

Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Driving Concept 3: A Newly Formed, Diverse nation: Confederation to Constitution (1770s–1800s)

Through this driving concept, students will analyze the context in which the representative democracy of the United States was created — evaluating its promise, contributions, and shortcomings. To begin their investigation, students will analyze the government created by the founders. They will assess the reasons for and the impact of compromises made during the Constitutional Convention, as well as the Constitution's inclusion of specific guarantees of individual liberty. Students will evaluate the ways those guarantees were and/or were not universal in their intent or application. Throughout their study, students will analyze key founding documents, source material from individuals who supported and opposed the adoption of the Constitution, and the impact it continues to have on our lives today.

Driving Concept 5: Emerging Social Movements (1800–1877)

Through this driving concept, students will consider the complexity of American history by examining primary and secondary sources that reveal the horrors and brutality of enslavement. Students will also investigate the means by which enslaved persons resisted bondage and maintained humanity. Students will contextualize the emergence of varying forms of abolitionism within a broader social and religious movement that called for reforms to American social and political life.

Essential Question

How did the emergence of social movements from 1800 to 1877, particularly the abolitionist movement, challenge American social and political structures?

Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

About This Unit

Unit 7: Antebellum Reform explores how cultural and political movements of the early 19th century challenged and reshaped American society. The unit begins with a focus on the cultural movements inspired by the Second Great Awakening and the Hudson River School, which encouraged Americans to reflect on morality, identity, and the future of the nation. Students then examine how reformers responded to rapid social change by working to address issues such as alcohol abuse, prison conditions, labor exploitation, and women's rights. At the heart of the unit is the abolition movement, which confronted the deep contradictions between the ideals of American democracy and the continued existence of slavery. Students analyze how enslaved people, writers, organizers, and orators—many of whom were excluded from political power—defied injustice and fought for freedom. Through the final assessment, an Abolitionist Project, students will evaluate the experiences, arguments, and activism of key abolitionists to determine how their voices contributed to a broader movement for justice and equality in America.

Use the Best Practices Repository for information on implementing every strategy and lesson activity!

Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Priority Standards

7.24	Analyze the experiences, perspectives and identities of people who were denied access to full rights across the colonies (e.g., enslaved people, women, free Black people, religious minorities), including citizenship, marriage and voting restrictions, and evaluate efforts by those groups to gain access to legal rights.
7.28	Use historical context to analyze the ideals contained in the Declaration of Independence, identifying Thomas Jefferson as a main contributor and critiquing the extent to which such ideals have fully applied to the people of the United States — from the Revolutionary era to today.
7.33	Analyze the impact of the American Revolution on the social and political status of different groups in the new nation including but not limited to women, Indigenous Nations, enslaved and free Black Americans, religious minorities, and European Americans of various socioeconomic groups (e.g., rural farmers, Southern planters, urban craftsmen, Northern merchants).
7.43	Analyze the daily lives of those who were not allowed to participate in the formation of the US government or were denied access to civil rights, such as voting and/or citizenship using primary sources (e.g., the writings of Olaudah Equiano and Harriet Jacobs).
7.45	Evaluate the causes and impacts of at least one rebellion led by enslaved individuals in the 18th or early 19th century (e.g., the Stono Rebellion, Nat Turner's Rebellion, Denmark Vesey's Rebellion).
7.47	Analyze the social and political changes during the Jacksonian era, including the expansion of voting rights, from multiple perspectives and evaluate the legacy of these changes.
7.48	Assess the extent to which perspectives toward American territorial expansion, including Manifest Destiny and Indigenous resistance, changed over time, including an understanding that the removal of Indigenous Nations was not inevitable.
7.55	Evaluate the impact of territorial expansion, immigration, and Northern industrialization on the institution of slavery and American politics.
7.57	Analyze the complex and varied lives and experiences of enslaved people and free Black Americans between 1800-1877.
7.58	Evaluate the growth and international context of the Abolitionist movement, including the effectiveness of various tactics and leaders by analyzing primary and secondary sources — including the perspectives of abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Freeman, Henry Highland Garnet and Frederick Douglass.

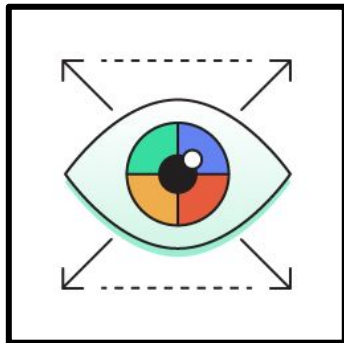


Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Additional Standards	
7.61	Compare gender rights and roles in different geographic regions and communities within the United States, and evaluate the goals and tactics of the women's suffrage movement.
7.62	Analyze societal confines and constraints within social reform movements of the 19th century, including the role of gender, sexuality, religion and race.

Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Unit Preview		
<i>Subtopic(s)</i>	<i>Compelling Question</i>	<i>Standard(s)</i>
Cultural Movements in the Early 1800s	How did cultural movements in the early 1800s shape a growing sense of an American identity?	7.33, 7.47, 7.48, 7.57
Emergence of Reform Movements	How did reform movements of the early 1800s strengthen or limit democracy?	7.24, 7.33, 7.43, 7.47, 7.55, 7.57, 7.61, 7.62
The Abolition Movement	How did the abolition movement expand and test the meaning of American democracy?	7.28, 7.33, 7.43, 7.45, 7.47, 7.57, 7.58
Assessment: Abolitionist Project		7.43, 7.45, 7.57, 7.58, 7.62



Unit Focus Skill: Perspective

Thinking historically means considering how one's personhood has influenced their perspective. It also means recognizing how diverse viewpoints and experiences shape the understanding of historical events. This allows students of history to cultivate empathy for the people of the past that are studied.

Cultural Movements in the Early 1800s: Topic Overview

	<u>LESSON 1 (90-120 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 2 (60 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	How did art in the Antebellum Era reflect both the changes happening and the hopes for the nation people wanted to build?	To what extent did religion provide opportunities for people to connect with their communities?
STANDARD(S)	7.33, 7.47, 7.48, 7.57	7.33, 7.57
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Contextualization Perspective	Contextualization Evaluating Evidence
DO FIRST	Frayer: Antebellum Quote Analysis	Frayer: Awakening Anticipatory Guide
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Inquiry Journal Topic 1: Supporting Questions	Second Great Awakening Video
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	"What is the Context? - Hudson River Valley" Reading	Visiting a Camp Meeting Gallery Walk
ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT	Analyzing Early American Art	Review Anticipatory Guide (Optional)
CONCLUSION	Exit Ticket: Write and Draw	Unit 7 Inquiry Journal Topic 1: Compelling Question

Emergence of Reform Movements: Topic Overview

	<u>LESSON 3 (90 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 4 (90 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 5 (90 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	How did reformers' ideas about morality shape American freedoms?	How did early reformers try to improve life for workers?	How did early women's rights activists use American ideals to support their cause?
STANDARD(S)	7.24, 7.43, 7.47, 7.57, 7.62	7.33, 7.47, 7.55, 7.57, 7.62	7.24, 7.33, 7.43, 7.47, 7.57, 7.61, 7.62
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Contextualization Evaluating Evidence	Perspective Historical Significance	Contextualization Historical Significance Comparison
DO FIRST	Frayer: Reform Scenario Response	Frayer: Union Prediction	Frayer: Suffrage Notice, Wonder, Think
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Inquiry Journal Topic 2: Supporting Questions	Advanced Organizer: Labor Reform	Seneca Falls Convention Video
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	"What is the Context? - The Antebellum Reform" Reading	Labor Reform Stations	†Document Analysis - Dec of Ind/Dec of Sent - COM
ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT	Temperance Movement and Prison Reform Jigsaw	N/A	Classroom Mingle
CONCLUSION	Evaluating Evidence Graphic Organizer	Exit Ticket: Triangle, Square, Circle	Unit 7 Inquiry Journal Topic 2: Compelling Question

The Abolition Movement: Topic Overview

	<u>LESSON 6 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 7 (90 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 8 (90 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 9 (60 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	How did the political, religious, and economic climate of the early 19th century contribute to the rise of abolitionism?	In what ways did enslaved people show defiance and what impact did that have on the nation?	How did the beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences of abolitionists shape the way they fought against slavery?	How did Frederick Douglass use the medium of photography to promote reform?
STANDARD(S)	7.28, 7.33, 7.47, 7.57, 7.58	7.43, 7.45, 7.57, 7.58	7.28, 7.33, 7.43, 7.57, 7.58	7.57, 7.58
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Contextualization Causation	Causation Comparison	Perspective Comparison	Perspective Evaluating Evidence
DO FIRST	Frayer: Abolition(ist) A-Z Guide	Frayer: Defiance Give One, Get One	Frayer: Underground Railroad Quickwrite	Frayer: Slave Narrative Notice, Wonder, Think
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Inquiry Journal Topic 3: Supporting Questions	"Urban Slavery" Podcast Clips	+Form Assessment - Harriet Tubman - PER	Photography as Activism Guided Notes
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	"What is the Context? - The Abolition Movement" Reading	Overt and Covert Resistance Jigsaw	Expand It! - Tubman and Truth	Gallery Walk: Portraits, Humanization, and Frederick Douglass
ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT	Origins of the Abolitionist Movement Video	N/A	Expand It! - Silent Discussion + Elaboration	Reflection: Photography as Activism
CONCLUSION	Contextualization Graphic Organizer	Comparison Graphic Organizer	Exit Ticket: DOK Question Generation	Unit 7 Inquiry Journal Topic 3: Compelling Question



Assessment : Topic Overview

	<u>LESSON 10 (150 MINS)</u>	LESSON 11 (60 MINS)	<u>LESSON 12 (90 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	How did the unique experiences and perspectives of abolitionists shape their efforts in the movement?	<i>Place-Based Lesson Extension</i> <i>See page 10 for lesson options and view Best Practice Repository for additional information about implementation</i>	In what ways did the diversity of abolitionists contribute to the overall effectiveness of the abolitionist movement?
STANDARD(S)	7.43, 7.45, 7.57, 7.58, 7.62		7.43, 7.57, 7.58, 7.62
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Perspective Evaluating Evidence Comparison		Perspective Historical Significance Evaluating Arguments
DO FIRST	Frayer: Emancipation Quote Analysis		Group Interviews Introduction and Classroom Set Up
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Mini-Research Project - Part A		Liberty Advocates Network Group Interviews
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	Abolitionist Gallery Walk		Hiring Decisions
ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT	Mini-Research Project - Part B		N/A
CONCLUSION	Exit Ticket: Interview Prep		Unit 7 Inquiry Journal Essential Question

Place Based Lesson Extension

	LESSON 11 (60 MINS)
SUPPORTING QUESTION	
STANDARD(S)	
FOCUS SKILL(S)	
DO FIRST	
OPTION 1 - PODCAST	
OPTION 2 - SYNCHRONOUS PRESENTATION	
OPTION 3 - FIELD TRIP	
CONCLUSION	

Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Unit Commentary:

Unit 7: Antebellum Reform provides rich opportunities for students to explore how individuals and movements pushed back against the limits of American democracy and worked to create a more just society. The unit uses the historical thinking skill of perspective to help students examine how personal identity shaped reformers' beliefs and actions, and how diverse voices challenged entrenched social and political structures.

Topic 1 introduces cultural movements of the early 19th century, beginning with the Second Great Awakening and the Hudson River School. Students examine how art and religion inspired Americans to reflect on morality, nature, and identity, forming a cultural backdrop that would help inspire social change. Through artistic analysis and source interpretation, students consider how cultural expression shaped national ideals and stirred people to action.

Topic 2 focuses on the emergence of reform movements that sought to address the problems of a rapidly changing nation. Students study the temperance and prison reform movements to analyze how moral ideas were used to expand or limit freedoms. They also explore labor reform and the early women's rights movement, including the Seneca Falls Convention, to understand how different groups advocated for inclusion and protection under the law. These lessons center on the ways social reformers worked within—and pushed against—the boundaries of democracy.

Topic 3 centers the abolitionist movement, the most urgent and radical reform of the era. Students investigate the religious, political, and economic contexts that gave rise to antislavery activism. They examine the ways enslaved people themselves resisted, and how their defiance—both overt and covert—forced the nation to confront the hypocrisy of slavery. Students study a range of abolitionists, including Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and William Lloyd Garrison, and evaluate how their identities shaped the tactics and goals of the movement. Additionally, students explore the role of media and image through a focused lesson on Frederick Douglass's use of photography as activism.

The summative assessment for the unit is an interactive, performance-based Abolitionist project. Students use evidence from primary and secondary sources to evaluate the contributions and perspectives of various abolitionists and determine how their voices advanced the movement. This assessment reinforces key themes of identity, activism, and historical perspective while helping students synthesize the unit's core questions.

Throughout the unit, students additionally apply historical thinking skills such as contextualization, evaluating evidence, comparison, and historical significance. By investigating the reformers who challenged injustice and demanded change, students gain a deeper understanding of how social movements have shaped—and tested—the meaning of democracy.



Antebellum Reform Unit 7 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Suggested Readings and Helpful Resources:

For information on:

- African American Spirituals, check out [this posting](#) on the National Humanities Center website
- The Debate over Presentism and History, check out [this article](#) on *The New Republic* website
- Best Practices for Student Research, check out [these tips](#) from the Literacy Ideas website
- Conducting Group Interviews, check out [these strategies](#) on the Learning for Action website

Unit Pedagogical Resources:

- What is Perspective? Guide
- What is Perspective Video

Museum Component:

- Optional Field Trip: Frederick Douglass National Historic Site