PART ONE:

1. The source of "sectional conflict" and then of the U.S.'s Civil War itself has been the subject of sharp debate since the war began (and before that). Trace the main lines of that debate, identify some of the main participants and their views, and then give and defend your own view of the subject.

2. The Lincoln administration embarked upon the Civil War with a narrowly-framed goal. By 1865 (and especially by 1869), however, the Republican party’s program had gone far beyond that modest aim. And then, over the following decade, that same party retreated substantially from its most ambitious plans for transforming the South and the Union. First, account for the narrowness of the original aim. Then explain the reason for the broadening of the Republicans’ goals between 1861 and 1869. Finally, give your explanation for the defeat of/retreat from the project of Reconstruction.

3. Why the North won the Civil War has attracted the attention of generations of scholars. Discuss some of the alternative and competing explanations of the war’s outcome and their strengths and weaknesses. Then present your own answer to this question.

PART TWO:

1. Discuss the decade of the 1890s as a watershed in terms of the structure of the economy, race and class relations, foreign policy, and electoral politics. What marks the decade as a departure from what came before and how did it set a stage for what came after?

2. Although the U.S. was slow to enter both the world wars, historians regard the impact of each as deep and far-reaching. Focus on either WWI or WWII and discuss the changes that took place in American lives during the war and in such matters as social relations, labor, reform, the state, and the place of the U.S. in the world after it.

3. Eric Foner contends that the history of the United States might best be framed as a “story of debates, disagreements, and struggles over freedom” as “both a reality and a mythic ideal.” Assess the value of this framework by considering the meanings and boundaries of the contentious concept of “American freedom” through several case studies of social/politics movements. Your “case studies” should include such social/political movements as: industrialization and conditions of work, Progressive era reforms, World War I, World War II, and movements for “cultural liberation” and “empowerment” of the 1960s and 1970s.