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Cambridge International AS Level

History of the USA
1840–1941
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Introduction

Cambridge International AS Level History is a new series of three books that offer complete and thorough coverage of the Cambridge International AS Level History (syllabus code 9389). Each book is aimed at one of the AS History syllabuses issued by Cambridge International Examinations for first examination in 2014. These books may also prove useful for students following other A Level courses covering similar topics. Written in clear and accessible language, Cambridge International AS Level History – History of the USA 1840–1941 enables students to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills to succeed in their AS Level course (and ultimately in further study and examination).

Syllabus and examination

Students wishing to take just the AS Level take two separate papers at the end of a one-year course. If they wish to take the full A Level there are two possible routes. The first is to take the two AS papers at the end of the first year and a further two A Level papers at the end of the following year. The second is to take the two AS papers as well as the two A Level papers at the end of a two-year course. For the full A Level, all four papers must be taken. The two AS papers are outlined below.

**Paper 1** lasts for one hour and is based on *The Origins of the Civil War 1846–61*. The paper will contain at least three different sources, and candidates will have answer two questions on them. Students are not expected to have extensive historical knowledge to deal with these questions, but they are expected to be able to understand, evaluate and utilise the sources in their answers, and to have sound background knowledge of the period. In the first question (a) candidates are required to consider the sources and answer a question on one aspect of them. In the second question (b) candidates must use the sources and their own knowledge and understanding to address how far the sources support a given statement. Chapter 1 provides the appropriate level of historical knowledge to deal with Paper 1.

**Paper 2** lasts for an hour and a half. This paper contains four questions, and candidates must answer two of them. Each question has two parts: part (a) requires a causal explanation; and part (b) requires consideration of significance and weighing of the relative importance of factors. A question on each of the four topics outlined in the Cambridge syllabus (for example, *The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal 1929–41*) will appear in every examination paper.
Examination skills

Chapter 6, which is entirely dedicated to helping students with examination skills and techniques, gives guidance on answering all the different types of exam questions in detail. Students should read the relevant section of the exam skills chapter before addressing practice questions, to remind themselves of the principles of answering each type of question. Remember that facts alone are not enough; they must be accompanied by a clear understanding of the question and must employ a range of skills such as focused writing, evaluation and analysis.

All chapters have a similar structure. The key features are as follows:

1. **Key questions** pose thought-provoking pointers to the key issues being dealt with in the chapter.
2. **Content summary** explains the essence of a chapter.
3. **Timeline** offers an overview of significant events of the period.
4. **Notes** highlight significant points from within the text.
5. **Key figures** offer a detailed profile of key personalities.
6. **Definitions** of key terms enhance students' understanding of the text.
7. **Questions** interspersed within the chapters help to consolidate learning.
8. **Key issues** outline the key aspects of the content that might be significant for exam preparation.
9. **Revision questions** help students assess their own understanding and skills.
10. **Further reading** provides a list of extra resources that will help with gaining a wider perspective of the topic.