

2015 AP® US HISTORY FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

“As to the history of the revolution, my ideas may be peculiar, perhaps singular. What do we mean by the revolution? The war? That was no part of the revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington.”

Former president John Adams to former president Thomas Jefferson,
August 1815

“There is nothing more common than to confound the terms of the American Revolution with those of the late American war. The American war is over: but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed. It remains yet to establish and perfect our new forms of government; and to prepare the principles, morals, and manners of our citizens, for these forms of government, after they are established and brought to perfection.”

Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence and delegate
to the Continental Congress, January 1787

3. Using the excerpts, answer (a), (b), and (c).

- a) Briefly describe ONE significant difference between Adams’ understanding and Rush’s understanding of the American Revolution.
- b) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development from the period between 1760 and 1800 could be used to support Adams’ interpretation.
- c) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development from the period between 1760 and 1800 could be used to support Rush’s interpretation.

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4. Answer (a), (b), and (c).
- a) Briefly explain why ONE of the following best marks the beginning of industrialization in the United States.
- The market revolution in the first half of the 1800s
 - The Civil War era in the middle of the 1800s
 - The rise of big business in the second half of the 1800s
- b) Provide ONE example of an event or development that supports your explanation in (a).
- c) Provide specific historical evidence that explains why ONE of the other options is less convincing as the possible beginning of industrialization in the United States.

END OF SECTION I

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Question 2 or Question 3

Suggested writing time: 35 minutes

Directions: Choose EITHER Question 2 or Question 3.

In your response you should do the following.

- State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
 - Support your argument with evidence, using specific examples.
 - Apply historical thinking skills as directed by the question.
 - Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay that extends your argument, connects it to a different historical context, or connects it to a different category of analysis.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War, 1754–1763) marked a turning point in American relations with Great Britain, analyzing what changed and what stayed the same from the period before the war to the period after it.
3. Evaluate the extent to which the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) marked a turning point in the debate over slavery in the United States, analyzing what changed and what stayed the same from the period before the war to the period after it.

WHEN YOU FINISH WRITING, CHECK YOUR WORK ON SECTION II IF TIME PERMITS.

STOP

END OF EXAM

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Short Answer Question 3

0–3 points

Score 3

Response accomplishes **all three** tasks set by the question.

Score 2

Response accomplishes **two** of the tasks set by the question.

Score 1

Response accomplishes **one** of the tasks set by the question.

Score 0

Response accomplishes **none** of the tasks set by the question.

Score —

Is completely blank.

SCORING NOTES

a) Describes ONE significant difference between Adams' understanding and Rush's understanding of the American Revolution.

- Adams thought that the revolutionary spirit that led to fighting was the revolution; out of a growing resistance to British regulation, the emergence of an American identity completed the revolution.
- Rush argued that the revolution was changing political systems and seeing if this new form of government could work; the revolution came after fighting ended.

b) Explains how ONE specific historical event or development from the period between 1760 and 1800 could be used to support Adams' interpretation.

- Developments: Growing separateness from Britain ("American mind," end of "salutary neglect")
- Stamp Act, Stamp Act Congress, and public demonstrations, including Sons of Liberty
- Movement to boycott British goods
- Boston Tea Party and Intolerable Acts
- *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine
- Declaration of Independence — list of grievances from 1760-1775

c) Explains how ONE specific historical event or development from the period between 1760 and 1800 could be used to support Rush's interpretation.

- Developments: republican form of government, American identity, nationalism
- Declaration of Independence — statement of "principles, morals" as basis of government
- Articles of Confederation
- Slavery as unresolved within the time period (Northwest Ordinance)
- Constitutional Convention and United States Constitution
- Bill of Rights
- Election of Washington's presidency, e.g., cabinet selection, Jay's Treaty
- Election of 1800 and the development of the first party system

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Question 3

Evaluate the extent to which the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) marked a turning point in the debate over slavery in the United States, analyzing what changed and what stayed the same from the period before the war to the period after it.

A. Thesis: 0–1 point

Skills assessed: Argumentation + Periodization

States a thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question. The thesis must do more than restate the question.

1 point

Does not state a thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question or has a thesis that merely restates the question.

0 points

Response is completely blank.

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B. Support for argument: 0–2 points

Skills assessed: Argumentation + Use of Evidence

Supports the stated thesis (or makes a relevant argument) using specific evidence.

1 point

OR

Supports the stated thesis (or makes a relevant argument) using specific evidence, clearly and consistently stating how the evidence supports the thesis or argument, and establishing clear linkages between the evidence and the thesis or argument.

2 points

Response does not use specific evidence to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.

0 points

Response is completely blank.

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C. Application of targeted historical thinking skill: 0–2 points

Skill assessed: Periodization

PERIODIZATION

Describes the ways in which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from OR similar to developments that preceded and/or followed.

1 point

OR

Analyzes the extent to which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from AND similar to developments that preceded and/or followed, providing specific examples to illustrate the analysis.

2 points

Response does not describe the ways in which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from OR similar to developments that preceded and/or followed.

0 points

Response is completely blank.

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Question 3 (continued)

D. Synthesis: 0–1 point

Skill assessed: Synthesis

Response synthesizes the argument, evidence, and context into a coherent and persuasive essay by accomplishing one or more of the following as relevant to the question.				
Appropriately extends or modifies the stated thesis or argument.	OR	Explicitly employs an additional appropriate category of analysis (e.g., political, economic, social, cultural, geographic, race, gender) beyond that called for in the prompt.	OR	Appropriately connects the topic of the question to other historical periods, geographical areas, contexts, or circumstances.
1 point		1 point		1 point
Response does not synthesize the argument, evidence, and context into a coherent and persuasive essay. 0 points				
Response is completely blank. —				

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Question 3 (continued)

SCORING NOTES

Responses define the chronological beginning and end points for the essay; the focus of the response helps determine what information is considered appropriate.

Thesis

An acceptable thesis would evaluate the extent to which the Mexican-American War was a turning point, indicating the extent of change OR continuity. Note: Indicating explicitly the extent of change implies the extent of continuity, and vice versa.

Possible thesis statements emphasizing change could include the following:

- The Mexican-American War marked a turning point in the debate over slavery in the U.S. by unleashing a massive tension between the North and South on what land would be free and what land would be slave.
- The Mexican-American War marked a huge turning point in the debate over slavery because it brought to light the controversy of territorial self-determination and asked the question that would define America on a fundamental level: is this country one of slavery or one of freedom?

Possible thesis statements emphasizing continuity could include the following:

- The questions of slavery and expansion were inevitable political issues.
- The culmination of Manifest Destiny only sped up the process.

Possible thesis statements modifying the position could include the following: The Compromise of 1850 with its controversial points, not the Mexican-American War, was the major turning point of 19th century.

Support for Argument

Possible evidence that could be used includes the following:

BEFORE Mexican-American War

- Manifest Destiny
- Missouri Compromise (1820)
- Increasing fear of slave power
- William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator* (1830)
- Gag rule
- Frederick Douglass
- Annexation of Texas (1845)

Mexican-American War and AFTER

- Opposition to Mexican-American War among northern Whigs
- Abraham Lincoln Spot Resolutions (1846)
- Wilmot Proviso (1846)
- Popular sovereignty
- Stephen A. Douglas
- Compromise of 1850
 - California enters as free state
 - Stricter fugitive slave law
 - Popular sovereignty in Utah and New Mexico Territory
 - Slave trade banned in Washington, D.C.
- Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
- Formation of Republican Party (1854)
- Bleeding Kansas (1855)
- *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857)

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Question 3 (continued)

Application of Historical Thinking Skills

- Essays earn 1 point by describing the ways in which the debates over slavery were different from OR similar to debates over slavery that preceded and/or followed the Mexican-American War.
- Essays earn 2 points by analyzing the ways in which the debates over slavery were different from AND similar to debates over slavery that preceded and/or followed the Mexican-American War, providing specific examples to illustrate the analysis.
- Examples of issues that influenced the debate over slavery could include the following:
 - Discussion of political balance based on slavery before and after the war
 - Discussion of extent of cotton cultivation before and after the war
 - Discussion of the abolition movement before and after the war
 - Discussion of the ideologies of free soil and free labor before and after the war

Synthesis

Responses can earn the synthesis point by crafting a persuasive and coherent essay. This could be accomplished by but not limited to the following:

- Providing a conclusion that extends or modifies the analysis in the essay by explicitly assessing the impact of the Mexican-American War on American Indian and/or Hispanic people living in the territory transferred from Mexico to the United States.
- Introducing another category of historical analysis by explicitly calling out the cultural or gender, or racial elements of a political story.
- Making a connection to another historical period or context. Examples could include the following:
 - Concretely and explicitly linking the Mexican-American War to earlier imperial conflicts such as the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution
 - Explicitly linking the Mexican-American War to subsequent developments such as the Civil War and Reconstruction or the 20th century Civil Rights movement