The War of 1812 marked the beginning of America’s transition from an agrarian nation to an industrial power. Stymied by on-going war and blockades between France and her enemies in the first years of the 19th century, Americans began developing their own means of industrial production that were not dependent on European exports. The Age of Jackson is a period of change that encompasses not just the presidency of Andrew Jackson, but also the significant political, economic, and social developments that occurred prior to the Civil War. The prosperity of the time allowed Americans to reflect on social problems and to seek reforms that took hold in some regions more easily than in others.

a. Explain Jacksonian Democracy, including expanding suffrage, the Nullification Crisis and states’ rights, and the Indian Removal Act.

Andrew Jackson emerged from the War of 1812 as a very popular war hero. He soon entered the political arena and questioned the existing framework for democracy. Jackson challenged the Democratic-Republicans and their expanding power. He believed that the party’s original mission to restrict the power of the federal government and preserve the rights of states and individuals was being lost in the country’s growth. Instead of supporting individuals, states, and agricultural pursuits, Jackson believed the Democratic-Republicans were becoming more centered on industrial progress, expanding federal power, and the upper-class. The aggressive challenge Jackson lodged against the Democratic-Republicans ended the Era of Good Feelings’ national unity and returned the country to a two-party system.

Jackson and his supporters shared a political philosophy later referred to as Jacksonian Democracy. It sought a stronger presidency and executive branch, and a weaker Congress. Out of respect for the common man, it also sought to broaden public participation in government, so it expanded voting rights to include all adult white males, not just landowners. The implementation of universal male suffrage by state legislatures dramatically increased the number of voters in the United States. The number of voters in the presidential election of 1824 was approximately 350,000. With the push by Jackson and his supporters for the expansion of voter eligibility, 2.4 million Americans participated in the 1840 presidential election. Most of the new voters were from the lower classes, which had previously been restricted from voting due to property requirements. These common men tended to support Andrew Jackson and their movement coalesced into a new political party – the Democratic Party. The old Democratic-Republican Party also transitioned at about the same time into the Whig Party. The Whig Party tended to favor industrial expansion and was supported primarily by the upper-classes. The United States was once again divided between to strong political parties with very different perspectives and goals for governing.

Another principle of Jacksonian Democracy was that politicians should be allowed to appoint their followers to government jobs as a way of limiting the power of elite groups. This process became known
as the spoils system. Jackson believed that the President had to make sure the executive branch employees were carrying out the business of the government according to the plans of the party in power. Therefore, he believed these government jobs, of necessity, should be held only by people who had demonstrated their loyalty to the party by working in campaigns. The new spoils system he implemented sometimes led to corruption and unqualified workers in government positions.

Jacksonian Democracy also favored limiting the power of the federal government in favor of expanded state power. This issue of states’ rights was a very divisive issue during the early 19th century. The idea of states’ rights revolved around who held the supreme power of government – states or the federal government. The root of the argument became fixed in the Constitutional debates between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists during the ratification process. The issue re-emerged in 1798 with the passage of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, which opposed the legality of the Alien and Sedition Acts.

The issue of whether states could nullify federal law nearly split the United States. Congress had passed the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 to protect American manufacturers from competition with cheap British imported goods. Southerners believed that the tariff was purposely passed to hurt southern plantation owners and would only benefit northern industrialists. In response, South Carolina legislators nullified the tariff. Andrew Jackson’s Vice President, John C. Calhoun, argued with the President about the right of states to nullify (cancel) federal laws they opposed. Calhoun, a South Carolinian, resigned from the vice presidency to lead the efforts of the southern states in the crisis. He even went so far as to suggest South Carolina’s secession from the Union. Calhoun’s loyalty to the interests of the southern region/section of the United States, rather than to the United States as a whole, made clear how divided the nation had become. The Nullification Crisis was resolved when a compromise tariff was passed and Jackson’s Congressional supporters authorized the President to use the army and navy to enforce
federal law. South Carolina then backed down from its secessionist threats. The Jacksonian Democracy
that purported to uphold states’ rights placed a limit on the approach when it threatened the Union as a
whole.

While most tribes resented the policy, they reluctantly complied. However, a few tribes, such as the
Cherokee Nation in Georgia, refused to give up their land to the state. Georgia had passed a statute that
abolished the Cherokee government and laws in the eyes of the state. The state was planning to use this
 provision to take control of Cherokee lands that had been granted to them by a 1791 treaty with the
United States government. The issue in Georgia was highly charged since gold had been discovered in
the northern part of the state. The Georgia lands where white settlers flocked in the gold rush of the
1830s was mostly held by Cherokee Indians. The Cherokee filed suit to challenge the loss of their land.
The case was heard by the United States Supreme Court and Chief Justice John Marshall issued the
ruling for Worcester v. Georgia. In this 1832 decision, Marshall sided with the Cherokee Indians and said
that the state of Georgia had no authority to legislate against the tribe.

After the Supreme Court issued the ruling, President Andrew Jackson openly challenged John Marshall
and the decision. Jackson stated, “John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it!” In 1835,
the Georgia Cherokee reluctantly surrendered their lands. Over the next few years, the Cherokee’s were
forced to travel to the west over what became known as the Trail of Tears. The forced removal was
difficult and thousands of American Indians died along the way due to starvation, disease, and
exhaustion.

Jacksonian Democracy is a term that refers to more than the eight years Andrew Jackson served as
President. It is more of a general term that encompasses the formation of the Democratic Party, the
Jackson Presidency, and also the broad political reforms that extended political participation to the
common man over the course of the 1830s through the 1850s. Not all groups were included in the
Jacksonian Democracy movement. Although universal male suffrage was achieved through the
promotion of Jacksonian Democracy, American Indians, enslaved and free Blacks, and women did not
benefit from the egalitarian values the term suggests.

b. Explain how the North, South, and West were linked through industrial and economic expansion
including Henry Clay and the American System.

Industrialization expanded in the United States following the War of 1812 and really picked up
momentum in the 1830s. The emphasis on building American manufactures was one of the points of
conflict between the Whig Party, led by Henry Clay, and the Jacksonian Democrats. Clay and the Whigs
believed very strongly that the federal government should be involved in funding progress through
infrastructure projects and investing in the development of industry. As industrialization expanded, each
region of the United States was impacted. The North, South, and West were increasingly linked together through advances in transportation and the industrial process.

The era known as the Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain in the 18th century when the country began the transformation from purely agrarian to a modern industrial and commercial economy. Soon hand-made and home-made goods were replaced by machine made and factory made goods and power driven machines operated by semi-skilled or unskilled workers. The Industrial Revolution made its way to the United States in 1793 with the completion of Samuel Slater's water powered textile mill in Rhode Island. Real impetus for the change to an industrialized economy came in the first decade of the 19th century as the Napoleonic Wars interfered with America's exports to European markets and its imports from Great Britain. Americans sought ways to improve the national economy.

As in England, the success of the Industrial Revolution was aided by four factors. First, transportation was expanded. Second, a power source was effectively harnessed (water power and, shortly thereafter, steam power). Third, improvements were made to industrial processes to accelerate production. Lastly, the government helped protect fledgling American manufactures by passing protective tariffs. Henry Clay and the Whigs supported the idea of economic nationalism in which the federal government would support these factors in developing a robust industrial network in the United States. The approach sought to boost the nation's overall economic success rather than each region of the country operating somewhat independently of the others. The nation had abundant resources available in the south, the ability to harness waterpower from swift rivers to operate factories in the north, a growing immigrant population to labor in the factories, and new methods of transportation to connect the farms, factories, and markets across all regions.

Connecting the vast distances between raw material cultivation, factory, and market was a challenge that had to be overcome if industrial and economic expansion was to develop. Private companies had been building the young nation's roads since the 1790s. These roads were often turnpikes, or toll roads, which travelers paid a fee to use. In turn, these fees were used to pay for upkeep of the new roads. When roads could not be built, barges were used on rivers to carry people and goods - as long as the rivers flowed in the same direction that settlers and merchants wanted to travel. Soon a new invention, the steamboat, enabled people to buy tickets from private companies that operated the boats to travel upstream as easily as downstream. In the wilderness, where rivers did not run and roads could not be built, government leaders joined businesspeople to build canals - artificial rivers. These shallow waterways were for barges, not steamboats, and had pathways alongside on which horses or mules pulled the barges.

The most famous canal built in this era was the Erie Canal, which stretches 363 miles and connects the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. It opened in 1825 after eight years of construction. The Erie Canal served as a turnpike for large cargo carrying barges where a road could not be easily built. Transportation costs for goods were lowered because of the canal's more efficient transportation. This not only opened up western New York and regions further west to increased settlement, but also helped unite new regions with the Atlantic states. The effect of the Erie Canal on this country was stunning.
Cargo that cost $100 per ton and took two weeks to haul by road could be moved on the Erie Canal at $10 per ton in three and a half days.

By the 1830s, an even more rapid mode of transportation was set to further expand commercial production and the economy. Railroads were less costly, time consuming, and labor intensive to build than canals. By 1850, there were 9,000 miles of railroad track crossing the United States and further cut transportation time. The result of transportation advancements was a more interconnected nation that could more efficiently industrialize and grow a national economy.

With improved transportation methods rapidly changing the United States, Henry Clay became more involved in promoting the nation's economic growth. Clay was a Kentucky politician, founder of the Whig Party, and rival of Andrew Jackson. He supported industrialization and believed that the federal government needed to take strong action to ensure the economic growth of the United States.

The American System was Henry Clay’s plan for expanding production in the United States. There were three components to the American System. First, Clay encouraged the Congress to pass protective tariffs that would make imported goods more expensive than similar products manufactured in new American factories. The second key feature of American System was federal funding for internal improvements to the infrastructure of the United States. Rather than states or private businesses being the primary contractors for roads, canals, or railroads, the federal government would fund the large scale transportation projects that would connect far reaching points instead of being limited to state boundaries. The third component of the American System that Henry Clay believed was the key to the entire process for industrial and economic expansion was the reestablishment of a National Bank to issue a national currency and serve as a depository for federal funds. The first Bank of the United States was established during George Washington’s presidency and was the creation of Alexander Hamilton. It had expired in 1811 while the Democratic-Republicans were in power. Whigs, such as Henry Clay, believed it was essential to bring back a National Bank in order to fund internal improvement projects, stabilize the economy, and support new industrial pursuits. The Jacksonian Democrats opposed the idea of a National Bank because they believed it supported the upper class industrialists at the expense of the small farmer.

The North, South, and West were physically linked through the improved transportation developments of the early 19th century. The regions were also linked through the expansion of industrial pursuits. Most factories were located in the North due to the swift flowing rivers that generated power and the large immigrant populations who supplied cheap, unskilled labor in the factories. The American South and West supplied the raw materials needed to manufacture finished products. Goods were transported by road, canal, or rail as a result of the widespread internal improvements to the infrastructure made by the state and the federal governments. Henry Clay was an immensely important figure in the progress of American industrialization and economic nationalism.

b. Explain the influence of the Second Great Awakening on social reform movements, including temperance, public education, and women’s efforts to gain suffrage.
In the 1820s, a Second Great Awakening arose in the United States. The Jacksonian Democracy's emphasis on the common man bolstered the religious revival that swept the nation. Revivalist ministers preached sermons that appealed to all classes and spread a message of salvation for all. One of the effects of the Second Great Awakening was a desire by Christians to attack perceived social ills in 19th century America. Temperance, public education, and women's efforts to gain suffrage were all areas of reform that emerged from the religious focus of the period.

The stress of an industrial environment, poor quality water, and cheapness of liquor all contributed to an increase in alcohol consumption during the early 19th century. The temperance movement grew out of a desire to protect women and children from abuse and general poverty associated with the workingman spending his pay on drink. They used moral arguments to target the dangers of alcohol. The temperance movement originally attempted to get people to drink less (temper their drinking) but quickly moved to pledges of abstaining from drinking. In the beginning of the period there were many temperance societies, but around 1835 most merged into the American Temperance Society. The movement was successful in reducing the amount of alcohol consumed but fell short of gaining a total ban on drinking in the United States.

Public education was another area of reform that Second Great Awakening religious followers supported. Until the 1840s, there was little public education. Only the wealthy educated their children. Reformers believed that in order for democracy to be effective an educated population would be needed. Reformers wanted to teach civic responsibility and morality. Horace Mann of Massachusetts, along with Henry Bernard of Connecticut, began the Common School Movement. The Common School Movement hoped to create good citizens, unite society and prevent crime and poverty. Mann advocated a free public education, financed by local funds and administered by a local school board and superintendent. This model is essentially the one used in America today.

As industrialization progressed in the United States, men and women were beginning to redefine their roles in the family and society. Some women from middle and upper class families had more leisure time, which allowed them to become more involved in the religious and reform movements of the period.

Women in the early 1800s were legally and socially inferior to men. Women could not vote and, if married, could not own property or retain their own earnings. Women were leaders in the reform movements, such as the temperance and abolitionist movements. However, in the 1840s, a number of prominent women activists were denied access to the London World Anti-Slavery Convention because of their gender. These women, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and the Grimke Sisters (Angelina and Sarah) became outspoken advocates for women's equality. With the advent of universal male suffrage, women began to hope that suffrage would be extended to them.

To push forward their ideas, Stanton and Mott organized a meeting "to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman." The conference was held in Seneca Falls, New York on July 19-20, 1848. The meeting was attended by 300 people- including 40 men. Curiously, none of the women felt that they should preside over the meeting, so Mott's husband initially led the conference. Stanton
drafted the Declaration of Sentiments, modeling her work after the Declaration of Independence. Stanton's Declaration called for an end to the unequal treatment of women. It is beneficial for students to analyze the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments together. Emphasis should be placed on format and why Stanton purposely chose to model her work after the document that gave America its freedom and independence from Britain.

In addition, Stanton drafted eleven other resolutions dealing with women's equality. Her ninth resolution, which called for women to have the right to vote, nearly failed. However, Frederick Douglass gave a speech, which persuaded the delegates to vote for the proposal. One hundred men and women signed the Declaration of Sentiments. The Seneca Falls Conference marked the beginning of the Women's Rights Movement.

c. Explain how the significance of slavery grew in American politics including slave rebellions and the rise of abolitionism.

The issue of slavery has been present in American politics since the nation's inception. Slavery was an issue when Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence. The delegates to the Constitutional Convention created a series of compromises addressing slavery to placate Southerners at Philadelphia. Jefferson and Washington spoke out against slavery and freed their own slaves upon death. Both historical figures have been scrutinized for the contradiction of owning slaves while speaking out against the practice. Slavery was prohibited in the Northwest Territories by federal law so that slave holding was confined to those states south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Prior to the cotton gin, slavery was nearly dead in the Upper South, awaiting its final benediction by state legislatures, and was dying a slow death in the Lower South. The cotton gin and westward expansion revived slavery. Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793. It is a machine that rapidly removes cotton plant seeds from the valuable cotton fiber used to make thread and fabric. By producing more cotton in a day than any person could clean by hand, the gin reduced the cost of processing cotton and greatly raised the profit from growing it. To further cut costs and raise profits, unskilled slaves were often put to work running the cotton gins in southern states.

Politicians in the first third of the 1800s sought to maintain “a perfect equilibrium” on the issue of slavery in several ways. First, by maintaining an equal number of slave and free states. The second way to maintain peace was to prevent slavery from becoming a divisive issue through the passage of the “gag” rule, which prevented the discussion of slavery in the House of Representatives from 1836-1844. Third, division over slavery was minimized by continuing the process of working out compromises on the issue in the 1850s. However, as the mid-western and northern states continued to grow in economic power and population (political representation), slavery became increasingly entangled in every political issue facing the nation, such as nullification, states’ rights, and the admission of new territories as states.

Party politics were also affected by slavery. The two-party political system re-emerged in the early 1830s with the birth of the Whig Party. The party was short-lived as the issue of slavery fatally split the party
by the end of the 1850s. New parties that were far more vocal on abolition, such as the Liberty Party and the Free-Soil Party, formed in the 1850s. These parties caused great fear among southerners who felt increasingly besieged, but by 1860 nearly all of these minor parties had self destructed.

Abolition movements existed in America since the colonial period when the Quakers led the effort to end slavery. Their popularity waned after the American Revolution but were renewed in the 1830s as part of the Second Great Awakening reform movements. Three groups of abolitionists emerged during this period. One group, the American Colonization Society (1818) called for the emancipation and transportation of freed slaves back to Africa to be settled in the new colony of Liberia. The second group, the American Anti-Slavery Society (1833), was led by William Lloyd Garrison and called for immediate emancipation by any means necessary. A moderate group, the Liberty Party, pledged to end slavery through legal and political means.

Some of the most notable abolitionists were William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and the Grimke Sisters. Garrison was the leading voice for many reform movements and abolition was a particularly important cause to him. He was the founder and editor of the Liberator newspaper, the leading abolitionist newspaper known for graphic stories of the bad treatment slaves endured. Frederick Douglass was a former slave who worked for Garrison in the abolitionist movement. Douglass traveled widely giving eloquent speeches and publishing his own autobiography and an antislavery newspaper – The North Star. Douglass is considered by many to be the most influential former slave or free Black in the abolitionist movement. Sarah and Angelina Grimke were white southern women who lectured publicly throughout the northern states about the evils of slavery they had witnessed growing up on a plantation.

The abolition campaign included both men and women; Northerners and some Southerners. For the first time, Blacks began to play a significant role in the movement. Instead of a gradualist approach, the new abolitionists advocated for immediate emancipation without compensation for slave owners. Abolition became a divisive issue as the southern states reacted against growing hostility in the North toward slavery.

Slave rebellions also began to occur and caused slave owners to implement even more harsh restrictions on slaves. The Black preacher, Nat Turner, believed his mission on Earth was to free his people from slavery. Seeing an 1831 solar eclipse as a message from God, he led a slave rebellion on four Virginia plantations. Approximately 60 whites were killed before Turner and his followers were captured, tried, and executed. Fear and anger over the murder of primarily white women and children led to many innocent Blacks becoming victims of mob violence. Virginia, a state that had been considering a ban on slavery, instead passed a series of laws to strengthen the institution of slavery. Other southern states quickly passed laws that emulated Virginia’s revised slave codes to reflect more strict control.