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Your name, professor's name, course number, and the date go left aligned and doubled spaced at the top. Use 12 pt. font in Times New Roman.

Conner 1

Your last name and the page number should be Times New Roman 12 pt. in the top right header.

Your title should be centered one space from your essay details, and it should be Times New Roman and 12 pt. font as well.

### The Price of Progress in Antebellum America

A long list of issues divided Americans during the antebellum period, at the national and state levels. These divisions appeared throughout American culture, society, politics, and the nation's economy—all four of which experienced extreme changes during this period. Voters found themselves differing from their neighbors on issues such as Indian removal, abolition, temperance, penitentiaries, workers' rights, and other mediums of national progress and reform.

Men adhered to opposing definitions of progress, often based on their moral and religious beliefs, race, or economic standing. Some thought of progress as necessary for retaining and furthering America's power, while others viewed it as a distraction from what some may have deemed more important life issues. Americans of the antebellum period held many questions surrounding both self-led interests and that of the "common good"—but the array of conflicting stances on the forward march of progress was arguably the most pressing of these questions, as it held the potential for some of the nation's most significant victories alongside the consequences of deep and meaningful loss.

Antebellum Americans held diverse opinions on the definition of American culture, usually based around their geographic location, their race, and their income level. Most strove for perfection in every aspect of life—and therefore, of their nation—leading to many cultural reforms. One key example of this evolution toward progress existed through the luxury afforded to the middle-class Americans through the Erie Canal (Sheriff 65). In total, it took about eight full years to build the Canal. Still, it gave Northeastern Americans—especially New Yorkers—the chance to significantly broaden their world, both by delivering a new way to grow economically and by broadening the way people experienced life since the Canal opened up an improved connection between cities (Atkins A2). The Canals' construction completely transformed American society and the American economy—particularly in the

Your thesis statement should describe what your essay is about in one to two sentences. You should place your thesis at the end of your intro paragraph.

Cite sources at the end of sentences by putting them inside parentheses. Add the last name of the author and the page number. Periods go after the parentheses.

The date should always start with day, then month spelled out, followed by the year.

Double space your body text throughout the entire essay. Use 12 pt. font in Times New Roman.

Sources that play a significant role in your paper should be mentioned within the text. Notice how full literary works such as books are placed in italics. A chapter title, however, would be placed in quotations.

If a digital source doesn't have page numbers listed, you can simply cite the last name of the author by itself.

Northeast (Jones). In her book, *The Artificial River*, Carol Sheriff mentioned even seemingly simple luxuries, such as fresh oysters in Batavia, to show the Erie Canal's transformative power, which helped deliver cultural experiences more easily to all those surrounding it (64). Another advent of progress through culture was the idea that everyone should—and for the most part, did—work toward the nation's common good. However, the "common good" sometimes came at the cost of personal loss for certain citizens, such as the immigrant workers who helped dig out the ditches to create the Erie Canal. These workers experienced none of the luxuries that their hard work provided to other Americans, essentially allowing the price of progress to lay fully on their shoulders (Sheriff 38).

Terms taken from a source can be placed in quotations, especially if the term is up for debate throughout the essay.

Along with the plenitude of cultural shifts brought on by the Erie Canal's progress, noticeable societal changes also took charge in the antebellum period. One of the greatest fears of transcendentalists such as Nathaniel Hawthorne was that too much forward progress could bring about unwanted social divisions. However, many stood opposite to Hawthorne, believing that Americans were immune to the social destruction brought on by rushed improvements because their nation was sanctioned by God to achieve all-encompassing greatness (Sheriff 26). The never-ending American hubris that has plagued the country throughout history seemed to act as a blinder over the American people (More). The supposed immunity did not ring true, though, as a wider divide arose between occupations such as laborers, farmers, and business people. The Canal served as the perfect way to examine these societal shifts because it provided vastly different levels of income and sustainability for each of these three livelihoods. The Canal supplied laborers with a source of pay, both in whiskey and cash; it allowed farmers to vastly expand their market, bringing them more customers and easier access to those customers; and it filled the pockets of businessmen who controlled large amounts of capital exchanged along the waterway (Sheriff 42, 110).

Use politically correct terms at all times unless driving home a point on a politically incorrect topic. Here, "business people" is used instead of "businessmen."

Notice how each paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence that let's the reader know what that paragraph is about.

Notice how two pages are listed here, separated by a comma. You can do this when you take information from multiple pages of a source.

**Bold societal shifts had a significant impact on the nation's economy, which affected Americans' everyday lives, especially in the Northeast.** The Erie Canal opened travel for citizens looking for leisure and those who sought to capitalize on the artificial river's increasingly significant business ventures. The Canal, along with other labor advancements such as the

factory system and the Second National Bank, entirely revolutionized the way Americans viewed the economy. The heightened economic progress grew most noticeable on the thirty-six lock sites along the Canal, where inns, taverns, and small shops sprung up like weeds to accommodate potential customers' never-ending supply (Erie). Farmers living along the Canal, however, were forced to place their welfare before the common good when the state of New York refused to reimburse them for the fields and water they lost due to construction (Sheriff 102). As Sheriff noted, this meant that farmers “began to distrust the state because, in a world of competing interests, the state seemed more often an adversary than an ally” (109).

For sources that don't have a named author such as online articles, you can list the first word of the web page title or work title.

You can add variety to how you cite sources. Notice how Emmi mentions the author in the sentence and the page number at the end.

Along with the economic developments of antebellum America, the nation's politics saw drastic changes surrounding the Erie Canal. The Erie Canal Board made almost all the decisions regarding funding, constructing, and managing the Canal, which gave the citizens affected by the Canal's direction—particularly the farmers—room to discuss their needs (Sheriff 82). Men elected to the Canal Board traveled the state holding hearings and making decisions about reimbursements and land awards for farmers along the waterway, sometimes to the farmers' dismay and other times to their delight. No matter the outcome of any particular hearing, though, the Canal Board undoubtedly provided a unique way for citizens to make their demands heard. On the other side of this newly developed, promising innovation lay the changing stance on property rights held by men who seized and retained power over the Erie Canal. Farmers who opposed aspects of the Canal's influence noticed a shift in the way others regarded their rights, making it possible to alter or destroy another's land as long as the “common good” was kept in mind (Sheriff 81). This change in thought came at a crucial point in American history when the rights surrounding other daily activities, such as factory work, were also in jeopardy (Marrs 435). Acknowledging the successes and gains of the Canal, farmers “viewed the economic progress with at least a touch of ambivalence” and “made clear their broader feelings about the nation's political economy” (Sheriff 80).

The steep price of progress remained unknown to antebellum American society, as proven by the African slaves forced to drive ever forward the international cotton industry in the antebellum South (Mulder 1539). The American South harvested and shipped three-fourths

Many beginning writers have a tendency to use passive voice in their sentences, but this slows down your paper's flow. Instead of "was a crucial point," or "progress was unknown," or "was harvesting and shipping," you can use active past or present tense verbs to strengthen your sentences.

of the world's cotton, making it the largest industry in America at the time—and making it a notable point of American progress (Meyer). Even though the immigrant workers who dug the trenches for the Erie Canal got paid, it wasn't much compared to Americans working in similar fields. Many poor immigrant men took on the laborious work of canal-digging because they had no other way to produce a reliable income; nevertheless, these workers were legally allowed to come and go as they pleased, differentiating them from African slaves trapped in the American South (Slavery). Still, these immigrant workers were seen and treated as less than human in almost every aspect of their lives. Much like freed African Americans in the North, most viewed these immigrant workers as nuisances to the public—drunkards who were mentally and emotionally incapable of upholding white Americans' morals and, in particular, white American men (Field 64).

Note that passive voice is not grammatically incorrect, but it does slow down your reader and drive a wedge in the flow if you use it too much.

As with many contemporary issues in America, the weight of the positives and negatives of progress depended much on the societal, political, and economic status each citizen held. To laborers who followed the Canal and its improvements around the northeastern United States, progress seemed a hard-fought battle that may not have been worth it in the end. To the business people who made money off the forward march of progress seemed the most outstanding innovation in American history and perhaps the world. To the families who lived in the middle of these two ends—the farmers, shopkeepers, etc.—the Canal and its subsequent improvements became a new way of life and means of survival off land divinely granted to them by God.

Your conclusion paragraph should neatly summarize what you've already discussed in the essay. Do NOT propose any new information in this paragraph.

Notice how the conclusion sounds very similar to the first paragraph. It summarizes what Emmi discussed in the essay as a whole, without adding anything new. She ends with a final sentence that sounds very similar to her thesis statement.

## Works Cited

List sources in alphabetical order with the first line left aligned and the lines following a full ".5" indentation to the right.

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With online sources, always keep track of the date you accessed the source. You may need it for the citation.

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Place longer works, such as books, albums, or websites in italics. Place shorter works, such as articles, videos, or songs in quotations.