

2021

AP®

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AP® United States History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

Long Essay Question 2

- Scoring Guideline**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

Question 2: Long Essay Question, Trans-Atlantic Voyages

6 points

General Scoring Notes

- Except where otherwise noted, each point of these rubrics is earned independently; for example, a student could earn a point for evidence without earning a point for thesis/claim.
- **Accuracy:** The components of these rubrics require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam essays should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.

Evaluate the extent to which trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 affected the Americas.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis/Claim (0-1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are not historically defensible. Only restate or rephrase the prompt. Do not respond to the prompt. Do not establish a line of reasoning. Are overgeneralized. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americas a whole bunch."</i> <p>Provide a restatement of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americas."</i> <p>Provide a claim that is not historically defensible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Trans-Atlantic voyages led to a great increase in Native American populations."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about how trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 affected the Americas. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reasoning for making that claim OR by establishing analytic categories of the argument. <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americas little in the fifteenth century, because Native Americans remained powerful, most of the Americas remained unknown to Europeans, and Native American cultures persisted despite European contact."</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning with analytic categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americas by leading to Native American demographic decline, European colonization, and trans-Atlantic trade."</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americans by establishing regular commerce between the Americas and Europe."</i> (Minimally acceptable thesis/claim) 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis or claim must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion (which may not be limited to the first or last paragraphs). The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row B Contextualization (0-1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt. Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. Provide a passing phrase or reference. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The ancestors of the Native Americans migrated from Asia long ago."</i> <p>Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Europeans built tons and tons of boats between 1607 and 1491."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately describe a context relevant to how trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 affected the Americas. <p>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native American society before 1491 East Asia trade (e.g., spices) British colonization of North America in the 1600s Native American Empire (e.g., Aztec) Isolation of Americas from Afro-Eurasian disease pools Naval technology (e.g., caravel) Muslim control of overland trade routes to Asia (e.g., Ottoman Empire control of Constantinople) European Renaissance and changes in ideas (e.g., humanism) <p>Example of acceptable contextualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The Protestant Reformation in Europe contributed to competition between European countries particularly between Protestants and Catholics. This competition helped inspire the European voyages in the Atlantic."</i>
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row C Evidence (0-2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.	2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
<p>Responses that do not earn points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a single piece of evidence. Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of prompt. Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt. Repeat information that is specified in the prompt. <p>Examples that do not earn points:</p> <p>Provide evidence that is outside the time period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The British king passed the Proclamation of 1763 to stop wars between colonists and Indians."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Identify at least two specific historical examples relevant to how trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 affected the Americas.</u> <p>Examples of evidence that are specific and relevant include the following (two examples required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christopher Columbus Ferdinand Magellan Aztec Empire Spanish conquest of Mexico Columbian Exchange (diseases, plants, animals) Smallpox Encomienda Silver mining Plantation agriculture Trans-Atlantic slave trade Henry Hudson John Smith Roanoke Jamestown Powhatan <p>Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The Spanish instituted the encomienda in America."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Use at least two specific historical examples to support an argument regarding how trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 affected the Americas.</u> <p>Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The arrival of Europeans in the Americas disrupted Native American societies because of the introduction of new diseases like smallpox. Many Natives died, and their weakened societies could be defeated by European conquerors."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about the disruption of Native American societies because of trans-Atlantic voyages) <i>"Native American societies gained use of new goods, such as metal tools and prestige goods such as jewelry through trade with European voyagers."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about changes in Native American material culture because of trans-Atlantic voyages) <i>"Despite the arrival of Spanish conquerors from across the Atlantic, Native Americans such as the Mayans resisted European incursions by revolting against the Spanish and maintaining their own cultural practices."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about the limits of the effects of trans-Atlantic voyages in the Americas) 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization. If a response has a multipart argument, then it can meet the threshold of two pieces of evidence by giving one example for one part of the argument and another example for a different part of the argument, but the total number of examples must still be at least two. (For example, supporting a three-part argument about demographic decline, European colonization, and trans-Atlantic trade with evidence about the spread of smallpox and the sugar trade.) 			

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row D Analysis and Reasoning (0-2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses historical reasoning (e.g., comparison, causation, continuity and change) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.	2 points Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
Responses that do not earn points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument. May assert the use of historical reasoning but does not use it to frame or structure an argument. 	Responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to explain how trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 affected the Americas, although the reasoning may be uneven, limited or imbalanced. 	Responses that earn 2 points: May demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables. Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects. Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods. Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes. Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence. 	
Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Christopher Columbus went to visit the Caribbean."</i> 	Using a historical reasoning process to frame or structure an argument could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining how trans-Atlantic voyages caused the spread of new diseases that disrupted Native American societies. Discussing continuity in Native American cultural practices despite interactions with European. Example of acceptable use of historical reasoning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Spanish colonists arriving in the Caribbean forced Native Americans to work in mining and sugar production, which helped cause the collapse of the native populations."</i> (Indicates a change as a result of trans-Atlantic voyages) 	Demonstrating complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response argues that trans-Atlantic voyages led to dramatic changes in Native culture. The response uses evidence about ecological, linguistic, and religious changes after the arrival of Europeans to corroborate the argument about the dramatic scope of the change in culture. The response argues that trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americas by weakening Native American societies in the face of European colonization. It then introduces evidence about alliances with Native Americans against the Aztec Empire to qualify the argument of Native American weakness. The response argues that while trans-Atlantic voyages played a role in the transformation of the Americas in this period, it was actually only a relatively minor first step. The response modifies the argument by contending that it was the intense colonization efforts of the Europeans after arrival that truly transformed the continent, concluding that the voyages on their own would have had minimal impact had the Europeans not decided to develop settlements in the Americas. 	
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 			

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Question 2

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Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The Americas Were largely after w European + involvement before w Columbus discovered in the Americas with in 1492 with the service of the Spanish Monarchs. Native Americans suffered greatly in complexions and widespread in societies such as with in Pueblos, in the Mayans, and others in Iroquois. Trans-Atlantic Voyages with in the period from 1491 to 1607 greatly affected in the Americas by introducing new diseases to Native Americans and animals, + the destruction of their environment, and especially in changes in the way of life for native Americans. etc.

Trans-Atlantic Voyages from 1491 to 1607 cause significant changes in affects on Native Americans by introducing European diseases. Shortly after the Spanish came in to contact with Native population, many started dying well across America. the biggest disease that killed the native populations was smallpox. Smallpox eventually killed 80% of all natives even if they did not come in direct contact with Europeans. Disease was the only reason the Spanish were able to conquer Mexico. Diseases + from European animals is a ultimate native animal populations.

Trans-Atlantic Voyages from 1491 to 1607 led to changes in the life style of Native Americans. One example of this is the effect the Columbian Exchange had on native economic ideals. As European caught in trade, he began to place monetary value with

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items which they wanted + have viewed as their's to own but a gift from the Earth before European trade. Increased competition for trade also greatly changed the Americas as more intertribal conflicts took place. Another example of how European voyages affected the Americas by affecting the social structures was the Spanish encomienda system. Within this system the Spanish viewed themselves as superiors and forced labor upon natives towns, subsequently sending messages that Europeans had supremacy over native groups in the Americas. Europeans also changed American Indian life styles by introducing them concepts of land ownership. This concept which was introduced with settlements and fences as Europeans claimed land as their's own disrupted the societal norms of Native Americans.

The Voyages between Europe, Africa, and the Americas also affected the Americas via the destruction of the environment. One example of this is how Europeans brought their livestock such as pigs and cows to the Americas and let them freely ~~wander~~ roam. This roaming led invasive species populations to grow and caused native plants to be destroyed as either eaten and trampled. Europeans also brought invasive plants from Europe in order to grow them but these plants destroyed natural ecosystems and overtook native plants. To conclude, transatlantic voyages to the

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Americas from 1491 to 1607 had major effects on the Americas. The largest effects were introduction of disease, disturbance of native way of life, and the destruction of the environment.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines. 8

~~The trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 completely changed the Americas by devastating the Native population, its cultural traditions, and its form of government.~~

The trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 completely changed the Americas by devastating the Native population, its cultural traditions, and its form of government.

When the Spanish arrived in the Americas in 1492 with Christopher Columbus, they brought with them many European diseases such as smallpox and malaria. Native Americans had never been exposed to these diseases, so many fell ill and died. In fact, about 90 percent of the Indigenous population was wiped out due to diseases brought by the Spanish.

This massive loss of life greatly impacted Native American cultural traditions and memories. This is because Indigenous culture relied on oral tradition in order to pass down cultural practices from generation to generation. Since disease especially affected the most vulnerable elders, who held the knowledge of their tribes, many tribes suffered from a loss of cultural identity. This caused the individuals that

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

survived Spanish diseases to join with survivors from other tribes to form new cultural traditions, since much of their own had been lost.

Besides bringing diseases, the Spanish also brought ambitions to conquer and colonize all of the Americas in search of profit—primarily gold. In order to ~~support~~ ^{provide} the labor required for their ambitions and plantations, the Spanish instituted an encomienda system that utilized surviving Native Americans as a form of labor. This system was completely novel to the Americas, but ~~the~~ idea of free slave labor from the encomienda system would ~~set the stage~~ ^{set the stage} for ~~the~~ ^{the} systems of slavery in ~~the United States in~~ the Americas for centuries to come.

When they arrived in the Americas, the Spanish sparked changes in the New World that would last for hundreds of years. Native populations were ~~near~~ nearly destroyed by disease, and their survivors suffered losses of their culture and freedom at the hands of the Spanish.

Although ~~in~~ some Spaniards like Bartolomé de ~~la~~ Casas believed that the cruel treatment of Natives was immoral, Spaniards justified their ^{brutality within the} encomienda system by claiming that Indigenous people were "inferior," "savage," etc.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Before the "discovery" of the Americas, Native American tribes and peoples lived in peace. Then, Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492, and he brought a long train of oppression, killing, and the stealing of land. Because Native Civilizations were organized in a much different manner than those in Europe, the colonizers saw them as less civilized and therefore they could steal and their land and kill their people. The trans-Atlantic voyages that took place from 1491 to 1607 turned the Americas from a place with thriving societies and cultures into a place of repression and hatred.

In the US alone, hundreds of thousands of native people were enslaved, tortured, killed, run off their land, and had their culture stolen and by white settlers. At this point, it was merely about the possession of their land, but it became a racial issue when colonists did the same thing to Africans, except instead, often they stole them from their land. ~~opportunity seized~~ From when colonists first stepped onto the American coast in the 15th century, all the way to present day, white people have killed natives, stolen what is theirs, like their land and culture, and changed the life in the

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Americas to suit the desires of white people. It all began with the first trans-Atlantic voyages in 1491 to 1607.

Question 2 — Long Essay Question

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

- Responses were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the period prior to 1607 through the lens of causation as they explored the effects of transoceanic voyages.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge, including the diversity of Native societies; the changes wrought through contact with Europeans; the effects of the Columbian Exchange; the development of Spanish colonial society and introduction of new economic, religious, and labor systems; and subsequent conflicts between Europeans and Native Americans.
- This question primarily addressed Topic 1.7.

Sample: 2A

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 2

Analysis and Reasoning: 2

Total Score: 6

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point by presenting a historically defensible thesis establishing a line of reasoning at the end of the first paragraph. The thesis states, “Trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 greatly affected the Americas by introducing new diseases to Native Americans and animals, the destruction of the environment, and especially a change in the way of life for native Americans.”

B. Contextualization(0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point by describing a broader historical context relevant to the topic in the first two sentences of the first paragraph. These two sentences combine to describe the context of American isolation “largely free of European involvement” prior to 1492 and populated by “complex and developed societies” of Native Americans. The context is relevant to the topic of the prompt because it establishes the preexisting conditions that were affected by the voyages, and it is more than a passing reference.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 2 points in the evidence category by using specific, relevant examples of evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt. In the second paragraph the response uses disease and smallpox to describe effects of Spanish contact with Native Americans. In the third paragraph the response explains how the Spanish *encomienda* system created a forced labor system for native groups based on the belief in the superior status of Spanish people.

D. Analysisand Reasoning (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point by presenting an argument using historical reasoning to address the topic of the prompt. The response establishes a causation line of reasoning noting, for example, that “[d]isease was the only reason the Spanish were able to conquer Mexico City.”

Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

The response earned 1 point by demonstrating a complex understanding through the use of evidence to corroborate an argument. The response provides multiple claims of causes and effects supported with historical specifics, displaying nuance and complex understanding. For example, the response states multiple effects of disease including the death of native populations, the ways disease aided conquest, and how disease “decimated native animal populations.”

Sample: 2B

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 0

Evidence: 2

Analysis and Reasoning: 1

Total Score: 4

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point by presenting a historically defensible thesis establishing a line of reasoning at the end of the first paragraph. The thesis states, “The trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607 completely changed the Americas by devastating the Native population, its cultural traditions, and changing its form of labor.” The thesis asserts a historical claim of changes incurred by Native Americans. The response presents a similar thesis in the last paragraph which would also have fulfilled the requirements to earn the point if the earlier thesis had not already succeeded.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for contextualization because it does not describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 2 points in the evidence category by using specific relevant examples of evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt. In the second paragraph, the response supports an argument about the effects of European diseases “such as smallpox and malaria” brought by the Spanish, which killed a large proportion of the Indigenous population. In the third paragraph the response extends the argument regarding the effects of disease, noting oral traditions among Native Americans and arguing, “Since disease especially affected the most vulnerable elders, who held knowledge of their tribes, many tribes suffered from a loss of cultural identity.”

D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for analysis and reasoning because it presents causation arguments using historical reasoning to address the topic of the prompt. The response establishes a line of reasoning (causation) in the second and third paragraphs about disease, explaining that “Native Americans had never been exposed to these diseases, so many Natives fell ill and died” and that it “caused individuals that survived Spanish diseases to join with survivors from other tribes to form new cultural traditions.” In the fourth paragraph the response locates the cause of the *encomienda* system in the Spanish search for profit.

Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

The response does not demonstrate a complex understanding because it lacks the use of evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument. The response approaches complexity through corroboration by providing multiple causes and effects, but it insufficiently develops the claims with the specifics and nuance necessary to have earned the point.

Sample: 2C

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 0

Evidence: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: 0

Total Score: 2

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point by presenting a historically defensible thesis establishing a line of reasoning at the end of the first paragraph. The thesis states, “The trans-Atlantic voyages that took place from 1491 to 1607 turned the Americas from a place with thriving tribes and cultures to a place of repression and hatred.” The thesis makes a historical claim that Native American cultures in the Americas experienced changes caused by trans-Atlantic voyages.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for contextualization because it does not succeed in describing a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. The start of the response includes an untrue assertion that native people lived in peace prior to the arrival of Europeans and an attempt to place the topic in the context of European views of civilization which is overly general.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1

The response earned 1 point in the evidence category. The response supplies two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt (e.g., Columbus and colonists who “stole [Africans] from their land”). The response did not earn the second point for evidence because it does not use specific relevant examples of evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.

D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for analysis and reasoning because it does not present an argument using historical reasoning to address the topic of the prompt.

The response does not demonstrate a complex understanding because it lacks a line of reasoning and does not use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument.