

## **II. Two Dimensions and Two Stories**

### A. Two Stories that are a part of American History

1. So far we have focussed on the most important dimension of American history: the rise of the world police power.
2. Now we are going to add another “dimension.” We are going to focus on what Americans call “civil rights.”
3. If we combine the issue of “civil rights” with the issue of America’s relationship to the world, we can see how American history can be divided into two eras: “Early” American history and “Modern” American history.

### B. Early America and Modern America from the Perspective of Civil Rights

1. Although the Founding Fathers believed in individual rights, their America was not an America of “civil rights.” The America they created still had slavery in it.
2. Slavery was everywhere in the world when America was born. Slaves had been used to build the pyramids of Egypt, the great wall of China, the Roman colosseum, and the Taj Mahal of India. Europeans had brought slaves from Africa to America.
3. By the time of the American Revolution, some Americans had begun to reject slavery, but not all of them.
4. So early American life was different from modern America in two ways:
  - a) political separation
  - b) a mix of individual rights *and* slavery
5. This combination lasted until those Americans most dedicated to freedom could no longer tolerate slavery as a part of their culture and fought the ***Civil War (1861-5)*** to end it.
6. After the Civil War, the American government was rebuilt—without slavery—in the period called “**Reconstruction (1865-88).**” This involved three new laws called “amendments”:
  - a) the 13th amendment - abolished slavery in the United States
  - b) the 14th amendment - made all former slaves *citizens*
  - c) the 15th amendment - gave the right to vote to former slaves
4. Modern America is thus different from Early America in two important ways. It is...
  - a) a country that polices the world, and
  - b) a country of civil rights (such as the right to vote)
5. The timeline on the next pages summarizes the two phases of American history so far: *Early America* and *Modern America*.

