U.S. History II Yearlong: Week 4- General Education
Packet 4 Overview:

<table>
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<th>ESSENTIAL QUESTION:</th>
<th>How did treatment of African Americans during and after World War II (GI Bill of Rights) likely contribute to civil rights protests later?</th>
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| PROCEDURES:         | Day 1: Read the text and respond to the multiple choice questions.  
|                     | Day 2: Respond to the brief response question using the text as support.  
|                     | Day 3: Use the text to respond to the discussion questions |
| WORK TO BE RETURNED:| Assignment 1: Text Dependent Questions (multiple choice)  
|                     | Assignment 2: Brief Response  
|                     | Assignment 3: Discussion Questions |
| TIME ALLOCATED:     | 3 (20) minute lessons |

Summary: Despite the fact that among the 16 million U.S. soldiers who fought in World War II, there were about one million African-American soldiers. They fought in the Pacific, and they were part of the victorious army that liberated Europe from Nazi rule. Black soldiers were also part of the U.S. Army of occupation in Germany after the war. Still serving in strictly segregated units, they were sent to democratize the Germans and expunge all forms of racism. It was that experience that convinced many of these veterans to continue their struggle for equality when they returned home to the U.S. They were to become the foot soldiers of the civil rights movement – a movement that changed the face of our nation and inspired millions of repressed people across the globe.

How African American WWII Veterans Were Scorned By the G.I. Bill

[p. 1] Veteran's Day is the federal holiday celebrating the bravery of the American men and women in uniform. But while it’s important to give fellow Americans a nod for their service, Veteran’s Day is also an occasion to remember when the federal government failed to honor the sacrifice of some American servicemen as they returned from combat.

[p. 2] A million African Americans joined the military during World War II as volunteers or draftees. Another 1.5 million registered for the draft. But when the war was over, many of those servicemen and women failed to receive their fair share of the benefits under the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 — the G.I. Bill.  

[p. 3] Also known as the G.I. Bill Of Rights, the G.I. Bill provided financial support in the form of cash stipends for schooling, low-interest mortgages, job skills training, low-interest loans, and unemployment benefits.

[p. 4] But many African Americans who served in World War II never saw these benefits. This was especially true in the south, where Jim Crow laws excluded black students from “white” schools, and poor black colleges struggled to respond to the rise in demand from returning veterans. After World War II, blacks wanting to attend college in the South were restricted to about 100 public and private schools, few of which offered education beyond the baccalaureate and more than a quarter of which were junior colleges, with the highest degree below the B.A.
But those exclusions were by no means limited to states South of the Mason-Dixon line—or to education. Historian Ira Katznelson has documented how and why black Americans have received far less assistance from social programs than white Americans, and argues that the G.I bill was deliberately designed to accommodate Jim Crow laws. He cites a study declaring it was “as though the GI Bill had been earmarked ‘For White Veterans Only.’ ”

Thousands of black veterans were denied admission to colleges, loans for housing and business, and excluded from job-training programs. Programs funded by federal money were directed by local officials, who especially in the south, drastically favored white applicants over black.

In 1947, some 70,000 African American veterans were unable to obtain admission to crowded, under-resourced black colleges. The University of Pennsylvania—one of the least-discriminatory schools at the time—enrolled only 40 African American students in its 1946 student body of 9,000.

The GI bill included support for banks to provide veterans low-cost, zero down-payment home loans across the United States. But of the first 67,000 mortgages secured by the G.I. Bill for returning veterans in New York and northern New Jersey alone, fewer than 100 were taken out by non-whites. The G.I. Bill helped place 6,500 former soldiers in Mississippi on nonfarm jobs by fall of 1947, but while 86 percent of the skilled and semiskilled jobs were filled by whites, 92 percent of the unskilled ones were filled by blacks.

In all, 16 million veterans benefited in various ways from the G.I. Bill. President Bill Clinton declared it “the best deal ever made by Uncle Sam,” adding that it “helped to unleash a prosperity never before known.”

For white people, that is. The lack of access to a family home meant a long-term loss of wealth for black Americans. A family home purchased in 1946 in a good neighborhood with a strong tax base and solid schools, became financial wealth to pass onto family members, borrow against to start a business, or to send kids to college.

Of course, it was not only black veterans who lost opportunities to begin building family wealth. Many African Americans who stayed home to work in the factories, which were bustling at the time, were refused employment in the war production industry. Eventually, civil rights activists forced President Roosevelt to issue an executive order in June of 1941 banning employment discrimination and to create a temporary Fair Employment Practices Committee to prevent defense manufacturers from practicing racial discrimination.

While affirmative action won’t replace that lost generational wealth, it can help to right some of the inherited inequity. Though both black and white soldiers went overseas in World War I and in World War II, the advantage given to those coming from white families was clear. Much like redlining in real estate, the inherent disadvantages to people of color created many, many more barriers to the ability for them to climb the social ladder.

The civil rights movement along with the expansion of federal funding for higher education in the postwar decades have attempted to equalize the distribution of G.I. Bill benefits. More than one million U.S. veterans now receive benefits under the plan. That number will likely increase with this year’s passage of the “Forever G.I. Bill”, which eliminates the fifteen-year limit on benefit use. The bill also includes tuition reimbursement for veterans who earned non-transferable credits at now-shuttered schools, like the for-profit ITT Technical Institute.

But these developments of course come too late for black WWII veterans. Too many were steered away from education, too many were unable to buy, enjoy, and pass down a home in a thriving neighborhood to their children. We live with the remnants of those policies and the racial inequities they exacerbated to this day.

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**Assignment 1 – Text Dependent Questions**

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer. When you locate the answer for the multiple choice questions, please highlight the correct response using the highlight feature on the toolbar above (the highlight feature looks like a little marker).
1. Over 1 million African-Americans joined the military during World War 2 and another 1.5 million African-Americans were drafted into the military. Many of these servicemen and women failed to receive their military benefits from which of the following (p. 2)?
   a) Selective Service and Training Act of 1940
   b) Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 —the G.I. Bill.
   c) Bonus Army March

2. Known as the G.I. Bill Of Rights, the G.I. Bill provided financial support in the form of cash stipends for schooling, low-interest mortgages, low-interest loans, and unemployment benefits (p.3)
   a) Food stipends
   b) Job skills training
   e) Grants

3. What is the author’s claim in paragraph 6?
   a) African-Americans received the same benefits from the G.I. Bill as white servicemen and women.
   b) White servicemen and women were given benefits that African-Americans were not
   c) African-Americans received more benefits than white servicemen and women

4. The Civil Rights movement along with the expansion of federal funding for higher education in the postwar decades have attempted to equalize the distribution of G.I. Bill benefits (p. 13).
   b) Fair Employment Practices Committee
   c) Civil Rights movement
   d) New Deal

5. Which of the following bills was recently passed to help African-American servicemen and women veterans receive their benefits (p. 13) ?
   a) Affordable Care Act
   b) Forever G.I. Bill
   c) Servicemen’s Readjustment Act

Assignment 2- Brief Response

Directions: Using the text, please respond in at least a paragraph to the question below.

1. Please compare and contrast the impact of the G.I. Bill on African-Americans veterans and white veterans of World War 2. Do you think the G.I. Bill effectively provided support to African-Americans who served in World War 2?
Assignment 3 - Discussion Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Imagine you had to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Do African-Americans still face discrimination in today’s society? If so, please explain with examples.

2. President Bill Clinton declared the G.I. Bill as “the best deal ever made by Uncle Sam” (p.9). What did he mean by this statement?