

U.S. History

WORKSHEET A

A

As far as we know, until the early sixteenth century no European person had ever set foot on the huge area of land that is now the United States of America. However, the territory had been home to a large population of Native Americans for thousands of years.

The first European settlement in North America was St Augustine, established by Spanish settlers in 1565 in what is now the state of Florida. Further north, the first settlement built by colonists from England was Jamestown (named after the English king at the time) in the state of Virginia, established in 1607. There were lots of conflicts between English settlers and the indigenous population in seventeenth-century Virginia, most of them caused by the fact that the settlers wanted to take the land in order to raise animals and grow crops. As the settlers moved inland, the Native Americans were pushed to the west – a process that would continue for another 250 years.

B

Britain established a total of thirteen colonies in North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the late eighteenth century, however, these colonies began to want to break away from Britain, a desire that led to the American War of Independence (1775-1783). On 4th July 1776 the colonies declared that they were a separate country called the United States, and on 17th September 1787, four years after victory in the war, the political leaders of the new country finished writing its constitution. From the very beginning, the government of the United States wanted to be different from the monarchies that existed in Europe, aiming to rule in a more democratic way.

The white settlers moved west and south throughout the nineteenth century. The United States incorporated Texas in 1845 and, following a war with Mexico, California and New Mexico in 1848.

C

Apart from the treatment of the Native Indian population (which fell by at least 90% between the arrival of the first Europeans and the end of the nineteenth century), most people would agree that the darkest stain on the history of the United States is slavery. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, tens of thousands of black Africans were forcibly shipped to North America, where they, and their descendants, were considered the property of their white masters, and typically had to spend their lives doing hard agricultural work.

Slavery was one of the main issues behind the American Civil War (1861-65), which began when eleven southern states declared that they would break away from the federal government or 'Union'. The southern states, which owned most of the slaves, wanted to maintain slavery while the northern states wanted to end it. The Union achieved military victory after four years of fighting in which more than 600,000 people (2% of the country's total population) lost their lives. As a result of the South's defeat, slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865.

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U.S. History

WORKSHEET B

Fill the gaps below to complete the name of the first president of the United States, whose term of office was from 1789 to 1797.

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- The settlement of Jamestown was established in 1607 in the state of _____.
- The Native American population fell by at least _____ percent between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- On 4th July 1776 the thirteen American _____ declared their independence from Britain.
- The American Civil war lasted _____ years.
- In seventeenth-century Virginia there were lots of conflicts between English settlers and the _____ population.
- _____ was abolished in the United States in 1865.
- Settlers in Virginia wanted to use the land to _____ crops and raise animals.
- The American Civil War began when the southern states declared that they would _____ away from the Union.
- St Augustine was the _____ European settlement in North America.
- From the very start the government of the United States wanted to be different from the European _____.
- The fact that the southern states wanted to _____ slavery was one of the causes of the American Civil War.
- The United States incorporated _____ in 1848.
- Jamestown was named after the _____ king.
- The white _____ moved west and south during the nineteenth century.
- Slaves were considered the _____ of their white masters.
- The leaders of the United States finished writing the country's _____ on 17th September 1787.

U.S. History

WORKSHEET C

Now answer the following multiple-choice questions.

1. What percentage of the United States' population was killed in the civil war between 1861 and 1865?

- a) 0.5%
- b) 2%
- c) 5%

2. What happened in 1845?

- a) The United States incorporated Texas.
- b) The first Spanish settlers arrived in North America.
- c) The American War of Independence ended.

3. Where is Virginia in relation to Florida?

- a) To the west
- b) To the north
- c) To the south

4. Where was the Spanish settlement of St Augustine?

- a) Florida
- b) California
- c) New Mexico

5. How many southern states fought against the Union in the American Civil War?

- a) Nine
- b) Ten
- c) Eleven

6. What is the name of the war that took place between the American colonies and Britain from 1775 to 1783?

- a) War for Liberty
- b) Native American War
- c) American War of Independence