SOFTWARE & TECH

Kaplan Ap U S History 2015

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Mastering the AP U.S. History Exam: A Deep Dive into the Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD

Preparing for the Advanced Placement U.S. History exam can feel like a monumental task. The course covers everything from pre-Columbian societies to the modern era, demanding not only factual recall but also the ability to analyze historical documents, craft evidence-based arguments, and think like a historian. For students tackling this challenge, the right study resources can make all the difference. One resource that has earned a solid reputation among educators and test-takers is the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD (Kaplan Test Prep)**. Even though it was released a few years after the major redesign of the APUSH exam, this integrated package remains a valuable tool for understanding the test's structure and mastering the essential content. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore what makes this product unique, how to get the most out of its components, and why it can still serve as a robust study companion for today's AP U.S. History student.

Why the Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Edition Stands Out

When the College Board overhauled the AP U.S. History exam in 2015, they shifted the focus away from simple date memorization and toward deep historical thinking skills. The new exam introduced the Document-Based Question (DBQ), the Long Essay Question (LEQ), and short-answer sections that test students' ability to analyze sources, understand causation, and compare historical developments. The **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD**was designed specifically in response to this redesign. It is not just a review book; it is a multi-format study system that addresses the test's new demands from multiple angles.

One of the standout features of the 2015 edition is its commitment to teaching the historical thinking skills that the exam emphasizes. Instead of overwhelming students with endless lists of names and dates, Kaplan's authors focused on concepts like periodization, continuity and change, and contextualization. This approach aligns perfectly with what the AP exam graders are looking for. The book's structure helps students build a mental framework of U.S. history, making it easier to recall information and apply it to unfamiliar prompts.

Inside the Book: Content Review and Strategy

The paperback volume at the core of the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD (Kaplan Test Prep)** package is a well-organized study guide. It begins with a diagnostic quiz that helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses. This personalized starting point allows test-takers to focus their limited study time on the areas that need the most improvement.

The content review is divided into nine chronological periods, mirroring the AP framework. Each chapter includes key concepts, timelines, and sidebars that highlight important Supreme Court cases, presidential administrations, and social movements. But what truly sets this book apart is the "Think Like a Historian" feature. These short sections walk students through the analytical process required for the DBQ and LEQ. For example, a section might explain how to identify bias in a primary source or how to weigh conflicting historical interpretations. This is far more useful than a simple list of facts.

Additionally, the book provides test-taking strategies specific to each question type. There are tips for managing time during the multiple-choice section, a step-by-step approach to the DBQ (including how to write a strong thesis

in the first few minutes), and advice for structuring the long essay. The practice questions at the end of each chapter are designed to mimic the style and difficulty of the actual exam, complete with answer explanations that clarify not just what is correct, but *why* each answer is correct—and why the others are not.

The Online Component: Interactive Practice and Diagnostics

One of the most powerful aspects of the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD** is its online portal. Unlike a static book, the online platform offers adaptive quiz banks, full-length practice tests, and performance tracking. Students can take a timed practice test that simulates the three-hour-and-15-minute exam experience, then receive a detailed score report that breaks down their performance by time period and historical thinking skill.

The online component also includes additional video lessons that supplement the book's content. These short, focused videos cover topics that students often find difficult, such as the complexities of Reconstruction or the foreign policy shifts of the Cold War. The ability to pause, rewind, and rewatch these explanations is invaluable for visual and auditory learners. Moreover, the online platform is mobile-friendly, allowing students to review flashcards or take quick quizzes during downtime—on the bus, between classes, or just before bed.

Another useful feature is the "Qbank," a repository of hundreds of practice questions organized by time period and skill. Students can create custom quizzes to target weak areas, and the system learns from their responses to present more questions on topics where they struggle. This sort of adaptive learning is the hallmark of modern test prep, and Kaplan integrated it well into the 2015 edition.

The DVD: Video Instruction for Deeper Understanding

While many test prep books now rely entirely on digital downloads, the 2015 Kaplan package included a physical DVD. This DVD contains strategic review sessions recorded by experienced AP U.S. History teachers. The videos cover key concepts that are often misunderstood, such as the difference between the Federalist and Anti-Federalist debates, the nuances of Jacksonian democracy, and the causes of the Great Depression.

For students who prefer a classroom-like experience, the DVD offers a change of pace from reading. Watching a teacher explain the chronology of the Civil War or walking through a DBQ outline can reinforce the material and provide a different perspective. The video lessons are concise—usually 10 to 15 minutes each—making them easy to fit into a busy study schedule. Even though the DVD format may seem outdated compared to streaming, it works perfectly offline, which is a blessing for students with limited internet access.

How to Use This Resource Effectively

To get the maximum benefit from the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD (Kaplan Test Prep)**, students need a strategic study plan. Here is a recommended approach:

- Start with the diagnostic test. Take the initial quiz in the book or online to establish a baseline. Review the results to identify your weakest periods and skills.
- Work through the book chronologically. Read each chapter, but don't just highlight. Actively engage with the "Think Like a Historian" prompts. Use the timeline at the end of each chapter to create your own mental map of events.
- Incorporate the videos. After reading a chapter, watch the corresponding DVD segment. The combination of reading and listening strengthens memory retention.
- Practice with the online Qbank. After reviewing a period, take a custom quiz on that content. Aim for at least 80% correct before moving on.
- Write essays early and often. The online platform includes DBQ and LEQ prompts. Write at least two full essays per week and compare your answers to the scoring guidelines provided.

- Take a full-length practice test monthly. Use the online test to simulate real exam conditions. After each test, deep-dive into the mistakes. Re-watch videos on topics you missed.
- Use the final month for review and strategy. Focus on your weakest areas, review test-taking tips, and take one last full practice test to build confidence.

Comparing the 2015 Edition to Modern Resources

Some students might wonder: is a 2015 test prep book still relevant for the current AP U.S. History exam? The answer is yes—with some considerations. The core content of U.S. history has not changed. The founding documents, the key battles, the major social movements—all remain the same. The historical thinking skills tested in 2015 are essentially identical to those tested today. The exam's structure (DBQ, LEQ, multiple-choice, short answer) remains unchanged.

However, there are a few updates in later editions. For instance, the College Board occasionally adjusts the weighting of certain topics or adds recent historical developments. The 2015 edition will not cover events after 2015, such as the Trump administration, the COVID-19 pandemic, or the modern civil rights movements of the past decade. But these recent events often appear only in the final multiple-choice questions or as context for the DBQ. The vast majority of the test focuses on pre-2000 content, so the 2015 book covers 95% of what students need.

Students using the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD**should supplement it with a more recent overview of the last ten years of U.S. history. That could be a quick read of a current textbook chapter or even a high-quality news timeline. Additionally, because the online platform may no longer be supported by Kaplan (as it is a decade old), students should check if the online access code still works before purchasing a used copy. If the online component is unavailable, the book and DVD still provide a solid foundation.

Advantages for Different Learning Styles

This tri-part resource is particularly effective because it caters to a variety of learning preferences. Visual learners benefit from the timelines, charts, and video explanations. Auditory learners absorb the strategies through the DVD lectures. Reading/writing learners thrive on the book's detailed passages and practice essays. Kinesthetic learners can engage with the interactive online quizzes and drag-and-drop exercises in the Qbank.

Moreover, the combination of resources reduces the likelihood of study burnout. If a student feels tired of reading, they can switch to watching a video. If they are tired of sitting, they can listen to the DVD while walking or exercising. This flexibility is crucial for maintaining momentum during the long AP prep season.

Real-World Testimonials and Success Stories

Although this article is about a specific product, it is worth noting that many students who used the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD**reported significant score improvements. In online forums, past users praised the book's clear explanations and the DVD's ability to break down complex events into digestible segments. One student noted that the "Think Like a Historian" sections were directly responsible for her ability to score a 5 on the DBQ. Another mentioned that the strategy for the multiple-choice section—specifically, the emphasis on eliminating obviously wrong answers—saved precious minutes during the exam.

These success stories underscore the value of a well-structured review system. The Kaplan package does not just hand students information; it teaches them how to think through the exam's challenges. That skill is far more enduring than any single fact.

Potential Drawbacks to Consider

No resource is perfect. Some users have noted that the Kaplan book is sometimes lighter on detail compared to

other review books like those from Barron's or AMSCO. Students aiming for a perfect score might want to supplement with more in-depth reading on specific eras. Additionally, the DVD format requires a DVD player or a computer with a disc drive, which fewer devices have today. However, many students can still play DVDs on gaming consoles or older laptops.

Another minor issue is that the online platform, even when functioning, has a dated interface. Students accustomed to modern, sleek apps might find the dashboard less intuitive. Still, the content remains solid, and the practice questions are realistically difficult.

Conclusion

In the ever-evolving world of AP test preparation, the **Kaplan AP U.S. History 2015 Book + Online + DVD (Kaplan Test Prep)** stands as a commendable study system that prioritizes understanding over memorization. Its three-pronged approach—offline reading, online practice, and video instruction—offers a balanced diet of learning methods that can accommodate different study habits and schedules. While it does not cover the most recent historical events, its core content and strategy lessons remain highly applicable to the current AP U.S. History exam. For students willing to supplement with a brief modern history update, this Kaplan package can be a powerful ally in the quest for a high AP score. Ultimately, what matters most is not the year on the cover, but the depth of understanding you build—and this resource provides an excellent foundation for that vital skill.

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