

## US History 1 Research Topic Suggestions

Below is a list of suggested research project topics. If you wish to write on a topic not appearing on this list, you must get permission from me first. These **are not thesis statements**; your thesis statement would be your answer to the question you chose from below.

1. Were the Pilgrims pioneers of religious freedom, adventurous heroes, plundering thieves, genocidal villains, or something else?
2. Is the popularly accepted story of the first Thanksgiving bogus?
3. Was King Phillip's War the bloodiest war in American history?
4. To what extent did the Puritans achieve their vision of a "City Upon a Hill"?
5. Why was indentured servitude replaced by African slavery?
6. Why did the Salem Witch Trials happen?
7. Was the Sons of Liberty a domestic terrorist organization?
8. What was Benjamin Franklin's most significant contribution to American history?
9. Were colonial protests, such as the Boston Tea Party, effective?
10. How did the Great Awakening of the 1740s affect American religious practices?
11. How were the Americans able to win the American War for Independence?
12. Were Americans justified in fighting for independence?
13. To what extent did colonial American women enjoy equal rights to men?
14. Were Daniel Shays and Nathaniel Bacon justified in their rebellions?
15. Which of the Founding Fathers had the most significant impact on the history of the United States? Evaluate his actions.
16. What connection existed between the ideas of the Enlightenment and the protest movement in the Colonies against British imperial policy?
17. What rights, claimed by the Declaration of Independence to be the inalienable rights of all men, were denied to those held in slavery, and how was that justified?
18. In what ways was the American War for Independence a civil war?
19. What role did newspapers play in the ratification of the Constitution?
20. What were the historical origins of the Second Amendment's protection to keep and bear arms?
21. How did scandals like Alexander Hamilton and Maria Reynolds, Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings, and Andrew Jackson and Peggy Eaton affect American politics?
22. What ideas were debated, and ultimately left out of, the Constitution, and why?
23. How did Citizen Genet test the Washington Administration?
24. Why was the Lewis and Clark expedition considered so important in America's westward expansion?
25. What affect did the Barbary Pirates have on American foreign policy?
26. Why was the John Adams presidency less successful than the presidency of George Washington?
27. Which First lady had the greater impact, Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, or Dolly Madison?
28. Was Alexander Hamilton the most important person in the Washington administration?
29. Why were the Federalists so successful in directing the formation of the government of the United States?
30. Why was the election of 1800 called "The Revolution of 1800"?

31. Did Thomas Jefferson remain consistent with his political views when he became president?
32. Was John Quincy Adams the greatest Secretary of State of all time?
33. Was the War of 1812 necessary?
34. To what extent was the conflict between white Americans and Native Americans the fault of the whites?
35. How did the election of 1828 contribute to the growth of democracy in the United States?
36. How did Andrew Jackson change the role of the American president?
37. How did the Tariff of 1828 and the Nullification Crisis lead to the Civil War?
38. What affect did William Lloyd Garrison have on the abolition of slavery?
39. Why were the members of government during the Antebellum period known as the “bungling generation” as related to the problem of slavery?
40. Which had more followers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the women’s rights movement or the cult of domesticity?
41. What role did northern women play in the abolition movement?
42. Who had a greater impact on the development of American public education, Noah Webster or Horace Mann?
43. To what extent was Transcendentalism a uniquely American invention?
44. Was Manifest Destiny a positive good or an evil imperialist land grab?
45. What battle played the greatest role in the Texas war for independence?
46. Was the war with Mexico justified?
47. What role did women play in the development of the West?
48. What role did the Mountain Men play in America’s expansion westward?
49. How did the Erie Canal contribute to America’s economic growth?
50. Why is James K. Polk considered by some to be the most underrated president?
51. How did the Gold Rush contribute to America’s moving frontier?
52. Why did Lincoln’s election cause southern states to secede?
53. What role did slavery play in the election of 1860?
54. What were the most important battles of the Civil War?
55. Did the major congressional compromises of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century enhance or slow the spread of slavery?
56. Which economy was more successful, the northern industrial or the southern agricultural?
57. Which of Eli Whitney’s innovations had a greater impact on history, interchangeable parts or the cotton gin?
58. What effect did *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* have on slavery?
59. Was Sherman’s March to the Sea necessary to end the Civil War?
60. What was the historical significance of the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> regiment?
61. Did Reconstruction increase or decrease states’ power?
62. Did industrialization and the growth of cities improve *and* worsen the quality of American life?
63. How did rapid growth and increased immigration contribute to corruption in American cities in the late 1800’s?
64. Were the experiences of immigrant groups between 1820-1860 similar or different? Focus on the Germans, Chinese, and Irish.
65. How were the reform movements of 1820-1860 related to the growth of industry and urban life?
66. “Instead of uniting the country, the economic changes brought about by the developments in industry, agriculture, and transportation from 1820-1860 produced more sectional conflicts and divisions.” Do you agree?

67. Did the South even have a chance to win the Civil War?
68. How did the federalist papers, the anti-federalists, and the compromise on the Bill of Rights help bring about the ratification of the Constitution?
69. To what extent was the “early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked by strong pressures to force Native Americans from their lands”?
70. To what extent was guerilla warfare a successful tactic for the South during the Civil War?
71. Were there “war crimes” committed by the combatants in the Civil War?
72. Which Supreme Court case (1803-1865) had the greatest impact on American history, and why?
73. Has there been a guiding architectural philosophy in the government buildings and monuments in Washington, D.C.? If so, what has it been?
74. Who was the worst president before 1870?
75. What personal qualities of Abraham Lincoln’s made him a strong presidential candidate?