



History Knowledge Organiser

Year: 8
Topic: American Civil War
Half term: Summer 1

- American Westward expansion started to happen around 1803.
- The West was seen as a new and attractive place to live with new opportunities and cities arising that had more potential than the current over-populated East.
- The Westward expansion had a devastating effect on Native Americans.
- Native Americans were pushed onto reservations by the US Government in a way to try and contain them, yet preserve their tribes.
- The differences in cultures and lifestyles meant that Native Americans were forced aside and overpowered by White Americans.

- By 1807, the International Slave Trade had ceased but America continued enslaving African-American people.
- As the 1800s progressed, more and more abolitionists found their voice and there was outcry for slavery to be abolished.
- Due to these attitudes the North and South of America started to separate from each other- with the North becoming more anti-slavery and the south pro-slavery.

- African Americans were allowed to join the war to fight for both sides but their experiences were vastly different.
- Most Black Confederate troops were forced into low paying non-combat work and scarcely paid.
- The Union had a regiment specifically for African American soldiers and some were awarded for their actions and service.



- Reconstruction Era**
- This is the period following the Civil War from 1865-1877.
 - The main focus for America during this period was to unite the North and South and find a way to be the USA. Whilst slavery was abolished in 1865, Black Americans were not afforded equal freedom to White Americans.
 - Individual states put segregation in place, ensuring Black Americans had to sign labour documents forcing their service for a year and some of the most racist times America had ever seen came about- The Jim Crow Laws.

- Homework tasks**
- Learn the key words and their definitions.
 - Design your own KO using the knowledge gained in your lessons.
 - Choose one of the topics we have covered in this unit and teach a family member. Ask them to write a review of what you have told them.
- Submit your homework to your class teacher for achievement points!

Suggested Reading
The Fiery Trial by Eric Foner
Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory by David Blight



Key Terms	
Louisiana Purchase	The purchase of Western territory from the French
The Gold Rush	Americans found that Gold was in California and there was a rush to acquire it
The Oregon Trail	A wagon route through America allowing the transportation of goods and migration
Manifest Destiny	An idea that America is destined to expand and spread Capitalism
Jim Crow Laws	State and local laws that enforced racial segregation
Contraband	Goods that have been imported illegally

Key Battles	
Battle of Bull Run	First major battle. Confederate victory due to Union disorganisation.
Fort Donelson	Union victory which showed how successful Ulysses S. Grant would be.
Antietam	Most historians believe this to be a stalemate, but the Union claimed victory.
Chancellorsville	Confederacy victory. Robert E. Lee became famous for splitting his army in two.
Vicksburg	Union win which gave control of the Mississippi river.
Gettysburg	Union win which slaughtered 1/3 of Lee's army.
Atlanta	Union victory- boosted morale and re-elected Lincoln as President.