

Prompt: Evaluate the extent to which technological advancements in the 20th century transformed American society.

Essay:

The 20th century witnessed an unprecedented surge in technological advancements that reshaped the very fabric of American society. From the rise of the automobile to the advent of the internet, these innovations revolutionized the way Americans lived, worked, and communicated.

One of the most transformative technologies was the automobile. The mass production of cars, spearheaded by Henry Ford's assembly line, made them affordable for the average American. This led to the growth of suburbs, as people were no longer tethered to urban centers. The interstate highway system further facilitated this movement, reshaping the American landscape and leading to a car-centric culture.

The rise of television and, later, the internet revolutionized communication and information dissemination. Television became the primary source of entertainment and news for most Americans, influencing public opinion and cultural norms. The internet, especially in the latter part of the century, democratized information access and transformed social interactions, commerce, and even politics.

Economically, these technological advancements spurred growth and created new industries. Silicon Valley emerged as a hub for tech innovation, leading to the rise of tech giants like Apple and Microsoft.

With these benefits, however, came challenges. The rapid pace of technological change led to job displacements in traditional sectors, and concerns about privacy and misinformation arose in the digital age.

In conclusion, the technological advancements of the 20th century profoundly transformed American society. They reshaped the economy, influenced cultural norms, and redefined the ways Americans interacted with the world and each other. While these changes brought about immense benefits, they also presented new challenges that society continues to grapple with.

Feedback:

Thesis/Claim (1 point): For an essay to earn this point, it must present a clear, precise, and defensible thesis. The sample essay accomplishes this with the statement, "The

20th century witnessed an unprecedented surge in technological advancements that reshaped the very fabric of American society.” This thesis not only directly addresses the prompt but also sets a clear direction for the subsequent arguments.

Contextualization (1 point): The APUSH standards emphasize the importance of situating the argument within a broader historical context. The essay adeptly does this by introducing major technological advancements of the 20th century, such as the automobile and the internet, and hinting at their transformative impact on American society.

Evidence (2 points): To earn these points, students must support their thesis with specific historical evidence. The essay excels in this area by detailing the rise of the automobile, the significance of television, and the advent of the internet. Each piece of evidence is directly tied to the central argument, showcasing how these technologies transformed various facets of American life.

Analysis and Reasoning (2 points): This criterion requires students to demonstrate a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the topic. The essay shines in this regard in two primary ways. First, it delves into the societal implications of each technological advancement, from the growth of suburbs due to automobiles to the democratization of information with the internet. Second, the essay showcases a complex understanding by weighing both the positive impacts and the challenges brought about by these advancements, such as job displacements and privacy concerns.

Total Score: 6

In summary, this sample essay embodies what the AP US History exam seeks in a perfect LEQ. It establishes a clear thesis, situates the argument within a broader historical context, supports its claims with specific evidence, and demonstrates a deep and nuanced understanding of the topic. By satisfying these criteria, the essay is well-positioned to earn a perfect score based on APUSH standards.