

History of the us essays examples

[Countries](#), [Germany](#)



1 . What lessons, if any, can be learned by comparing and contrasting Hoover and Roosevelt's differing approaches to combating the Great Depression?

The Great Depression is remembered as the worst economic slump that has ever hit the industrialized world. The Great Depression was experienced during the presidency of Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt. Their approaches towards the crisis were similar and dissimilar in a number of ways. Both the presidents utilized government resources more than any other previous US presidents in a bid to resurrect the struggling economy. Americans insists that Hoover was less committed to save the economy but the Hoover Dam and Reconstruction Finance Corporation were his brainchild. Nonetheless, Roosevelt initiated major economic reforms that proved his willingness to do much than Hoover to combat the depression. Hoover's conservative, hands off approach to the crisis at the time when daring economic policies was needed made the American people abhor his leadership. Hoover's administration was unworried and dormant. On the other hand, Roosevelt embraced new ideas and took bold decisions that were crucial in creating the path back to economic recovery. Immediately after assuming office, Roosevelt declared a bank holiday to stop the continuing collapse of banks that were wiping out people's savings and livelihoods. Hoover was of the opinion that the constitution did not empower the government to take such an action.

Secondly, it was under the Roosevelt leadership that the government enacted regulations to direct various economic segments by removing the existing flaws that had contributed to the financial crisis. Hoover's

conservative government was of the opinion that such an action amounted to interference on a self-directing system that would, in the long run, adjust on its own. Roosevelt also introduced the Safety Net and public works programs to assist millions of jobless and starving Americans. Roosevelt successful approach teaches that it is wise to initiate cautious progressive policies in the fast changing world.

2. Did America's policy of isolationism play a major role in the rise of the aggressors during the 1920's and 1930's?

Isolationism was a foreign policy adopted by the American government insisting that the federal republic interests would be upheld and sustained by adapting a neutral approach to other countries affairs. The policy was founded on the principle that limiting international involvement would keep the republic from being drawn into hazardous and adverse conflicts. The policy dates back to the time of independence and was advocated by the first president, George Washington. The policy prevented the US involvement in the two world wars. The US was also insulated from the armed conflicts that were increasingly taking place in Asia and Europe. The policy of isolationism must have contributed to the rise of aggressors in the 1920s and 1930s. The aggressors knew that they would continue unleashing terror on their victims since the US was unlikely to intervene. For example, Japan's military offensive against the Chinese had persisted since 1931. The US never intervened although it was clear that Japan was the aggressor. Even after Japan sank and bombed an American gunboat in 1937, the American failed to act and accepted the Japan's apology. Japan continued conquering Asia and eventually, attacked US Pearl Harbor. Similarly, in

Europe Adolf Hitler influence was expanding. The Spanish republic had been formed in 1931 and five years later, the republic attacked Morocco. Hitler supported the Spanish; he was later joined by the Italians. Many Americans viewed the war as a battle between democracy and fascism. However, the Americans never intervened and the Germans continued waging war against other European countries. The Germans also attacked the US and the federal republic was forced to repeal the neutrality act to protect its territories and allies.

3. Someone once said the truth is the first casualty of war. Could the same be said of liberty?

In times of war, propaganda takes center stage leading to the assassination of the truth. Similarly, during wars, liberty is usually at stake with anyone opposed to the war being viewed as a traitor and guilty of treason. During the war against Germany and Central powers, Americans liberty was suppressed. The Espionage Act curtailed the freedom of speech. It was illegal to make comments or statements that would obstruct war efforts. The socialist press was the first casualty of the enactment of the act since they were accused of spying. The Espionage Act was reinforced by the Sedition Act that outlawed any spoken or printed remarks that intended to create an impression that engagement in the war was immoral. Over 2000 people were charged of violating the provisions of the Sedition Act with half of them being found guilty and sentenced in prison.

The states assisted the federal republic in reining over those perceived to be disloyal and opposed to the war. Flag was viewed as a symbol of passionate loyalty and opponents or disloyal people were forced to publicly kiss the flag

as a sign of guilt. Buying liberty loans was a must and those who failed to buy them were investigated by their respective states. In addition, teachers had to sign loyalty oaths. A group known as American Protective League worked as undercover agents to weed out the disloyal people. Workers rights organizations were not spared with employers taking advantage of the prevailing environment to crush the labor unions. The government even supported the violation of workers' rights in the name of promoting patriotism.

4. Do Americans truly believe in the concept of civil liberties or only their own civil liberties?

The US history shows that the Americans believed only in their own civil liberties as opposed to civil liberties for everyone. The Immigration Commission identified that there were not less than 45 races in the nation and even ranked them in order of their importance. Each race was associated with certain features; indeed, those considered inferior were segregated and even worse sterilized. Americans were concerned that immigrants were not adapting to the American cultures fast enough therefore put in place policies to assimilate the immigrants to the American culture. This amounted to interfering with the rights and liberties of the immigrants because they were entitled to live as per their subcultures. For example, Ford Motor Company's sociology department went as far as sending investigators to immigrant worker's home to assess how their lifestyles. Failure to Americanize within a stipulated amount of time meant loss of job.

There were concerted efforts to Americanize the high number of German

immigrants. Use of German expressions and German language was prohibited. Indeed, the Iowa governor stated that freedom of expression only applied to the use of the English language. The teaching of foreign languages was also outlawed in many states. The war against the German led to drastic decline in the German-American culture. The African-Americans were not spared either. They experienced widespread discrimination in the North while they were disenfranchised in the South. Many of them worked in plantations or as domestic workers. The existing laws on workers protection did not cover this group of workers thus they were severely exploited and treated inhumanely. Even the movement advocating for women rights disregarded black women arguing that black women were favored after the civil war and they should allow white women to flourish.

- Should the United States have entered the First World War?

The US was warranted to join World War I. First, German was provoking the US by sending unauthorized submarines in the US east coast. The US had a mandate to defend its people against external threats thus it had to declare war against the intruders. The Germans had also sunk a British transport ship in which 1195 people died including 128 Americans. The Germans were even willing to finance Mexico in its bid to regain the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas from the US. The US had a right to protect its foreign investments in countries like Britain and France. If the two countries were defeated in the war, they would have been unable to finance loans from the US and the American economy would suffer. Moreover, the US wanted to assert its power as the sole world power. In addition, the US had a responsibility to entrench democracy across the world. This would be

possible by defeating enemies of democracy and establish institutions that respected democracy.

2. Was the U. S. justified in dropping the atomic bombs?

The US was not justified to use the atomic bombs to force Japan to surrender. The US had underestimated the power of the atomic bomb and the devastating effects it would cause to innocent Japanese. Majority of the people who perished were not actually belligerents but innocent men, women and children. It is immoral and unacceptable to kill and maim innocent people to end war. Japan was ready to negotiate surrender but the American president turned down the offer; instead preferred to use the weapon of mass destruction. The US did not exhaust other alternatives that would have ended the war without such massive fatalities. Turning down the Japan offer for peaceful conclusion of war and then bombing two islands was cruel and inhumane. Indeed, Japan never posed a major threat to the US survival.

3. What was the greatest challenge facing the United States during the postwar period?

After the end of the war, it was clear that the US would not continue with its isolationist policy. The US had to face the challenge of combating the rapid expansion of communism; the Soviet Union was advocating for communism. Already the Soviet Union had shown its intent to spread communism by supporting communist rebels in Turkey and Greece. The US passed policies in a bid to combat communism. Foreign aid would be given to countries that were opposed to communism. Turkey and Greece were the main target; the US would also attempt to influence China that was also under communist

rule. Besides tackling communism, the US had also to play a critical role in rebuilding war ravaged Europe and Japan. There was also the crisis on the unification of Germany with France and the Soviet Union opposing the unification.

4. Is the Patriot Act a modern incarnation of McCarthyism?

McCarthyism was a policy passed in the United States in response to the allegations that communism had infiltrated the country State Department. It is during this era that the CIA, the Department of Defense and the National Security Council were formed. The legislation was hostile to any one branded as communist. Americans were not spared either and their rights and freedoms were violated. In a bid to curb terrorism following the September 11 attack in the American soil, the congress passed the Patriotic Act. The Act gave extensive powers to the law enforcement agencies to survey and investigate. There were no clear check and balances that would prevent the violation of the civil liberties. The privacy of the American people is under threat as the government increases surveillance to prevent future acts of terror. The constitutional rights of the American people and the immigrants are at stake; the government argues that it is in the interest of the American people.