The Simple AP® US History Unit 6 Cheat Sheet

6.2–6.3 Westward Expansion

Economy

Transcontinental Railroad (1869): built by Irish and Chinese workers; links East and West.
Homestead Act: free land for settlers who farm it.
Mining and cattle booms bring settlers and boomtowns in the Plains and West.
Farmers face debt, falling prices and high railroad rates → many join the Grange and Populists.
Frontier closed (1890); Turner says the frontier shaped American democracy and spirit.

Native Americans

Event	Year
Sand Creek massacre	1864
Little Bighorn	1876
Dawes Act	1887
Wounded Knee	1890

Buffalo nearly wiped out → Plains life destroyed.
Reservations shrink; treaties broken.
Dawes Act: breaks up tribal land → tribes lose most of it (about two-thirds, by 1934).
Boarding schools try to erase Native cultures.
Ghost Dance: spiritual movement; ends at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, 1890.
Exodusters: Black families moved west to Kansas for land and safety after Reconstruction.

⚠ The Dawes Act was called reform but took Native land and weakened tribal life.

✓ Railroads + settlers → Native displacement.

6.4 The "New South"

Economy

New South: plan to build factories and railroads in the South (Henry Grady; Birmingham steel).
Reality: still mostly farming; low wages.
Sharecropping traps Black and poor white farmers in debt through the crop-lien system.

Jim Crow

Jim Crow laws: legal segregation in schools, trains and public places after Reconstruction.

Tool	Blocked voting by
Poll tax	Charging a fee
Literacy test	Unfair tests
Grandfather clause	Exempting whites
Violence	Fear, lynching

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896): "separate but equal" is ruled legal under the 14th Amendment.
Segregation stays legal until 1954.

Black Responses

Ida B. Wells: exposed lynching.
Booker T. Washington: job training first (Tuskegee Institute); accept segregation for now.
W.E.B. Du Bois (later): demand full rights now.
Atlanta Compromise (1895): Washington's speech accepting segregation for economic progress.

⚠ Jim Crow kept most Black Southerners poor and unable to vote well into the 1900s.

✓ Compare Washington and Du Bois.

6.5–6.6 Technology & Big Business

Innovation

Cheap steel → railroads, skyscrapers, bridges.
Edison (electric light), **Bell** (telephone).
Railroads create national markets and time zones.
Westinghouse spreads electric power.

Big Business

Tycoon	Industry
Carnegie	Steel
Rockefeller	Oil
J.P. Morgan	Banking
Vanderbilt	Railroads

Vertical integration: own every step (Carnegie).
Horizontal integration: buy out rivals (Rockefeller).
Monopolies and trusts control whole industries.
Standard Oil controlled about 90% of oil refining.
Corporations sell stock to raise money; brands and ads spread (e.g., Coca-Cola, Kodak).

Ideas

Laissez-faire: government stays out of business.
Social Darwinism: rich succeed because they're "fittest" → justifies inequality (Spencer).
Gospel of Wealth: the rich should give back (Carnegie funds libraries and colleges).
Gilded Age (Mark Twain's 1873 term): shiny on top, corruption and poverty underneath.

⚠ Government helped business with tariffs and land grants plus friendly court rulings.

✓ Debate: robber barons or captains of industry?

6.7 Labor in the Gilded Age

Conditions

Long hours, low pay, dangerous work.
Child labor was common in mills and mines.
Company towns controlled workers' homes and stores (e.g., Pullman, near Chicago).
Workers lost control over their pace and skills.

Unions

Union	Who joined
Knights of Labor	All workers
AFL	Skilled workers
American Railway U.	Railroad workers

AFL (Gompers): focused on pay and hours; lasted.
Knights of Labor welcomed women and Black workers; faded after Haymarket.
Eugene Debs led the Pullman strike; later a Socialist leader (ran 5 times for president).

Major Strikes

Railroad Strike (1877): ended by troops.
Haymarket (1886): bomb → unions blamed.
Homestead (1892): Carnegie crushes union.
Pullman (1894): federal troops end strike.
Courts used injunctions to stop strikes.
Real gains for workers (8-hour day, unions) came later: Progressive and New Deal eras.
Haymarket made many Americans link unions with violence and foreign-born radicals.

⚠ Most strikes failed; government sided with owners (troops, court injunctions).

✓ Strikes show government favored business.

6.8–6.9 Immigration & Responses

New Immigrants

	Old	New
From	N. & W. Europe	S. & E. Europe
Faith	Protestant	Catholic, Jewish
Settled	Farms, cities	Cities

Why came: jobs, freedom, escape poverty and persecution (e.g., Jewish pogroms).
Ellis Island (East) and **Angel Island** (West).
Ethnic neighborhoods kept language and culture.
Tenements: crowded, unsafe city housing.
Black Southerners began moving to Northern cities for factory jobs, fleeing Jim Crow.

Responses

Nativism: fear of immigrants' jobs, religion, ideas.
Chinese Exclusion Act (1882): bans Chinese laborers for 10 years; renewed until 1943.
First law to ban immigrants by nationality.
Political machines: trade jobs and aid to immigrants for votes; often corrupt (graft).
Tammany Hall (Boss Tweed) ran New York City.
Settlement houses (Jane Addams, Hull House 1889): classes, childcare and English.
Strikebreakers: employers hired immigrants → anger and tension with native-born workers.
Melting pot vs keeping your own culture.
Nativist groups pushed literacy tests to keep out new immigrants (Cleveland vetoed, 1897).

⚠ Machines were corrupt but helped immigrants.

✓ Compare nativism across periods.

6.10–6.11 Middle Class & Reform

Middle Class

Office jobs grow: clerks, managers.
Shopping: department stores and catalogs.
Leisure: baseball, parks, amusement parks.
Women gain more schooling and office jobs.

Reformers

Social Gospel: churches should fix social problems such as slums and poverty.
Jacob Riis: photos of tenement poverty.
Settlement houses help the urban poor.
Henry George: tax land to reduce inequality.
Temperance and **women's suffrage** groups grow.
WCTU (Frances Willard) fought alcohol and pushed other reforms like suffrage.

Early Regulation

Law	Purpose
Pendleton Act	Jobs by merit
Interstate Commerce	Regulate railroads
Sherman Antitrust	Ban monopolies

Weak: courts limited these laws.
Cities add clean water, sewers and police as they grow to fight disease, fire and crime.
Sherman Act was even used against unions.
Consumer culture: brand names and ads change how people shop (Macy's, Sears catalogs).

⚠ These laws had little effect until the Progressive Era in the early 1900s.

✓ Gilded Age reform → Progressive Era.

6.12–6.13 Government & Politics

Politics

Close elections, weak presidents, high turnout.
Issues: tariffs, money, government jobs.
Garfield killed (1881) → Pendleton Act.
Scandals under Grant hurt trust in government.

Farmers Organize

Grange: farmers fight railroad rates.
Granger laws: states regulate railroads.
Farmers' Alliances (1880s) grow in South and West, incl. the Colored Farmers' Alliance.
Populist Party (1892, Omaha Platform): free silver, income tax, direct election of senators.

Gold vs Silver

	Gold	Silver
Backers	Bankers	Farmers
1896	McKinley	Bryan

Panic of 1893: severe depression to 1897.
Coxey's Army: jobless men march on Washington.
Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech; McKinley wins.
Tariffs: high tariffs protect industry but raise prices for farmers (McKinley Tariff, 1890).
McKinley wins in 1896 with city workers and business money (Mark Hanna's war chest).
Populist ideas later became the 16th and 17th Amendments (income tax, senators).

⚠ Populists lost, but many ideas became law later during the Progressive Era (1900s).

✓ Was Populism a failure or a success?

6.14 Continuity & Change, Strategy

Big Themes

Industry: U.S. becomes an industrial power.
Inequality: great wealth and deep poverty.
Who belongs: immigrants, Jim Crow, Native policy.
Government: hands-off vs calls for regulation.

Key Dates

Year	Event
1869	Transcontinental RR
1877	Great Railroad Strike
1882	Chinese Exclusion
1886	Haymarket
1887	Dawes Act
1892	Populist Party forms
1896	Plessy v. Ferguson

Essay Tips

CCOT: what changed and stayed the same after Reconstruction? (e.g., 1877 vs 1898)
Compare: Knights vs AFL; old vs new immigrants.
Complexity: growth helped some and hurt others.
Context: Civil War laws set up the boom.
Links: Gilded Age reformers → Progressives.
Argument: take a clear side and back it with 2+ specific examples from 1865–1898.
Sourcing: explain the author's purpose, point of view, audience or historical situation.

⚠ Imperialism (1898+) belongs to Period 7.

✓ Pair a business source with a worker's source.