# Dr. Neal’s AP U.S. History

**DECADES PROJECT**

**GLOBALIZATION AND LIFE IN THE U.S.**

**1950s to Present**

*The U.S. emerged from World War II as one of two Superpowers of the world. Although we struggled against the spread of Communism, much of the world looked to us as either the symbol of freedom or as the cult of materialism. While our economy has expanded vastly and globally as the leading economic power, we have ridden the rise and fall of economic trends, affected not only by conditions at home but also from a global trade economy. In terms of politics, we have shifted back and forth between liberalism and conservatism. We have continued to strive for social reform in an effort to live up to our mantra that humans are “created equal.” In response, our culture has created trends that change and move in divergent directions.*

*For this project, your team is to choose one of the seven themes from the AP list, learn as much as you can about the U.S. from 1950 to the present, and then focusing on your theme, write an arguable thesis which your team supports with significant evidence and effective analysis to share with your classmates in order to help them understand more about our nation’s history. This is not only about developing your own history skills but also teaching your classmates.*

**Focusing on your selected theme, describe and analyze continuity and change through the decades of the last half of the 20th century, including specific examples from each of the decades (50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s). Then compare/contrast the late 20th century to life, policies, and/or events of the 21st century.**

Objectives:

* To learn U.S. history following World War II as you prepare for the AP Exam.
* To research primary and secondary sources to understand a topic in history in more depth than simply reading a textbook or hearing a lecture.
* To apply a thematic approach to research and presentation material.
* To work with peers to analyze and synthesize the research and organize it into a presentation to teach to the rest of the class.
* To practice the skills of teamwork.
* To polish the presentation skills of individuals and groups.
* To synthesize a body of research to help understand a period of history.

**Procedure:**

* You and your team members will choose a theme and apply it to the history of the United States between 1950 and the present. Do not worry if your material overlaps with other team presentations. This should be considered reinforcement rather than repetition.
* Begin with information from your textbook, then find additional primary and secondary sources (such as excerpts from public documents and literature, pictures, cartoons, charts, graphs, diary entries, music, poetry, dance, art, film, advertising, speeches, news articles, fashion trends).
* Put together a GoogleDoc, PowerPoint presentation, video, or interactive presentation that you can share with your classmates.
* Include evidence and sources from **each of the following decades**: 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and then 21st century as a comparative separate unit.
* Connect your theme to **at least** **two historical events we have studied prior to 1945** to indicate how our history has had ongoing trends. (This is a good practice for **contextualization** and **synthesis**, which we can also use as review.)
* Include several relevant **primary sources** in the form of excerpts from documents, audio sources, and visuals.

Your presentation is to take **20-30 minutes** and you need to be ready to present on the assigned day (even if a team member is absent.) **Remember to present as a team—not side-by-side reports.**

**CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATION:**

* **A = Exceeds Expectations; Well done and enthusiastically delivered with strong knowledge, all requirements, plus insightful understanding of theme**
* **B = Meets Expectations and meets all requirements with evidence of good knowledge and understanding**
* **C = Mostly Meets Expectations; evidence of adequate knowledge and understanding**
* Present a **hard copy** of the following to Dr. Neal **before you begin the presentation**:
  + - Your **arguable thesis statement**
    - **a Chicago style bibliography**—this should include titles and/or sponsors of websites, dates of websites, and date of access as well as the URL (web address). Be sure to cite the sources in which your find your primary documents and media.
* Begin with an **introduction** that provides a context for your theme (**contextualization**).
* Introduce your **thesis statement** near the beginning of the presentation. The thesis must be **arguable** and **clearly relevant and significant to your selected theme**.
* Provide substantial **evidence and detail** to describe the facts of your theme over the decades and **to support** your thesis statement.
* Include relevant **primary source** documents to enhance the presentation.
* **Analysis:** Explain how your evidence proves your thesis.
* **Synthesis:** make at least one significant **connection to U.S. history prior to 1945**. Show how your theme has demonstrated **continuity and change** over time **decade by decade**.
* **Compare/contrast:** analyze how life, policies, and/or events changed or remained the same into the 21st century.
* **Include visuals to supplement your topic**—at least **one visual for each slide**. Do **not** make the visual the background image.
* Choose a **font** size, style, and color that are easy to read. (Please no gray on gray.)
* Talk to your audience, not the SmartBoard. Face your audience. **Do not read** from the SmartBoard. Hold a note card if you need notes to remind yourself what to say. Do not read aloud from this card. Talk to us. **Show us that you are both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about your topic.**
* Use key phrases or words for bullet points—**keep the wording to an absolute minimum**! Remember the rule of sevens (no more than seven bullets or seven words per bullet, unless you are quoting a primary source as supporting evidence). It is better to have more slides rather than slides too full of details. The point of the slides is to reinforce (not replace) what you are teaching.
* **No complete sentences (unless quoting a primary source directly**). If you place a quote in your presentation, read it aloud and do not assume the audience can read it on their own.
* Presentation must be a team effort—not side-by-side presentations. Know who is speaking when. Share the information so everyone knows specifically what the other members will be saying.
* Presentation needs to stay within the allotted time (**20-30 minutes**)
* Most importantly: **Team members demonstrate confidence in their historical knowledge**. Thesis is well supported with **specificity**. Detailed evidence and significant analysis is clear, accurate, and relevant to both the thesis and the theme.
* Connections to events prior to and including World War II
  + 1st Connection prior to 1945 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + 2nd connection prior to 1945\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Supporting evidence includes detail from the decades following World War II:

-1950s -1980s

-1960s -1990s

-1970s -2000-present