U.S. History I
Research Project: Key Questions in American History

Colonial Era

1. To what extent were the settlers of Jamestown responsible for their own suffering?

2. Why did a slave labor system develop in the Chesapeake colonies (Virginia and Maryland)?

3. By 1750, which of the 13 colonies do you believe was the best overall place for the "common man" to live?

4. Why/How did the French and Indian War alter or harm the relationship between American colonists and the British?

5. How did the period known as Salutary Neglect actually benefit the American Colonies?

6. What challenges did the British Empire face immediately following the French and Indian War?

The American Revolution

7. To what extent did the American protest movement have support in Parliament?

8. Why did John Adams choose to defend the Soldiers in the Boston Massacre?

9. To what extent did John Adams shape events in the 2nd Continental Congress?

10. Was the Battle of Bunker Hill important and if so, why?

11. Why did the Americans end up with such a favorable arrangement with the 1783 Treaty of Paris?

12. How did George Washington grow and improve as a general as the war progressed?

13. Why did the British lose the Revolutionary War?

14. To what extent was Benedict Arnold justified in his treason?
The Young Republic

15. Who were the leading Anti-Federalists and why did they oppose the Constitution?

16. Was the First Bank of the United States Constitutional?

17. Was Jefferson’s Embargo Act a mistake?

18. Why did the United States go to war with Great Britain in 1812?

19. Why did the Federalist Party decline and eventually disappear?

20. Why did Missouri’s desire to enter the union as a slave state create a crisis?

21. How did the Supreme Court decisions of John Marshall strengthen the federal government?

22. How did the Constitution increase the power of the federal government & lessen the power of the state legislatures?

Jacksonian Democracy

23. What were the core beliefs of Jacksonian Democrats?

24. Why did New England develop into the nation’s first industrial - manufacturing center?

25. Why did John Quincy Adams only have one term as President?

26. Why was the Erie Canal so critically important?

27. How did westward expansion intensify the dispute over slavery?

28. Was the Texas rebellion and revolution justified?

Civil War and Reconstruction

29. How did the issue of slavery contribute to starting the Civil War?

30. Why did the Republicans nominate Lincoln in 1860?

31. Why did the Confederates lose the Civil War?

32. Was Stonewall Jackson a great general?

33. Why are Grant and Sherman considered the first “modern” Generals?
34. Why did the U.S. Government fail to break up the plantations and give the freedmen land?

35. How did the Civil War transform the United States?

36. What traits made Abraham Lincoln such an effective politician and or president?