

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Organized 1884

Incorporated by the Congress 1889

August 20, 2014

The AHA Supports the Revised Framework for the Advanced Placement U.S. History Course and Exam

The American Historical Association (AHA) supports the College Board in its efforts to encourage rigorous history education and ensure that the history classroom is a place of engaged learning and open dialog. The AHA remains confident that the College Board's [Advanced Placement US History Framework](#) will help teachers achieve these goals without introducing partisanship, dictating content, or ignoring important aspects of US history. The AHA objects to mischaracterizations of the framework as anti-American, purposefully incomplete, radical, and/or partisan.

The 2012 framework reflects the increased focus among history educators in recent years on teaching students to think historically, rather than emphasizing the memorization of facts, names, and dates. This emphasis on skills, on habits of mind, helps our students acquire the ability to understand and learn from key events, social changes, and documents, including those which provide the foundations of this nation and its subsequent evolution. The authors of the framework took seriously the obligation of our schools to create actively thinking and engaged citizens, which includes understanding the importance of context, evidence, and chronology to an appreciation of the past.

The new framework is not a set of instructions or dictates for teachers; it allows them to decide what content may be taught in the AP history classroom. The framework has been grievously mischaracterized as a curriculum. It is not. The framework offers guidance for teachers on how to connect just about any historical content to the skills that students will need for the AP exam, for college, and for citizenship. The curriculum content remains the province of the teacher, the school district, and the state.

Historians and history teachers know that the honest, nonpartisan study of history will turn up episodes that are inspirational and episodes that are deeply troubling. Studying history challenges anyone's beliefs, whatever their political commitments may be. This makes it even more important that history teachers know they are free to emphasize independent thinking, cooperative inquiry, evidence, and open discussion. The AP US History Framework is a positive step in this direction for all teachers of history.