Dallek, Hail to the Chief, Oxford University Press, 1996

R Daniels, Coming to America, Harper Collins, 2002

J Diggins, The Proud Decades 1941-60, Norton, 1989

M Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights, Princeton University Press, 2011

H Evans, The American Century, Random House, 1998

D Farber, The Age of Great Dreams: America in the Sixties, Hill & Wang, 1994

N Ferguson, Colossus, Penguin, 2004

E Foner, Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, HarperCollins, 2002

S Fraser, Every Man a Speculator: A History of Wall Street, Harper, 2006,

R Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR, Random House, 1988

M Isserman & M Kazin, America Divided, The Civil War of the 1960s, OUP, 2007

D Kennedy, Freedom from Fear, Oxford University Press USA, 2001

D Kennedy, Over Here: The First World War and American Society, OUP, 1980

A Kessler-Harris, In Pursuit of Equity, OUP, 2003

M McGerr, A Fierce Discontent, OUP, 2005

D Okrent, Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition, Scribner, 2011

J Patterson, Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, OUP, 1996

J Patterson, Restless Giant: The US from Watergate to Bush v. Gore, OUP, 2005

D Reynolds, America: Empire of Liberty, Penguin, 2010

D Sandbrook, Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the Seventies, Anchor, 2012

C Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, LSU Press, 1951

 J Williams, Eyes on the Prize, Longman, 1999

H Zinn, The Twentieth Century: A People's History, SOS Free Stock, 2003

**Websites**

<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/20th.asp>

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory>

<http://backstoryradio.org/>

<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/>

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

<http://www.flowofhistory.com/units>

<http://sheg.stanford.edu/us>

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/>