

**2023**

**AP®**



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# **AP® United States History**

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

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## Question 4: Long Essay Question, National Security and Changes to Foreign Policy

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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in United States foreign policy from 1945 to 1991.

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>“Fear led to major changes in U.S. foreign policy.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide an overly generalized response to the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“National security concerns led to social, economic, and political changes in U.S. foreign policy.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a claim that is not historically defensible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“As the most powerful country in the World, the United States didn’t feel like it needed any other countries’ help to address its security concerns, so it established an isolationist foreign policy.”</i></li> </ul> <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>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <p>Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about how growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in United States foreign policy from 1945 to 1991. The thesis must suggest at least one main line of argument development or establish the analytic categories of the argument.</p> <p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“While the most significant change to U.S. policy that resulted from the fear of communism was the formation of permanent alliances, something the U.S. had never done, the U.S. also increased its use of foreign aid and military power in the period.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning with analytic categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Security concerns led to more alliances and increased foreign aid during the Cold War.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Concerns about national security led to the formation of permanent alliances.”</i> (Minimally acceptable thesis/claim)</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 1920s was a period of great cultural change, flappers challenged gender norms, cars gave young people more freedom, and the radio was a new form of entertainment. Not everyone was happy with the changes as we can see with the Scopes trial."</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 period after World War II was an age of optimism and anxiety. Americans were both excited about the social and economic changes in the period and worried about dangerous developments around the world."</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <p>Accurately describe a context relevant to how growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in United States foreign policy from 1945 to 1991.</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>Washington's Farewell Address</li> <li>First Red Scare</li> <li>Interwar foreign policy of isolationism</li> <li>The Second World War</li> <li>Economic prosperity in the post-war era</li> <li>The Civil Rights movement</li> <li>Gulf War</li> <li>September 11, 2001</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of acceptable contextualization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Following World War I, many in the United States hesitated to get involved in foreign affairs. In fact, the U.S. didn't even join the League of Nations or get involved in World War II until the bombing of Pearl Harbor. But that all changed with the Cold War."</i></li> <li><i>"1945 marks the end of WW2 and the start of a panic about communists."</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 United States helped broker the Oslo Accords which improved the relationship between Israel and Palestine."</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 growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in United States foreign policy from 1945 to 1991.</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>The Cold War</li> <li>Nuclear weapons</li> <li>Containment</li> <li>Second Red Scare</li> <li>Korean War</li> <li>Vietnam War</li> <li>Potsdam and Yalta Conferences</li> <li>NATO</li> <li>SEATO</li> <li>The United Nations</li> <li>Marshall Plan</li> <li>The Alliance for Progress</li> <li>Ronald Reagan</li> <li>Truman Doctrine</li> <li>Cuban Missile Crisis</li> <li>Duck and Cover Drills</li> <li>Peace Corps</li> <li>Detente</li> <li>Nixon's visits to China &amp; Soviet Union</li> <li>OPEC Oil Embargo</li> <li>Camp David Accords</li> <li>Iran Hostage Crisis</li> <li>Mikhail Gorbachev</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"President Truman met with the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom to plan for the end of World War II at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences."</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 growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in United States foreign policy from 1945 to 1991.</p> <p><b>Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"As the Soviet Union promoted the spread of communism around the world which led to the Red Scare, the United States responded by developing a foreign policy based on containment."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about how the spread of communism shaped foreign policy)</li> <li><i>"Shortly after World War II ended, several other countries developed nuclear weapons, including some enemies, so the U.S. started building a lot more of these bombs."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about the growth of the U.S. nuclear arsenal)</li> <li><i>"Fear of Soviet power motivated the United States to create permanent alliances for the first time, for example, NATO."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about why the U.S. formed alliances)</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 alliances with NATO and military spending with nuclear weapons.)</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 growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in United States foreign policy from 1945 to 1991.	<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>"NATO was a military alliance that included the U.S., Canada, and most of Western Europe. The alliance was based on the idea that an attack on one was an attack on all."</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 tension with the Soviet Union caused the U.S. to form new alliances.</li> <li>Explaining how the Cold War was a continuity throughout the period from 1945 to 1991.</li> </ul> <b>Example of acceptable use of historical reasoning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"While the tension between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. decreased some during détente, the conflict between these two powers consistently shaped U.S. foreign policy in this period."</i> (Indicates a continuity in foreign policy related to the Soviet Union)</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 during the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy came to increasingly depend on both military engagements and diplomacy to slow the spread of communism. It then corroborates this argument with evidence from multiple areas of the world, including East Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe.</li> <li>The response argues that concerns about the power and influence of communist countries led to continuity in U.S. foreign policy throughout the period. It then qualifies this argument with evidence of the changes during the period of détente.</li> <li>The response argues that national security concerns were only a minor factor in shaping U.S. foreign policy. It modifies the argument by providing evidence of how economic interests shaped foreign policy, arguing that the desire to protect global trade based on capitalism motivated U.S. policy, noting that national security concerns were a result of this economy-driven foreign policy rather than a cause.</li> </ul>	
<b>Additional Notes:</b> This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.			

During world war one, Russia left the war because they had their own civil war which produced the communist soviet union. This had the effect of producing the first red scare in the United States, where xenophobia and fear of communist infiltration were extremely high. After this died down, in between the years of world war one and world war two, the united states entered a period of isolationism and were not involved in foreign conflicts. However, the attack on pearl harbor by Japan made the united states enter the war directly. Even when the USSR and United States were on the same side, tensions were still high between the two countries because of opposing ideologies. The Soviet union and the United states emerged from World War II as the global superpowers, and with the United states seeing itself as the global protector of democracy, it would conflict with the soviet union. The extent to which growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in foreign policy was significant, due to the red scare, the domino effect, and the buildup of nuclear weapons. Following world war two, the cold war started between the united states and the soviet union, or rather capitalism and communism. The first big major change in foreign policy was the fact that the United States joined their first peace-time military alliance ever with NATO. They had never done this before, but fear of a soviet offensive caused them to join it and to support eastern Europe from communism, which can also be seen through the Marshall plan. Ever since Washingtons farewell address, the U.S had never joined a foreign organization outside in the middle of a war, and this is seen during the first world war where congress denied joining the league of nations because it would tie them to foreign affairs. So with them joining NATO, we can see just how much national security concerns contributed to changes in foreign policy. Not only that, we see the United States involve themselves in proxy wars around the world against communism. We see this with the korean war and vietnam war. With the vietnam war, the United States kept spending and spending to support the south against the north, and kept promising the people at home that we were close to victory. However, this was the first major war that was put on television, so the people at home saw that in reality, the united states were not winning and could better be described as losing the war. Point being, national security concerns led to proxy wars in Asia and around the world because the U.S came up with the domino effect, saying that if they let one country in Asia become communist, the rest would soon fall to it, producing a domino effect which would eventually reach the united states. Another thing that was new in foreign policy was the massive amount of economic aid solely for the purpose of fighting another ideology. The marshall plan was for eastern european countries and so that they would depend on united states and their capitalism ideology, the plan resembled reconstruction efforts after the civil war in the U.S but here we see the U.S be directly involved with construction of foreign economies. National security concerns also gave birth to the second rare scare, which deported many immigrants. We also see the united states station troops in other countries and oversee them, such as in East Germany. The Berlin wall was hotly contested between the U.S and Soviet union, and the U.S employed the Berlin Air Lift to ship in goods to West Berlin because it was blocked off to the east. All these foreign policy changes fall under one principle that was prevalent during this time period, and that was the idea of containment. Starting with Truman, the U.S was devoted to being involved in foreign affairs to make sure that they contained the spread of soviet communism and to keep it from reaching other countries. This was only sparked even more when Cuba and Castro overthrew their dictatorship and installed a communist government, because seeing that ideology so close to their home only inspired national swcu

Before 1945, the United States had tried to establish an isolationist foreign policy. Due to the outcome of the first world war the United States hoped to rebuild their economy and build a military, yet keep out of any foreign affairs for as long as possible. However, following the attack on Pearl Harbor the U.S. was pushed into WW2 causing them to change their ideas about foreign policy. Following the war, the U.S. and Soviet Union stood off in the Cold War with threat of nuclear war. So from 1945-1991 the United States' action in many "wars" contributed greatly to its changes in foreign policy.

To begin, the United States had hoped to stay out of World War 2 as much as possible until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Before the ambush, the U.S. had supplied money and weapons to European countries fighting in the war. Their foreign policy remained neutral and no sides were officially taken as the shipments were available to any country willing get it. However, the axis powers believed that the U.S. was clearly favoring the allies which resulted in their initial attack. Following the attack, the U.S. had completely changed its foreign policy and changed focus to win the war and help the allies. Rather than building the economy, they built a military and thousands of men and women were sent to help in Europe. Throughout the war the United States thrived and risked little to no dangers on the nation itself as it was across the entire ocean. Nonetheless, the risk of communism crossing the atlantic if the axis powers had won was enough to keep fighting. Following the war, the United States took control of recovery process. They provided aid to all countries involved and established the Marshall Plan in order to prevent future wars and rebuild Europe. During this period the United States, had to adapt a new foreign policy multiple times to fight in a war and help recovery from it.

Furthermore, the United States and Soviet Union entered a stand-off which arguably could have begun the next world war. Shortly after the WW2, the Soviet Union and U.S. threatened a nuclear war on each other. Although, it just remained threats and lies, the danger was there. Throughout the cold war, espionage and scandals flooded the government and people began to have little trust in each other. The U.S. military built bases in neighboring countries to the U.S.S.R and remained as informed as possible. Foreign Policy was built around obtaining information and not starting the war, but only reacting. The threat to national security contributed greatly to foreign policy as new allies were formed and deals were created to stay out of trouble.

To conclude, the period from 1945 to 1991 contributed significantly to the changes in foreign policy. Constant threat to national security during the Second World War and Cold war forced the military to take action and stay on their toes. While this period was primarily an era of war, many treaties and pacts were created to eventually end major wars. Due to the constant action of the era it is less common to see so much foreign violence today, which is why it can be argued as one of the more influential periods in U.S. history.

The growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in the United States foreign policy by the new technology like the nuclear bombs and the political rivalry between communism and capitalism.

From 1945 to 1991 was the Red Scare which affected the lives of many, during this time America fought in wars to protect countries from communism like Korea, Iran, and Vietnam.

The technology from World War 2 had a great affect on Americans national security because of the creation of the nuclear bomb getting into the hands of Russia. The battle between communism was an indirect fight through other countries. With the technology America had they could support civil wars like the Korean and Vietnam War.

The political rivalry was the reason for the wars and the tension between America and Russia. America also fought wars in Cuba to end the dictatorship but it didn't work leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

## Long Essay Question 4

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

### Overview

- Responses were expected to demonstrate knowledge of how growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in foreign policy in the period from 1945 to 1991.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge, including reasons for containment policy, various methods of implementing containment including through proxy wars and economic assistance, domestic events that stemmed from fear of communism such as the Second Red Scare, Cold War competition and policies targeting Latin America, examples of post–Second World War decolonization in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and examples of various presidential policies regarding Cold War events.
- This question primarily addressed Topic 8.1.
- Topics 8.3, 8.7, and 8.8 were also addressed.

### Sample: 4A

**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 provides a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning. The seventh sentence states, “The extent to which growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in foreign policy was significant, due to the red scare, the domino effect, and the buildup of nuclear weapons.”

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

The response earned 1 point for contextualization because it describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. Within the first few sentences, the response identifies the creation of the communist Soviet Union and its connection to the First Red Scare in the United States. Additionally, the response describes how “Even when the USSR and United States were on the same side, tensions were still high between the two countries because of opposing ideologies. The Soviet union and the United states emerged from World War II as the global superpowers, and with the United states seeing itself as the global protector of democracy, it would conflict with the soviet union.”

### Long Essay Question 4 (continued)

#### C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 2 points for evidence. The response identifies specific examples relevant to the prompt, such as the Cold War and the Berlin Airlift.

The response earned the second point because it supports the argument in response to the prompt by using specific historical evidence. For example, it argues that the proxy wars in Korea and Vietnam were a product of the domino theory and that the Marshall Plan’s economic aid was motivated by the United States’ desire to promote capitalism in Europe.

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

The response earned 1 point for structuring an argument that addresses the prompt, explaining how tension with the Soviet Union caused the United States to form new military alliances, contributing to changes in foreign policy.

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating a complex understanding, using evidence to corroborate an argument that addresses the question. The response explains relevant and insightful connections across periods to corroborate its argument. It also extends the discussion of the Marshall Plan back to Reconstruction efforts after the Civil War. Additionally, the response extends the discussion of NATO back to Washington’s Farewell Address.

**Sample: 4B**

**Thesis/Claim: 1**

**Contextualization: 1**

**Evidence: 1**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 1**

**Total Score: 4**

#### A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for the thesis because it responds to the prompt with a historically defensible claim in the final paragraph that establishes a line of reasoning: “Constant threat to national security during the Second World War and Cold war forced the military to take action and stay on their toes. While this period was primarily an era of war, many treaties and pacts were created to eventually end major wars.”

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

The response earned 1 point for contextualization because it describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. In the first paragraph, the response describes the movement from an interwar period of isolation to involvement in the Second World War following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

### Long Essay Question 4 (continued)

#### C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for evidence because it provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. For example, it identifies the Marshall Plan and the threat of nuclear war.

The response did not earn the second point for evidence. While it contains at least two specific historical examples relevant to the prompt, the response does not adequately use these in support of an argument.

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

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to structure an argument that addresses the prompt. In the third paragraph, the response argues that the United States changed its foreign policy, and it sums up this analysis well: “The threat to national security contributed greatly to foreign policy as new allies were formed and deals were created to stay out of trouble.”

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding. It does not attempt to use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the topic of the prompt.

#### Sample: 4C

**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 for the thesis because it responds to the prompt with a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning. In the opening paragraph, the response argues that the “growing concerns about national security contributed to changes in the United States foreign policy by the new technology like the nuclear bombs and the political rivalry between communism and capitalism.”

#### 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.

### **Long Essay Question 4 (continued)**

#### **C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for using evidence because it provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the prompt. For example, in the second paragraph, it identifies conflicts fought against communism in Korea and Vietnam. The third paragraph also identifies the volatility of atomic weapons.

The response did not earn the second point. While it contains at least two specific historical examples relevant to the prompt, the response does not adequately use these in support of an argument.

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

The response did not earn the point for using historical reasoning because it does not provide relevant analysis supporting causation, continuity and change, or comparison to structure an argument that addresses the prompt.

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding. It does not attempt to use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the topic of the prompt.