

A CURRICULUM GUIDE

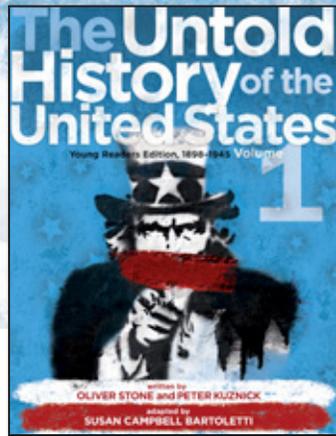
The Untold History of the United States

Young Readers Edition, 1898-1945 Volume 1



written by
OLIVER STONE and PETER KUZNICK

adapted by
SUSAN CAMPBELL BARTOLETTI



The Untold History of the United States, Volume 1: Young Readers Edition, 1898-1945

HC: 9781481421737

ABOUT THE BOOK

Most textbooks of American history celebrate our country by recounting events we all know well. In these books, the United States always does the right thing, and every American leader is a hero. *The Untold History of the United States* takes a very different approach. It asks whether the US could have done a better job at key points in history. It includes episodes in American history that most people don't know about. Reading it, you will get new perspectives on the parts of our history you already know and will be introduced to some episodes you've never heard of before.

Based on the latest archival findings and recently declassified information, this four-volume series will come as a surprise to the vast majority of students and their teachers—and that's precisely why these books are such crucial counterparts to today's history textbooks.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These discussion questions align with the following Common Core State Standards: (RH.6–8.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (WHST.6–8.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

1. Why is this book called *The Untold History of the United States*?
2. At the end of Chapter Four, “All That Glitters,” the authors say that “Instead of spreading democracy, the United States would defend the status quo—all in the name of empire.” Most textbooks celebrate the United States as a democracy; this book, in contrast, calls the United States an empire. What is a democracy? What is an empire? Which do you think the United States is today?
3. This book includes several primary sources in its discussion of the US invasion and takeover of the Philippines, including photographs, an excerpt of a speech Senator Albert Beveridge gave to the Senate in 1900, and a 1901 newspaper article. How do these primary sources support the book's argument? Which of them is most important to the book's argument, and why?
4. In Chapter 6, the authors argue that the US involvement in the banana industry in Central America and the banana wars were in conflict with the values of the American Revolution of 1776. How do they support this claim? Use the Internet to research this period of history. Can you find evidence that supports or contradicts this claim?
5. How did the United States come to dominate Latin America? Provide a narrative of events and explain why various events were significant and how they were related.
6. How are the words *capitalism* and *fascism* defined in this book?
7. Why is Chapter 9 titled “R.I.P. Freedom of Speech”?
8. How did the Treaty of Versailles come to be ratified?
9. What were the goals of the Nye Committee? How did it operate? Why did it fail?
10. In Chapter 19, the text states that “For perhaps the only time in US history, powerful antiwar sentiment was actually misplaced.” What does this statement mean? Do you agree?
11. Look at some of the visual primary sources in the book, such as the World War II era posters. What do these images tell you? How do these images support the book's argument about America during World War II?
12. Was Harry S. Truman a good president? Cite specific evidence from the book to support your argument.

ACTIVITIES AND PROJECT IDEAS

These activities align with the following Common Core State Standards: (RH.6–8.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (WHST.6–8.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

1. Before assigning reading on a topic, have students spend ten minutes brainstorming on paper what they know about that topic; for example, the lives of typical working-class people in the US between 1898–1945, or the accomplishments of a particular president. Once students have read in *The Untold History of the United States* on this topic, have them identify what they learned and what surprised them. You might also have them identify aspects of the topic they would like to research further.
2. Have students use resources found in the library and online to research the history of labor strikes in the United States. They can choose to look at a specific strike (such as the 1885 railroad strike), strikes in a particular industry (such as trucking or textiles), or the wave of strikes in 1919, when five million workers went on strike. Have them craft arguments to explain why workers went on strike. Have them present both their findings and their arguments in either a paper or a PowerPoint presentation.
3. Have students research the life and politics of Eugene Debs, Henry Ford, or Henry Wallace. They can start by reading the sections of this book on their individual and summarizing them. They can then decide what aspects of the individual's life they would like to know more about, and seek out both print and online sources to learn more. As a class, discuss which search terms students will use, and how they will decide whether a source is credible. At the end of the research process, have students create PowerPoint presentations to share their information and arguments with one another.
4. Have students write argumentative essays on the two wars. Assign half the students to the argument that World War I was not worth fighting, but World War II was worth fighting, and half to the argument that World War I was worth fighting, but World War II was not. For both groups, have students clearly state their arguments, explain why the opposing argument is incorrect, and support their arguments with evidence. Encourage students to write essays that are organized, include introductions and conclusions, and are written in a professional voice.
5. Have students write articles for newspaper readers today, about significant events in our nation's past. (Examples of events to write about include the Haymarket Riot on May 4, 1886; the US Senate's rejection of the League of Nations on November 19, 1919; and the United States' entry into World War II on December 8, 1941). Encourage students to connect the events they write about to current events, if they can.
6. Have students write a newspaper article for readers in July 1944 that describes the drama of the 1944 Democratic National Convention, at which Senator Harry Truman was selected as the vice presidential candidate.
7. Have students use resources found in the library and online to learn more about German concentration camps during World War II. They can research the general phenomenon of German concentration camps in eastern Europe, or a specific camp (such as Auschwitz). Have each student keep a blog of his/her research process in which s/he reflects on what s/he is learning. Have each student create a website on which s/he publishes what s/he has learned.
8. Have students use resources found in the library and online to learn more about Japanese-Americans being held in concentration camps in the US during World War II. They can research the anti-Japanese feeling in the US, the concentration camps in which Japanese-Americans were confined, or life in a specific camp (such as Manzanar). Have each student keep a blog of his/her research process in which s/he reflects on what s/he is learning. Have each student create a website on which s/he publishes what s/he has learned.
9. Have the students free write for ten minutes about how they think they themselves would have reacted to government propaganda urging people to support World War I, the New Deal, or World War II. Have them discuss their reactions in pairs, small groups, or with the class as a whole.
10. Have students read accounts of historical events that conflict with Stone and Kuznick's accounts of the same events. Working individually or in groups, have them compare the conflicting accounts. How can we decide which of two conflicting accounts of history is correct?

SIMON & SCHUSTER CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020
TEACH.SimonandSchuster.net • TEEN.SimonandSchuster.com

Guide written by Susie Steinbach, Professor of History, Hamline University, College of Liberal Arts.

This guide, written in alignment with the Common Core Standards (www.corestandards.org) has been provided by Simon & Schuster for classroom, library, and reading group use. It may be reproduced in its entirety or excerpted for these purposes.