Sample History Outline
By a Former Kent Student

Thesis Statement: Though the Second World War cost numerous American lives, the conflict actually helped improve the country economically, socially, and militarily.

Topic Sentence 1: During the Second World War, America’s economy was on the rise. Numbers of people were employed.

Evidence 1: “By 1943 the last appreciable unemployment - except of people transferring from job to job, or waiting for a promised opening to materialize - had been soaked up.”

Explain: America was one of the few countries to produce war supplies/weapons. Unemployment decreased because factories needed more workers to replace men.

Evidence 2: “Ninety percent of all women workers in 1940 fell into just ten employment categories.”


Evidence 3: “By war’s end unemployment was negligible. In the ensuing quarter century the American economy would create some twenty million new jobs, more than half of them filled by women.”

Explain: After war ended, unemployment was still at a decent rate. Some might expect post-war crisis, but impact of the war was beneficial for Americans, including women, because it provided them occupations.

Topic Sentence 2: The Second World War also played a major role in improving America’s income.

Evidence 1: “…but it is the industrial workers who as a group have done best – people such as a steelworker’s family who used to live on $2,500 and now are getting $4,500, or the highly skilled machine-tool operator’s family who used to have $3,000 can now spend an annual $5,500 or more.”

Explain: Because of working in manufacturing and industrial jobs, American people were able to raise their income. The growth of income stayed positive during and after the war.

Evidence 2: “Within less than a generation of the war’s end, the middle class, defined as families with annual incomes between three and ten thousand dollars, more than doubled.”

Explain: Every member of family occupied with their own affairs. Husbands would serve country, mothers would go and fill the empty jobs, and children would probably work as well. Each family member had a decent annual income.

Evidence 3: “We saw a first round of wage increases, a second round, a third round - and then we lost track of the number. The rising cost of almost everything bore down heavily upon some business…but as to the continuing actuality of prosperity there could be no doubt whatever.”

Explain: Prosperity was everywhere, especially after the war. Americans content with better wages and better incomes.

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3 Kennedy, Freedom from Fear, 857.
4 Allen, The Big Change, 213.
5 Kennedy, Freedom from Fear, 857.