

**2023**

**AP®**



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# **AP® United States History**

## **Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1**

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#### **Long Essay Question 3**

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### Question 3: Long Essay Question, 19th Century Territorial Growth

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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis/Claim  (0-1 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are not historically defensible.</li> <li>Only restate or rephrase the prompt.</li> <li>Do not respond to the prompt.</li> <li>Do not establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>Are overgeneralized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Consistent changes in U.S. foreign policy contributed to consistent territorial growth from 1840 to 1898."</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide an overly generalized response to the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Economic, social, and political changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth."</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a claim that is not historically defensible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"The isolationist foreign policy of the United States motivated America to fight to get the Europeans out of our area."</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <p>Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about how changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898. The thesis must suggest at least one main line of argument development or establish the analytic categories of the argument.</p>	
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row B Contextualization  (0-1 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt.</li> <li>Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt.</li> <li>Provide a passing phase or reference.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"The fur trade with the Indigenous population of colonial New France and New England was very lucrative but short-lived."</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"The second half of the 1800s was an age of conflict, selfishness, and dishonesty."</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <p>Accurately describe a context relevant to how changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.</p> <p><b>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native American Nations/Tribes</li> <li>American Revolution</li> <li>French Revolution</li> <li>Haitian Revolution</li> <li>Decline of the Spanish Empire</li> <li>The spread of cotton cultivation</li> <li>Debates about slavery</li> <li>European imperialism</li> <li>Nationalist movement in the Philippines</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of acceptable contextualization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"From the early republic through the late 1800s, Indigenous Nations controlled vast areas of North America. From the Cherokee Nation in the Southeast to Comancheria on the plains, numerous Indigenous communities thrived before the expansion of the United States."</i></li> <li><i>"During this time, as industrialization was growing, the U.S. had more opportunities to trade with other countries because they could use their new resources and technological advancements to create new relations with other countries."</i> (Minimally acceptable context)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row C Evidence  (0-2 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the <b>topic</b> of the prompt.	<b>2 points</b> Supports an <b>argument</b> in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
<p><b>Responses that do not earn points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a single piece of evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of prompt.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt.</li> <li>Repeat information that is specified in the prompt.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn points:</b></p> <p><b>Provide evidence that is outside the time period</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"The federal government had a policy that focused on expanding west, so they signed the Treaty of Greenville with the confederation headed by Little Turtle to get the land where Ohio is today."</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <p><u>Identify at least two specific historical examples</u> relevant to how changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.</p> <p><b>Examples of evidence that are specific and relevant include the following (two examples required):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian Removal</li> <li>Manifest Destiny</li> <li>Annexation of Texas</li> <li>Mexican-American War</li> <li>Oregon Treaty</li> <li>William Seward</li> <li>Purchase of Alaska</li> <li>Wars with Indigenous Nations (Seminole, Apache, Sioux, etc.)</li> <li>Treaty of Fort Laramie</li> <li>Native American reservations</li> <li>Annexation of Hawaii</li> <li>Spanish-American War</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"The United States purchased Alaska from Russia and annexed Hawaii in this period."</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <p><u>Use at least two specific historical examples</u> to support an argument regarding how changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.</p> <p><b>Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"With industrialization, U.S. foreign policy became more focused on acquiring territory overseas which contributed to the Spanish-American War."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about changes in foreign policy because of industrialization)</li> <li><i>"Widespread enthusiasm for Manifest Destiny contributed to government policies aimed at taking land in the West from Indigenous people."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about the influence of Manifest Destiny on territorial expansion)</li> <li><i>"Inspired by arguments that the United States needed outposts in the Pacific to serve as markets and as strategic naval outposts, the United States began to claim Pacific nations like the Kingdom of Hawai'i as American territory."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about how changes in foreign policy led to the acquisition of territory in the Pacific)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization.</li> <li>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 two-part argument about territorial expansion on the continent with evidence of the annexation of Texas and territorial expansion overseas with the annexation of Hawaii.)</li> </ul>			

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row D Analysis and Reasoning  (0-2 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Uses historical reasoning (e.g., comparison, causation, continuity, and change) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.	<b>2 points</b> 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.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
<b>Responses that do not earn points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument.</li> <li>May assert the use of historical reasoning but does not use it to frame or structure an argument.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b> Must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to explain how changes in United States foreign policy contributed to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898, although the reasoning may be uneven, limited, or imbalanced.	<b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b> May demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining the nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables.</li> <li>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects.</li> <li>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods.</li> <li>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes.</li> <li>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence.</li> </ul>	
<b>Examples that do not earn points:</b>  <b>Provide evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"William Seward was a politician who served as the Secretary of State in the 1860s. He negotiated with Russia about Alaska."</i></li> </ul>	<b>Using a historical reasoning process to frame or structure an argument could include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining how U.S. foreign policy became more aggressive over time and contributed to wars to acquire territory.</li> <li>Explaining how U.S. foreign policy shifted from a focus on acquiring territory in the West to a policy of acquiring territory overseas.</li> </ul> <b>Example of acceptable use of historical reasoning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"At first the U.S. was mostly focused on taking land from Native Americans and Mexico in the West, but by the end of the century, U.S. foreign policy focused on getting land in the Caribbean and Pacific."</i> (Indicates a change in foreign policy related to territorial acquisition)</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrating complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response argues that U.S. foreign policy got steadily more aggressive about acquiring territory. It corroborates this argument by providing evidence across themes, including ideological motivations emanating from Manifest Destiny, economic interest resulting from industrialization and agriculture, and global competition related to European imperialism.</li> <li>The response argues that the U.S. became much more willing to use war to gain territory over the course of the 19th century. It then qualifies the argument about change with evidence of continuity, noting that warfare was used to take land from Native Americans from the 17th century through the 19th century.</li> <li>The response argues that changes in foreign policy played a minor role in the growth of the United States. The response modifies the argument by contending that it was the actions of citizens that primarily contributed to growth, providing evidence like settlers pushing into Indigenous land.</li> </ul>	
<b>Additional Notes:</b> This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.			

From even before the Revolution, Americans wanted to spread west. This idea of Manifest Destiny had always existed in the American heart and mind. After the American revolution and the Proclamation of 1763 no longer applied, of which colonists ignored, many more Americans went to western territories. This expansion eventually lead them to run into other countries like Spanish Mexico and British Canada. Despite the annexation of Texas and much of the Southwestern United States, American foreign policy contributed very little to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.

The Annexation of Texas was not an act of foreign policy, but rather an act of the people calling upon Manifest Destiny, and the government response to it. Let me explain, people started moving to Texas after the Mexican government allowed American citizens to settle there under a few conditions. Many of these Americans ignored these conditions and settled there anyway, and eventually these Americans made a majority within the territory and decided they didn't want to be apart of Mexico anymore so they fought back. The Americans living there then wanted to be a part of the United States, but they weren't annexed for a time because of United States domestic policy, namely the Missouri Compromise. Although the United States did eventually go to war with Mexico and a lot of territory, it wasn't an act of a change in foreign policy but rather the government reacting to the actions of the people that lead to the United States gaining territories like Texas, California, and New Mexico.

The Spanish American War was justified by acting upon the Monroe Doctrine, a piece of United States Foreign policy, but it was largely caused by the actions and pressures by the people not foreign policy. In Spanish Cuba, the Spanish were oppressing upon the Native Cubans that lived there, and Yellow Journalism encouraged many Americans that we needed to do something about it, based on moral grounds. The Navy at this time had also been expanding as a result of Alfred Thayer Mahan's book, "The Influence of the Sea upon History", which talked of expanding the navy to have a greater presence and impact upon history, which Americans wanted. Because of this increased military power, we felt compelled to use it, which later President Eisenhower warned about in his farewell address. Eventually these two factors combined when the USS Maine blew up in a Cuban Harbor, which the Yellow Journalists blamed the Spanish and called for war, although later investigations revealed that it had been an accidental internal explosion and wasn't related to the Spanish at all. In the end the Spanish American war which saw the United States gain territories in Puerto Rico and indirectly Hawaii, as well as imperial strongholds in Cuba and the Philippines, was caused by the will of the people, not changes in United States foreign policy.

Despite the fact that the United States territory expanded from 1840 to 1898, it was as a result of actions of the people and the government responding to such actions, rather than changes to foreign policy.

In the early 1800s, America quickly revolutionized its tactics in agricultural practices and therefore required the need for new land, since the South had ultimately deployed its soil from nutrients due to the quick paced machienery of the cotton gin. Additionally, Manifest Destiny in the the U.S and its action in part due to it by expanding westward and creating the Trail of Tears to remove native americans from desired land, had influenced an emergence to expand in territory. By the 1820s and foward, America had quickly set its goal on expanding in order to dominate the western hemisphere and to play a larger part in its country. Despite many arguing that foreign relatios had a low role in the territorial growth of the United States in the later half of the 1800s, foreign policy ultimately regarded the most influencial in the development of expansion of territory in the United States as a result of war with countries, annexations, and buyings off on foreign territories.

Foreign policy ultimately had the largest role in America's territorial growth due to wars that America fought in. By the 1930s, America had the desire to move westward as a result of manifest destiny and its 'god given power' that was rewarded to them. Therefore, America desired to take Texas, Oregon, Arizona, and many other west regions, however, it could not due to the region being occupied and owned by Mexico. As a result, the United States interacted with war with Mexico, ultimately transforming into the Mexican American War. However, it soon became destructive for Mexican forces, Mexico surrendered and with the Treaty of Hildago, indicating the northern regions of Mexico were given up to become part of the United States. As a result, the foreign policy of the United States heavily influenced growth in territory due to the introduction of new land seen in the Mexican-American War.

Another reason for foreign policy being the greatest factor in bringing in territorial growth was due to annexations and buyings of land. For instance, in the late 19th century, America had begun its imperialistic acts in order to influence its growing markets and was seeking to sell to great populations of consumers. However, the United States first needed to grow its goods in order to sell. As a result, when the Dole company found Hawaii, a foreign territory, to be the best place to grow its pineapple agriculture, it requested for the U.S to aquire the land. During the late 1800s, America focused heavily on businesses and granted the Dole company the land by removing the Hawaiian monarchy. Therefore, with the account of annexing Hawaii and removing their monarchy for the countries and companies' benefits, the U.S was able to grow in size and expanded in territory from foreign land.

Another reason for foreign policy being the largest role in territory growth was due to the purchase of land. As the United States moved westward and Imperialism in America was on the rise, the desire for further expansion and greater western influence continued. Therefore, when looking into areas to expand, the U.S looked North to the region that was held by Russia, which would soon become Alasaka. As a result, America had purchased Alaska from Russia and quickly expanded in territory. Therefore, purchase was a factor into foreign policy creating territory because the U.S was allowed to buy Russian land and by purchasing land, the U.S created greater expansion, which was their desire.

The Growth of the territorial United States was changed because of foreign policy which allowed the USA to achieve and acquire such land. This is shown through historical developments in the time period of 1776-1898 and after as well.

One Historical Event is that of the Mexican-American war. The Mexican-American war only started due to a foreign policy allowing Americans to enter Texas, and with them came slavery, and Texas wanting to be free. All this tension due to foreign policy lead to the Alamo("Remember the Alamo") and united states declaring war on Mexico. After the United States won the war and signed a peace treaty. we receive all of California, Arizona, New Mexico, etc... as well as Texas joining the union before the war. This was all caused by a change in foreign policy from Isolationism to that of a country at war.

Another Historical Event which lead to the United States gaining more territory was with the purchase of Alaska, which was not stated in the constitution, and was also used by Thomas Jefferson in Louisiana. The United States acquired Alaska from Russia for 10-50 million dollars. This Purchase went against the ideals sent by the united states years prior with that by which not purchasing any more land.

One Final Historical Event which was caused by a change in foreign policy from Isolationism to imperialism. The Spanish-American war was caused from the USA moving from a isolationist movement to that of an imperialist country, we declared war on Spain for the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine ("Remember the Maine"). This war lead to the US "acquiring" the Philippines. This war was pushed by journalist around the country as well with Yellow Journalism, which told the truth of an event, but pushed the event with lies trying to get people to support the superior motive.

All These Historical Events show that due to a change in foreign policy, and a regard to doing something not granted in the constitution, allowed the United States to grow to become a gigantic country, now stretching from east of continent to the west, with a state near the north pole, and another near the equator.

### Long Essay Question 3

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

#### Overview

- This question asked students to evaluate the extent to which changes in United States foreign policy contributed to the territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge, including Native American treaties/policies, United States North American expansion, United States overseas expansion, or ideologies of Manifest Destiny and imperialism.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 5.2, 5.3, 5.12, 6.3, 6.6, 6.12, 7.2, and 7.3.

**Sample: 3A**

**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 for the thesis because it presents a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning. At the end of first paragraph the response offers the novel argument that “Despite the annexation of Texas and much of the Southwestern United States, American foreign policy contributed very little to territorial growth from 1840 to 1898.”

#### B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization by providing historical context leading up to the time period of the prompt. In the first paragraph, it describes territorial expansion during the colonial and Revolutionary periods.

### Long Essay Question 3 (continued)

#### C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for providing numerous specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. For example, it discusses Texas annexation and Manifest Destiny in the second paragraph.

The response earned the second evidence point by using evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt. In the second paragraph, the response argues that the annexation of Texas should rightly be understood as “an act of the people calling upon Manifest Destiny, and the government response to it” rather than a top-down foreign policy. In the third paragraph, the response uses evidence about the Spanish-American War to advance an argument that public pressure from Americans contributed to United States’ territorial expansion at the end of the nineteenth century.

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

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning of causation to structure an argument relevant to the prompt. It argues that the “actions and pressures by the people” of the United States caused territorial expansion.

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating a complex understanding, using evidence to modify an argument that addresses the topic of the prompt. Throughout the essay, evidence of the annexation of Texas, the Mexican-American War, and the Spanish-American War is used to modify an argument to claim that more than top-down foreign policy decisions, American popular opinion contributed to territorial growth between 1840 and 1898.

**Sample: 3B**

**Thesis/Claim: 1**

**Contextualization: 1**

**Evidence: 2**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 1**

**Total Score: 5**

#### A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for the thesis because it presents a historically defensible claim in the last sentence of the first paragraph. It argues that “foreign policy ultimately regarded the most influential in the development of expansion of territory in the United States as a result of war with countries, annexations, and buyings off on foreign territories.”

### Long Essay Question 3 (continued)

#### B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization in the first paragraph by describing the broader historical context during the time period relevant to the prompt, including the South's depletion of the soil and the Trail of Tears.

#### C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 2 points for using evidence. It provides numerous specific examples of evidence relevant to the prompt. For example, in the second paragraph, the response identifies the Mexican-American War, and in the third paragraph, it identifies the annexation of Hawaii.

The response earned the second point by using evidence of the Mexican-American War and Hawaiian annexation to advance arguments on foreign policy and territorial expansion.

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

The response earned 1 point for historical reasoning. The response uses causation to frame arguments, including the ways the protection of the Dole Company led to expansion and how the desire for more land led to the Mexican-American War and the purchase of Alaska.

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding. It consistently advances a basic argument on foreign policy causing territorial growth and does not attempt to use evidence to modify, corroborate, or qualify an argument that addresses the question.

**Sample: 3C**

**Thesis/Claim: 0**

**Contextualization: 0**

**Evidence: 1**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 1**

**Total Score: 2**

#### A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn 1 point for the thesis. The attempt with the first sentence merely restates the prompt: "The Growth of the territorial United States was changed because of foreign policy which allowed the USA to achieve and acquire such land."

#### B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn 1 point for contextualization. In the conclusion, the response attempts to describe a broader historical context, but this overgeneralized statement about the time period does not meet the minimum requirement.

### **Long Essay Question 3 (continued)**

#### **C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for using evidence. It identifies numerous historical examples relevant to the prompt, for example, the Mexican-American War and the annexation of Texas.

The response did not earn the second evidence point. In paragraph three the response uses evidence of the Spanish-American War to advance an argument about changes in United States foreign policy contributing to territorial acquisition. However, with the second piece of evidence, the discussion of the Mexican-American War merely makes a passing reference to “foreign policy allowing Americans to enter Texas” in the second paragraph. This argument is not developed.

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

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to structure an argument relevant to the prompt. It consistently uses causation reasoning throughout. For example, in the second paragraph, the response states that the Mexican Cession “was all caused by a change in foreign policy from Isolationism to that of a country at war.”

The response did not earn 1 point for demonstrating a complex understanding by using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question. It consistently argues that a shift from isolation to intervention policies caused territorial acquisition.