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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2011 Volume III: The Idea of America

Exporting the Idea of America

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Is Democracy for everyone? Can a population of uneducated people perform the basic functions of a democracy? Should the United States be involved in assisting or promoting democratic movements around the world? Are human rights, equality and economic opportunity dependent on a democratic political system? These questions are not only central to understanding U.S. foreign policy, they are also necessary when analyzing modern political and philosophical movements globally. Recent democratic movements in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia highlight the dramatic changes in political structures and public opinion that have taken place in the last fifty years. Our students need to be able to analyze their own country's involvement in these political revolutions to determine how and when to spread American ideals and values, now and in the future. This unit gives the teacher a background for the causes for expansion of the U.S. from 13 colonies to the Continental U.S., as well as a basis for understanding U.S. policies of global intervention in spreading American ideals of Democracy. This unit is designed for period six of the college board's advanced placement world history course and contains both an AP style Comparison Essay and Document Based Question.

(Developed for World History and AP World History, grade 10; recommended for World History [General or Advanced Placement], grades 10-12)

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