

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS - Periodization

Defining the Period, 1890–1929

Note: Unit 6 covers only part of College Board's Period 7. We will cover the rest, 1929-1945, in Unit 7.

From the 2015 Revised Framework:

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, analyze, and evaluate different ways that historians divide history into discrete and definable periods. Historians construct and debate different, sometimes competing models of periodization; the choice of specific turning points or starting and ending dates might accord a higher value to one narrative, region, or group than to another.

Students will be able to...

1. Explain ways historical events and processes can be organized into discrete, different, and definable historical periods.
2. Evaluate whether a particular event or date could or could not be a turning point between different, definable historical periods, when considered in terms of particular historical evidence.
3. Analyze different and/or competing models of periodization.

Reminders About Periodization

Defining eras and chunking history into units of study is a natural consequence of studying the past. We are familiar with terms like “Colonial Era” or “The Roaring Twenties,” however it is important to remember that *history is everything*. It is not limited to what is listed on a timeline, and it is not limited to the obvious subject in the title of a historical era.

Eras are typically defined by major turning points. If we define the Colonial Era as beginning with Jamestown in 1607, for example, we make the case that the first permanent English settlement was a turning point in U.S. history. It ushered in an era where people from Europe and Africa overtook the native populations and created a new culture... and eventually a new nation. However, by defining the era with Jamestown, do we neglect the Spanish colony of San Agustin (Saint Augustine, Florida) in 1585? What about the Powhatans and hundreds of other groups who lived and settled in North America before the Spanish arrived? By defining the era with Jamestown, we give our periodization of the era an English emphasis. Now, it is true that our study of United States history will have an English emphasis, and we will focus primarily on that English thread; however it is important for us to remember that **defining periods is a historical viewpoint.** **And for every viewpoint, there is an opposing or differing viewpoint.**

So, the Colonial Era is not only the main events and people spotlighted by a particular viewpoint... *it is everything*. It includes the Asians who migrated and settled the land long before Europeans arrived. It includes the Vikings who came... and left... before the Spanish and Portuguese began conquering. It includes the many empires that rose and fell throughout the Americas, and it includes the Spanish, French, Dutch, Swedes, Native Americans, Africans... and the English in North America... *and so on*. **What we choose to focus on will change how we define the era.** And, as we study the historical periods defined by others, we must be ready to **analyze a viewpoint, compare viewpoints, defend a viewpoint, challenge a viewpoint, or to offer an alternate viewpoint.**

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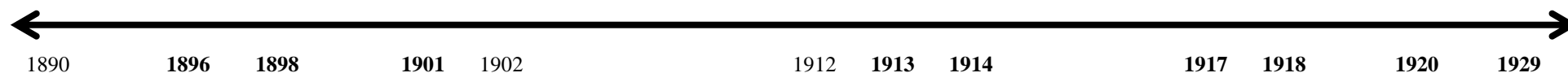
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1. What can we call the historical time period defined by the years 1890-1929?

How can that period be divided into smaller eras?

2. The previous era was: _____ The era was ushered in with: _____.

3. Identify significant events for each of the years on the timeline by labeling the timeline.



4. Some important *turning points* within this era include:

_____ in 1898, *turning point from* _____ *to* _____.

_____ in 1901, *turning point from* _____ *to* _____.

_____ in 1917, *turning point from* _____ *to* _____.

_____ in 1918, *turning point from* _____ *to* _____.

5. The era was *ushered out* in 1929 by: _____, *which was an important turning point from*

_____ *to* _____.

6. The next era is: _____.

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7. **Identify and EXPLAIN** four major *defining characteristics* of this era. **Think thematically**, and go beyond what you identified as turning points.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS	EXPLANATIONS

8. **Explain why** the year 1890 is used to define the beginning of this era in the College Board Content Outline.

9. One historian defines the Progressive Era as beginning with the Hull House in 1886 and ending with 19th Amendment in 1920. Most textbook historians characterize it differently. **Defend, Refute, or Modify the viewpoint that the Progressive Era began in 1886 and ended in 1920.**
(write a complete thesis, including opposing viewpoint)