



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2023 AP® United States History Set 1

Free-Response Questions

- Number of Students Scored 467,975
- Number of Readers 2,800
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	49,756	10.63
4	69,052	14.76
3	103,552	22.13
2	106,390	22.73
1	139,225	29.75

- Global Mean 2.54

The following comments on the 2023 free-response questions for AP® United States History were written by the Chief Reader, Michelle Kuhl, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Short Answer Question 1

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Historians on the New Deal

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.04

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- This question asked students to describe the difference between two excerpts from secondary source texts about the politics of those supporting the New Deal. The first excerpt, by Lizabeth Cohen, argues that the diverse political supporters of the New Deal advocated, often for the first time, for the Democratic Party. The second excerpt, by Ira Katznelson, argues that the New Deal depended on the support of Southern legislators, and, thus, the government failed to enact civil rights legislation.
- Responses had to provide relevant evidence (between 1932 and 1945) and explain how that evidence supported each of the arguments found in the excerpts.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and secondary sources.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 7.9 and 7.10.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Students successfully described information about the New Deal Era and utilized descriptive skills to support claims by Cohen and Katznelson.
- In the most common pattern, students supported Cohen by citing evidence of the vast array of New Deal supporters, including African Americans, women, marginalized communities of color, and the working class, who involved themselves in politics in new ways and changed the membership of the Democratic Party.
- To support Katznelson's argument, students cited the persistence of racial oppression in the South, as well as throughout the United States generally, and the New Deal's lack of action in failing to include civil rights legislation. In comparing the central arguments of the historians, students successfully demonstrated the skill of argumentation.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A common misconception was that New Deal programs aided minority groups in the United States by lessening the impact of racial segregation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses demonstrated that the New Deal did not take action on civil rights legislation so as to retain the support of Southern legislators.• “One development in the period 1932–1945 that can be used to support Katznelson’s perspective is the continued prominence of Jim Crow laws and racial segregation in the South. The New Deal efforts turned a “blind

	<p>“eye” to racial segregation and this allowed Jim Crow laws to stay in effect in the south, which is what Katznelson is arguing when she says that the New Deal collaborated with the South’s racial hegemony.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common misperception was that the New Deal gave African Americans and women the right to vote, thus garnering support for the Democratic Party. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses demonstrated the popularity of New Deal programs, which prompted African Americans and women to vote for the Democratic Party. “Cohen’s interpretation of the New Deal is that the New Deal was beneficial to minorities, while Katznelson’s interpretation is that the New Deal was more beneficial to white supremacists. Evidence of Cohen’s beliefs can be seen in how she details how minorities benefited from welfare programs created by the New Deal and how that led them to support the policies by voting for FDR.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses inaccurately argued that the New Deal created Medicare and Medicaid and used this as evidence of New Deal programs eliciting support from minority groups and the working class. These programs were developed after the time period of the New Deal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses demonstrated that various New Deal programs were beneficial for minority groups and the working class, thus garnering support for the Democratic Party. “One development from 1932 to 1945 that can be used to support Cohen’s argument were the various New Deal organizations such as the Public Works Administration and the Tennessee Valley Authority whose reform policies extended to African American’s helped get them out of the Great Depression. This supports Cohen’s argument because the opportunities of reform out of the Depression was available in various New Deal programs such as the PWA and the TVA and so the people benefitting from this, including minorities, would be more inclined to vote Democratic because of these programs, which is what Cohen is saying.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Students struggle to identify arguments in excerpts from secondary sources.
 - Teachers could do exercises where students practice reading and analyzing secondary sources in the classroom and expressing a scholar’s argument in the student’s own words. This could be done as homework or as classroom discussion and/or group work.
- Students struggle to understand complex historical perspectives and differentiate nuance between two arguments.
 - Teachers could do a Pair and Share exercise where they give the class two excerpts. One half of the pair analyzes the first excerpt on their own, while the other half analyzes the second excerpt on their own. Then they teach each other their understanding of their excerpt and talk out the similarities and differences.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 7: 1890–1945, which addresses the content required in this question.
- The Focus on Assessment and Focus on Teaching activities in Teaching and Assessing Module Period 5: 1844–1877 discusses strategies for teaching the skills required in this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 6.8 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice comparing historical arguments, an important skill for this question.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>

Short Answer Question 2

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Explain Tarbell History of Standard Oil

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.02

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- The question asked students to describe the point of view of the author and then explain a specific event or development that led to and resulted from calls for increased government regulation of trusts and big business activities of the Gilded Age. Responses were confined to 1865 to 1904 for part (b) and 1904 to 1920 for part (c).
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge, including events, documents, people, and developments related to Gilded Age business practices, muckraking journalism, and Progressive legislation during the period from 1865 to 1920.
- The question primarily addressed Topics 6.2, 6.5, 6.6, 6.10–6.13, and 7.4.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses frequently succeeded in demonstrating the analytical skill of explaining causation and demonstrated some of the demands of the sourcing skill of describing the point of view of the author of a primary source.
- Students most often identified the effects of calls for government intervention in the economy, outlining a clear understanding of Progressive legislation and government activism. These responses specifically focused on antitrust legislation and other regulations spearheaded by both Republican and Democratic presidents.
- Students often identified the causes of the calls for government intervention in the economy. The responses demonstrated an understanding of how the growth of monopolies and trusts occurred. The responses explained how horizontal and vertical integration led to the acquisition of smaller companies and businesses, which created large corporations owned by a small group of extremely wealthy individuals.
- Some responses demonstrated an understanding of the point of view of the author of the source by describing the goals and journalistic standards of muckraking.
- Responses that did not earn the point for part (a) most commonly summarized or rephrased the source document rather than describing the point of view of the author.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A common error was the identification of Ida Tarbell and the muckrakers as advocates for the labor movements of the era.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses identified Ida Tarbell as a muckraking reformer who publicized the danger unregulated trusts and monopolies posed to society.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One point of view suggested in the excerpt is that of a Progressive muckraker who is against monopolies and trusts and intends to reveal the corrupt nature of a dominant monopoly, such as the Standard Oil Company.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common error was an interpretation of the source as a pro-trust document that supported trusts and monopolies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses interpreted the source as an antitrust document that highlighted the problems such anticompetitive behaviors presented. “Ida Tarbell speaks against Standard Oil because she believes the trust is too powerful and exhibits too much control over society and the economy.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common error was an interpretation that the muckrakers’ criticisms were exclusively focused on worker’s rights and working conditions and that labor strikes were the primary motivator for Progressive action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses identified anti-competitive business tactics and/or “laissez-faire” government policies as causes for the investigations led by muckrakers and other critics of trusts and monopolies. “Trusts often used practices such as vertical integration, (the production of a product from start to finish rather than outsourcing help) and boards of directorates (leaders from different companies joining together) in order to dominate markets. Trusts often prohibited unionizing and strikes, too.” “The ideas of laissez faire economics that are brought up in the excerpt affected the development of Progressive Era and their growth and birth of muckrakers.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common chronological error was to argue that the Sherman Antitrust Act (1890) was passed after 1904. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses identified heightened public awareness of and specific regulatory remedies to the problems posed by corporations and trusts. “Ideas such as those brought forward by Ida Tarbell, a well known progressive muckraker, led to the passage of the Clayton Anti-trust act of 1914, which sought to end a ‘restraint of trade’ and was designed to be an add-on to the Sherman Antitrust act, passed

	<p>to end price discrimination in American economic sectors.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common error was the claim that an effect of Tarbell's and other muckrakers' arguments was that labor unions were formed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses identified that the specific effects of Tarbell's advocacy were in increased federal regulation and legislation related to the economy. “Specifically, many reform movements for industries had been brought up through muckrakers at this time, like Upton Sinclair who criticized the food industry for their “meatpacking”. America had seen changes and more regulations on industry after this period of free market economy once critics came out with their thoughts.” “Many people, such as Upton Sinclair, began to criticize trusts. Sinclair wrote an exposé on the meat packing industry called “The Jungle”, exposing the nasty practices the industry would use, such as putting rats in the meat. When the government heard about this, the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Acts were passed in order to ensure the consumer's safety. The meat industry could no longer cruise under the government's laissez faire policies as government intervention in companies became a growing theme.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Students frequently struggled to differentiate the labor movement from the muckrakers in the Gilded Age.
 - Teachers could create an exercise that uses a T-chart or a graphic organizer to compare the labor movement with muckrakers.
 - Teachers could set up a mock debate to tease out the differences between the concerns of various groups in the face of consolidation of business, corruption in government, and lax regulation of the economy. The teacher could ensure that the discussion/debate includes business leaders, labor leaders, populists, and muckrakers to allow for them to express their priorities for society, governance, and the economy. Students would then have to identify what problems each group identified, the priorities each group shared, and the solutions each group suggested as remedies for those problems. Differentiating groups in this way could improve student awareness of the multiple themes and possible solutions posed within the Gilded Age.
 - Some students seem confused about the structure of the Short Answer Questions. Teachers can do exercises that teach students how to ACE (Answer, Cite, Explain) their responses.

- “Answer” is a direct response to the question, “Cite” is a reference to a specific historical piece of evidence (a “proper noun” is often the way that teachers should refer to it). “Explain” is a statement of support that connects the evidence to the answer.
- Teachers can go over the meaning of the command terms “Describe” and “Explain.”
 - Have students “Describe” a feature of their own lives and then “Explain” something they know how to do to another student. Once they have done that, they should take a recently learned concept and describe/explain as an exit ticket or a warm-up. This practice might lead to better student success.
 - Students struggle with sourcing. For example, point of view is not merely a statement of identity (journalist), but an expression of identity and outlook on life. This might include the priorities, occupation, and outlook this person/group has on the world, and what they expect should be done.
 - Using key sources, teachers can regularly model a process for identifying the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and intended audience in warm-up activities as part of homework and as a distinct skill that is assessed on all assessments.
 - HIPP is a great acronym to teach this strategy (Historical Situation, Intended Audience, Purpose, and Point of View).
 - HAPPy is also an excellent acronym that could be shared (Historical Situation, Audience, Purpose, Point of View, and then the ‘y’ stands for ‘why’)
 - Create a template for this analytical tool and use it regularly and consistently. The students need to be aware of how important these skills are to the course beyond the DBQ. Applying their HIPP analysis to a broader statement is an important element of argumentation, and teachers could provide opportunities to practice it as a warm-up activity or an exit ticket. With a simple rubric, this creates the expectation to use HIPP/HAPPy in ALL analyses of source material.
 - Questions to have students ask of sourcing:
 - Point of View: What about the author’s identity could have influenced what they said in the source? Race, class, gender, religion, political party affiliation, etc.?
 - Purpose: What is the objective or goal of the author? What verb captures their motive?
 - Historical Situation: What was happening at the time and in the place where the source was created? Is it immediate and related to its creation as opposed to broader in scope?
 - Audience: Who is intended as the recipient? How would this affect the reliability of the source?
 - Example: Having students write point-of-view poetry could help them articulate the point of view of important historical figures.
 - The importance of causation needs to be clearly outlined as both a set of causes and effects.
 - Diagrams and graphic organizers work well for this in ALL areas of the course.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 6: 1865–1898 and Period 7: 1890–1945, which address the content related to this question.

- The Unit 6 and Unit 7 University Faculty Lecture videos address the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 4.3 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice generating historical evidence to support claims in a primary source.
- In the optional activity for Topic 7.10, students utilize outside evidence to evaluate and support the claims in a primary source, one of the skills tested in this question.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>

Short Answer Question 3

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Explain Agriculture and Early Migration

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.29

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Responses were expected to describe how agriculture influenced migration to North America between 1607 and 1776.
- Responses were expected to explain a similarity and a difference in how agriculture influenced the development of two distinct regions.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses often demonstrated an understanding of agriculture as a pull for migrants to North America in the period 1607 to 1776.
- Many responses successfully contrasted the impact of agriculture on the development of two regions, particularly New England compared to the South.
- Many responses had difficulty successfully identifying similarities in how agriculture impacted the development of two regions.
- A skill needed for this question was geographic knowledge, such as the ability to identify specific colonial regions.
- A skill needed for this question was to be able to provide a specific comparison of regional similarities and differences.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most common problem was that responses did not provide enough specificity to show a similarity between the two regions. Instead, most responses were vague or discussed farming generically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses provided specific detail.• “Agriculture influenced the development of the Chesapeake and Southern colonies similarly. Both regions grew cash crops, like tobacco, on large plantations to sell for profit. This plantation system created a need for laborers, which was filled with imported African slaves, which these two colonies grew economically dependent on.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A common challenge was that responses differentiated between the agriculture in two	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses fully explained how regions developed.

<p>regions without successfully explaining the resulting developments in those regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Agriculture differently influenced the development of the New England and Chesapeake colonies. The New England Colonies did not have access to good soil for farming, so they became mostly small subsistence farmers. They grew enough food for themselves and lived in close, familial communities. In the Chesapeake, the development of cash crop plantations lead the colonists to live very far apart from each other, with few families or true towns to speak of.”
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Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Students struggle with geography.
 - Teachers should have students practice identifying the different geographic regions of colonial America and their corresponding characteristics.
 - This could start with a map review of the thirteen colonies and help students chunk them into regions.
 - Follow up the map review with a chart to summarize some of the basic characteristics of each region. Put the regions across the top of the chart (New England, Middle Colonies, Chesapeake, Lower South), and down the left side (rows), add categories for comparison (colonies included in region, climate/geography, economics, demographics, political structures, religion, etc.).
 - Conclude with some practice comparing colonial regions (and their characteristics) by writing responses to an SAQ or an LEQ. See prior released AP US History Exam questions for potential prompts.
 - This activity could be done inductively as well. The students could start by studying the characteristics of each colony and then work towards grouping similar colonies into logical regions.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 2: 1907–1754 and Period 3: 1754–1800, which address the content related to this question.
- The 2.3 Daily Video 1 in AP Classroom reviews some of the content related to this question.

- The optional activity for Topic 2.8 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice utilizing historical evidence to compare topics..
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
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Short Answer Question 4

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Explain Agriculture in the Late Nineteenth Century

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 0.79

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- The question asked students to describe a way in which agricultural interests influenced a societal debate in the United States from 1865 to 1900.
- Students were asked to identify and explain one similarity and one difference in how agriculture impacted the development of two different regions in the United States.
- Responses had to use comparison with two different regions in the United States and explain relevant evidence that showed a development influenced by agriculture for each region.
- This question focused on the comparison of historical developments in two different regions of the United States that were influenced by agriculture from 1865 to 1900.
- This question generally addressed Topics 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.8, and 6.12.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses frequently succeeded in explaining the concept of sharecropping leading to societal debates from 1865 to 1900 concerning the status of formerly enslaved people in the southern states.
- Responses often successfully used comparison to explain the effects of agriculture on the development of the South and West, including the expansion of farming communities and the influence of Populist ideas in these regions.
- Responses most often identified and explained Homesteaders, Exodusters, and frontier farmers as unique contributors to the development of the West.
- Most commonly, the responses successfully explained the ideas and aims of the Populist Party in explaining societal debates from 1865 to 1900.
- The skills needed for this response are connected to explanations of historical concepts and developments (Skill 1.B) and the identification and description of a development in historical context (Skill 4.A, 4.B).

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A common error was the use of slavery debates as a societal debate from 1865 to 1900 rather than addressing a societal debate that took place after the abolition of slavery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses explained that slavery had been replaced by sharecropping and tenant farming in the South, sparking debates about the real freedom of those people who had been enslaved prior to 1865.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A way that agricultural interests influenced societal debates springs from the switch from slavery to legal forms of exploitation like tenant farming and sharecropping; both of which pressured newly freed slaves into conforming to. These interests sparked debates on whether the current systems of farming prove to be beneficial in supporting the newly freed population.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common knowledge gap was the explanation of the development of the North as industrial without any real connection to agriculture in the North. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses showed an understanding of the impact of agriculture on the development of the North and the South. “Because the mechanization of agriculture allowed for crops to be produced in a more efficient manner, there were more crops that were not only produced in the south, but they were also sent to the North to feed the ever increasing population that worked in industry. Although the North and South had two very different economical approaches during this time, the North in industry and the South in agriculture, both regions were able to benefit from the increase in production of agricultural goods.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common content error involved responses that focused on content that occurred prior to 1865, such as the practice of slavery, the cotton gin, and the steam engine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses used examples from the time period. “Agricultural development, mainly from mechanization involving the invention of the Mechanical Reaper and Combine Harvester, and even refrigerated rail cars, allowed for greatly increased yields of crops for big farms and safer transportation of food to all areas of the country.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Students struggle with geography.
 - Teachers can use Venn diagrams and other graphic organizers to reinforce the similarities and differences between geographic regions, including the North, South, West, and Midwest. These tools can be used at the beginning and end of each unit on a different time period.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 7: 1865–1898, which addresses the content related to this question.
- The 6.4 Daily Video 1, 6.13 Daily Video 1, and 6.2 Daily Videos 1 and 2 in AP Classroom review some of the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 2.8 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice utilizing historical evidence to compare topics.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
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Question 1—Document-Based Question

Task: Document-Based Question

Topic: Commercial Development

Max Score: 7

Mean Score: 3.04

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to analyze the extent to which commercial development changed United States society from 1800 to 1855.
- The question primarily focused on causation, contextualization, document analysis, sourcing, and complexity.
- The question required students to show an understanding of major commercial developments in the United States from 1800 to 1855 that the market revolution brought to the country, such as industrialization (the onset of the mill system), transportation (the role that steam engines played in expanding water and land travel), budding sectional tensions, westward expansion, and the onset of urbanization.
- The question required students to demonstrate an understanding of some of the major changes that occurred in society during the market revolution, including the Second Great Awakening and the emergence of abolitionism, the women’s rights movement, and temperance efforts.
- The question required students to contextualize the market revolution, which could include the aftermath of the American Revolution, the onset of the Civil War, and the changes that industrialization and the Gilded Age would later bring to the country.
- The question primarily addressed Topics 4.5 and 4.6.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Many responses successfully wrote a historically defensible thesis statement that explored how the United States changed because of commercial developments. There were several responses that explored how commercial development had geographical implications, such as arguing that the North developed faster in a quest to be connected to the West.
- Some responses misinterpreted the terms commercial development. For example, some students thought that the prompt pertained to actual advertisements (commercials), which led them to see all of the other documents beyond #2 (the actual advertisement) through the lens of commercial advertisements.
- Many responses successfully provided contextualization. Responses explored the aftermath of the American Revolution and the development of the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, connecting the start of the nation to the emergence of commercial development. Responses also explored the differing visions of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson for the United States as either a nation rooted in industry or an agrarian republic. Several responses also provided contextualization after the time period of the prompt. Some responses explored how the changes in society pushed the country into the Civil War. Other responses explored the continuity into the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, with explorations of child labor laws, women’s suffrage advocacy, and the labor reforms in the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, the emergence of labor unions, and Prohibition.
- Responses tended to use the content of several of the documents, in particular the report from an association of churches, Henry Tayloe’s letter, and Josephine L. Baker’s *Lowell Offering*. Some

responses misidentified Document 2 as a steamboat rather than a railroad locomotive. Other responses misinterpreted Document 7, in particular Douglass’s discussion of free labor versus slave labor.

- Responses tended to group the documents on temperance (Documents 1 and 5), working in textile mills (Documents 4 and 6), and the experiences of African Americans (Documents 3, 5, and 7). In terms of arguments offered, responses tended to explore the positive and negative impacts of commercial development on African Americans and women, labor conditions, and social reforms. Additionally, responses tended to focus on sectional differences.
- Responses often did not provide sufficient evidence from the documents. Several responses brought in outside information from outside the time period of the prompt and used examples as if they were occurring within the time frame of the prompt. When a response successfully utilized evidence from outside of the documents, they tended to explore the usage of the cotton gin, the start of the Second Great Awakening, Manifest Destiny, the Erie Canal, and Henry Clay’s American System.
- Not all responses explained the documents’ point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience relevant to an argument. Not all responses attempted to source the documents. Many simply summarized the content of the documents or reiterated the information already provided in the header of the documents. Most responses did not explore the relevance of the documents. Several responses also offered a general audience, such as the American public.
- The stronger responses tended to offer extensive historical situations and points of view. For example, a discussion of the Second Great Awakening was used to provide historical situation for the temperance document or a discussion of the ending of the international slave trade for the document on the internal slave trade. Stronger responses also understood the historical situation of the women in Lowell, connecting industrial opportunities to the cult of domesticity and the influence of republican motherhood.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some students began with a sophisticated thesis and consistently followed through with that complex analysis throughout the essay. Others began with a more basic thesis and initial argument but developed a more nuanced analysis in the last paragraph or two of their essay. The strongest responses corroborated multiple perspectives in terms of geographical differences, exploring how industrialization primarily developed in the Northeast, and the transportation revolution linked the West to the Northeast. Stronger responses tended to analyze multiple variables, using a wealth of outside information to discuss the entire time period of the prompt. For example, responses explored how the Embargo Act of 1807 forced the United States to explore its own industrial efforts. Additionally, some responses explored the technological advances—from interchangeable parts to the usage of the cotton gin—that supported those budding industrial efforts. Other responses saw continuity in the southern economy, while major changes appeared in the northern economy due to the market revolution.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responses showed a lack of specific and accurate information about the time period preceding the market revolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses had specific examples."After a hard-fought battle for freedom in the Revolutionary War, the United States was now free to look inwards. With the shackles of oppressive British taxation, the United States focused on developing itself economically. As the South focused and expanding plantations worked through slave labor, the North focused on developing factories for its economy. These developments were in stark contrast to the harsh years of fighting the United States experienced during its war for independence, so it was able to influence society greatly."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responses misinterpreted the content of the documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses clearly understood the documents, such as Document 3."With the industrial revolution came more efficient methods of farming and processing, like the introduction of the cotton press that made cotton processing a lot more efficient. Slave owners took advantage of the situation and sold their slaves for high prices, raking in the profits."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responses did not use evidence beyond the documents that was appropriate to the prompt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More successful responses used appropriate and relevant evidence from the time period of the prompt."During this time period, there was a so called market revolution within the United States, which led to an increase in industry such as textile mills, and the increased connection (and consequently increased consumption and reliance) between the differing regions of the US. There was also significant developments made through projects like Henry Clay's 'American System' (which implemented tariffs, increased

	<p>government support of infrastructure, and created a strong banking system), which aimed to directly help commercial development in the US.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses lacked an understanding of the complexity of a historical development that is not part of the argument or the focus of the prompt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses fully developed complex arguments. “This demonstrates another way that commercial development during the Industrial Revolution in the U.S. failed to cause radical change in the South. These failures in the South to industrialize would also lead to intensified sectionalism, the growing opposition between the North and South of the U.S. due to their radically different economies and ways of life, would lead to an important conflict afterward: the Civil War, a war between the Northern Union against the seceding Confederation of southern states that did not want to lose slavery, believing it to be a fundamental part of their way of life. The causes of the Civil War further demonstrate the failure of commercial development in United States society from 1800 to 1855 to cause radical and profound change in southern United States society, showing that although the North’s way of life was heavily modified because of the Industrial Revolution, the South’s way of life stay the same, and did the opposite: it only intensified and became more traditional.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Students struggle with chronology.
 - Teachers should have their students focus on the dates of the documents, in particular, the gaps in the dates where students could provide additional evidence beyond the documents and historical contextualization.
 - Teachers should emphasize watershed events that reinforce periodization/chronology. For example, students should have a clear understanding that the time period of 1800 to 1850 is rooted in the market revolution, the Second Great Awakening, the advent of reform movements, an Era of Good Feelings, budding sectional tensions, and westward expansion.
- Students struggle with understanding terms in the prompt.
 - Teachers should emphasize vocabulary terminology. In this particular DBQ, some students struggled with the words commercial and social.
- Students struggle with the meaning of the documents.
 - Teachers are encouraged to work with their students on a closer reading of the documents and their relation to an argument.
 - As the document is explored, what are the limitations? What is the point of view that the document provides? How is the document valuable in answering the question? How does the time period of the document provide additional contextualization?

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice DBQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 4: 1800–1848 and Period 5: 1844–1877, which address the content and skills related to this question. Of particular value may be the Focus on Teaching: Document Analysis in Period 4 and the Focus on Assessment: DBQ in Period 5 activities.
- The 4.5: Daily Videos 1, 2, and 3, and 4.6: Daily Videos 1 and 2 in AP Classroom review the content related to this question.
- The optional activities for Topics 7.3 and 7.4 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offer students an opportunity to practice the skill of sourcing documents.
- The optional activities for Topic 7.15 offer students an opportunity to practice the skill of complexity.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>

Long Essay Question 2

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Growth of Transatlantic Trade

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.03

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Responses were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the extent to which the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial society from 1607 to 1776.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge, including colonists' relationships with Native Americans, the overtaking of Native American lands, diversity among British colonial regions, imperial policies, such as the Navigation Acts, and the extent to which they were enforced (salutary neglect), the triangle trade, mercantilism, systems of labor (indentured servitude and chattel slavery) and reactions to these systems (Bacon's Rebellion and Stono Rebellion), Anglicization, the spread of ideological movements (the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening), various revenue acts following the Seven Years' War, and the gradual movement toward independence and the ideals expressed in relevant revolutionary documents (e.g., *Declaration of Independence*).
- This question primarily addressed Topics 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.3, and 3.4.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses succeeded in meeting many of the content demands of the question while demonstrating required historical thinking skills (1) *Developments and Processes*, (4) *Contextualization*, (5) *Making Connections*, and (6) *Argumentation* in framing responses arguing about the extent to which the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial society in the period 1607 to 1776.
- Many responses presented accurate content knowledge on the topic of the prompt, commonly referring to developments such as the triangular trade, the settlement of Jamestown, labor systems such as indentured servitude and African enslavement, cash crops (indigo, rice, and tobacco), plantation systems, and the transfer of intellectual ideas through the Enlightenment and the First Great Awakening.
- Responses showed a high degree of success in framing an appropriate historical thesis in response to the prompt. Many of the responses focused on the impact of the transatlantic slave trade in contributing to a change in British colonial society. More-developed theses also included the impact of the enforcement of mercantilist policies on the development of a strained relationship between British American colonists and the mother country. More sophisticated responses included the sharing of Enlightenment ideals through trade and their impact on emerging revolutionary thought.
- Responses demonstrating contextualization focused primarily on Columbus's voyages and European colonization. Many responses discussed British settlement on the east coast of North America. Several responses concluded their analysis by explaining how the societal changes led to the American Revolution.
- Many responses established a line of reasoning in both the thesis and the body of the response, providing motivations and reasons for the establishment of British North American colonies and the trade that developed between the colonies and Great Britain. Ultimately, this transatlantic trade led to the development of a plantation system based on the expansion of chattel slavery in British North

America. Transatlantic trade also led to an increase in the presence of different European religious groups (e.g., various Protestant sects such as Quakers) and the spread of new ideas (e.g., the Enlightenment and the First Great Awakening). Responses noted that although the colonies were established for Great Britain's growth and development, many colonists had personal reasons for participating in the founding of the colonies.

- Many responses demonstrated historical reasoning (continuity and change over time or causation) to frame an argument that addressed how much transatlantic trade changed colonial society in British North America from 1607 to 1776. Responses specifically showed the change in society due to the need for laborers, noting a transition from the use of indentured servitude to race-based slavery and acknowledging how this transition created distinct social classes. Other changes included the movement from widespread loyalty to the Crown to the rise of revolutionary thought and an expressed desire for independence.
- The analytic shortcomings of responses were in the overgeneralization of labor systems and an inability to recognize or elaborate on the change from dependence on indentured servants to enslaved labor.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some students began with a sophisticated thesis and consistently followed through with that complex analysis throughout the essay. Others began with a more basic thesis and initial argument but developed a more nuanced analysis in the last paragraph or two of their essay. Responses that demonstrated complex understanding corroborated and supported arguments utilizing varied pieces of evidence, qualified the historical claim using a counterargument, and/or demonstrated both changes and continuities over time. For example, some explanations ranked specific causes of change as being more or less important than other causes or discussed a counterargument that developments beyond transatlantic trade caused changes in colonial society, such as the interactions between British colonists and Native populations. Responses that attempted to explain relevant and insightful connections within and across periods typically fell short of connecting these examples to the era of the prompt. Many responses attempted to identify a continuity through the reference to the Civil War or the Civil Rights movement without explanation. Higher-level responses clearly explained the conflicts between Enlightenment ideals of freedom and the future arguments about slavery, discussing the Declaration of Independence and the blossoming abolition movement.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many responses demonstrated chronological misconceptions surrounding the Columbian Exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stronger responses demonstrated an understanding that the Columbian Exchange began before British transatlantic trade."Prior to 1607, Spain and Portugal had established settlements in the Americas. Christopher Columbus had explored the sea in attempts to find a shorter route to India for trade. However, Columbus arrived in the Americas instead. He found goods like

	<p>tomatoes and other rich minerals to return to Queen Isabelle and King Ferdinand of Spain. The trade also included trading sources of labor like the capture and enslavement of Native Americans and the establishment of the encomienda system. In an effort to expand the British economy and global prowess, the British also established settlements in the Americas.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses described an advanced technological level of manufacturing or industrialization within northern colonies during the colonial era that did not exist until later in time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses recognized that colonial New England was not an advanced manufacturing center prior to the early 1800s. These responses clearly showed the role of the northern colonies in providing resources for England in return for finished goods. “The Puritans traveled in families and once they arrived in New England, they began to participate in large ports of commerce. Due to their proximity to the Atlantic Sea, Puritans were able to partake in sectors such as fishing and efficiently exporting goods. This commerce catapulted their economic success because they were able to send raw goods to England which were manufactured and sold back to the colonies.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses misunderstood the economic and social diversity of the thirteen British colonies and considered them a largely homogeneous society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses understood the diversity represented in the various colonial regions. “The transatlantic trade deeply shaped the British North American colonies from 1607 to 1776 because of how it changed New England from a colony only focused on Puritanism and commerce to a colony that had an independent economic livelihood that they fought to protect and how the south went from a society dependent on indentured servants to a society whose economic stability depended on the institution of slavery.” “The demand for cash crops, and the warm climate of the region led to the development of plantations. These plantations would then shape society around them, because of the

	<p>immense reliance on them in the economies of the Southern economies. Another example is the Northern and Middle economies. These economies were more balanced, but society here shifted as well. Farming was done at a family, rather than plantation level, due to the climate.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses misidentified cotton as a major cash crop prior to the American Revolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses understood the importance of tobacco as a cash crop, especially through its relationship to early Jamestown and through its influence on the use and growth of both indentured servitude and slavery. “The first successful British colony established in North America was Jamestown, which resided in the Chesapeake region of the eastern coast. This colony was greatly affected by the transatlantic trade as their main source of income was through the cultivation of cash crops, specifically tobacco.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses misidentified inhabitants of northern colonies as being against slavery or that slavery was only practiced in the southern colonies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses understood that while the institution of slavery was used more heavily in the southern colonies, it was practiced in all colonies prior to the American Revolution. “Due to the fact that the South relied heavily on slave labor, while the north were mainly yeomen farmers and traders, the south began to form a distinct and unique culture. A new plantation elite class began to form, as more and more massive commercial plantations began to spring up, and almost the entire workforce consisted of slave labor. Because of this, a difference in ideals began to form between the two ‘sides’ of the colonies. The south placed a heavy emphasis on local governing and the rights to rely on slave labor, and these ideals were bolstered by the flourishing domestic and foreign slave trades. While the North was not completely slave free, there was much less need for slaves and hence, much less slavery in the North. This created a large

	<p>cultural gap between the North and South, and even in the times of the battle for independence, citizens still identified with their state rather than their country. All of these societal gaps stem from the prevalence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and were truly made by the trade.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses associated trade with only physical items such as goods and people and excluded the spread of ideas or policies across the Atlantic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses understood that trade routes also facilitated the spread of ideas, especially ideas related to the Enlightenment and/or religious ideologies. “In order to seek religious freedom, Puritans traveled from England to North America. Puritans were a conformist religious group which sought to have pure protestantism; which they did not find in England.” “Other ideas came over from Great Britain, and some came with a person: George Whitefield. The Irish preacher became famous and really started the First Great Awakening here in American [sic]. His open air preaching and fiery sermons were powerful, and affected many an American colonist deeply.” “These religious sentiments echo through many leaders of the patriot movement as well, and George Washington often attributed his victories in battle (including Trenton at the end of 1776) to ‘Divine Providence.’”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses attempted to explain connections within and across periods but typically fell short of clearly connecting these examples to the topic of the prompt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses successfully explained relevant and insightful connections within and across periods. “Knowing the colonies’ dependency on slavery, the Royal Governor of Virginia sent out what was known as Dunmore’s Proclamation, which stated that any enslaved people who fought for the British during the American Revolution would be granted freedom. Although the colonies won the war, this proclamation just goes to show how heavily the colonies relied on slavery,

and that it created a system that would be very hard to destroy.”

- “Even once we broke away from the British, these ideas continued to haunt our country, with men like John C. Calhoun trying to argue that slavery was a ‘positive good’ in his attempt to justify it. These ideas and more led to South Carolina’s secession from the Union and the Civil War.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Some students struggled with the thesis point.
 - Although many students are earning a point for a minimal thesis, students should be encouraged to clearly develop a more elaborate line of reasoning. This will help guide students toward stronger overall responses.
 - Teachers can give students a minimally acceptable thesis and ask them to develop further lines of reasoning.
- Some students had attempts at contextualization that were too general and disconnected from the topic.
 - Teachers can work with students to describe multiple relevant developments and make a clear connection to the prompt.
- Students need to practice providing evidence and connecting it to an argument.
 - Teachers can encourage students to present their evidence explicitly and offer explanations. For example, the common uses of “mercantilism” and “salutary neglect” need to be developed beyond mere references and make a connection to the prompt. Working on drafts to expand how and why the evidence “caused British North American society to change” would improve student writing skills.
- Some student arguments are vague. For example, a student might argue that what led to social change in the British American colonies was that “indentured servitude led to slavery.”
 - Teachers can guide students to provide deeper analysis, for example, “Although indentured servitude was the primary labor system in the British colonies, it was gradually replaced by chattel slavery due to the impacts of Bacon’s Rebellion.”
- Some students were unable to structure their essay based on the historical reasoning skill identified in the prompt.
 - Teachers can practice with students to identify the historical reasoning skill in a prompt. For example, this prompt could be used to work on this skill. Students should state how a historical development changed British colonial society by using the language of the rubric. For example, “the introduction of slavery in Virginia altered British colonial society by introducing a new social structure largely influenced by race/ethnicity.”

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 2: 1607–1754 and Period 3: 1754–1800, which address the content and skills related to this question. Of particular value may be the Focus on Teaching and Focus on Assessment activities in Period 3.
- The 2.4: Daily Videos 1 and 2 in AP Classroom review some of the content and skills related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 1.7 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an early opportunity to practice the skill of causation.
- The optional activity for Topic 3.5 offers students an opportunity to practice matching evidence with a sample thesis.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>

Long Essay Question 3

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Nineteenth-Century Foreign Policy and Territorial Growth

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 2.69

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- 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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Many students demonstrated an understanding of the causes of territorial growth as a result of foreign policy changes.
- Most students demonstrated a high degree of knowledge of the Spanish-American War, and many students demonstrated a high degree of knowledge of the Mexican-American War. Fewer students demonstrated knowledge about Native Americans in relation to foreign policy.
- Most students were able to contextualize the ideas of Manifest Destiny and imperialism.
- Many students earned the thesis point by providing a line of reasoning about expansionist foreign policy.
- Most of the evidence provided was in relation to the territories acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War. Many students were able to differentiate between the policies towards Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Some students, however, attempted to use evidence beyond the time frame of the prompt, such as Big Stick Diplomacy, Dollar Diplomacy, and the Open Door policy, demonstrating a weaker understanding of chronology. Students also effectively used evidence about the acquisition of territory through the Mexican-American War and Manifest Destiny ideology. Many students were able to explain specific territorial disputes in North America, such as those over Texas with Mexico and Oregon with Great Britain. However, some students struggled to differentiate between domestic and foreign policy, attempting to use the Kansas-Nebraska Act and Homestead Act to support an argument about foreign policy. Few students demonstrated an understanding of Native American policies and treaties in relation to foreign policy.
- Most students demonstrated historical reasoning through causation, explaining how various elements of United States foreign policy caused territorial growth. Some students used comparisons of different policies or territories. Other students used continuity and change to frame an argument about isolationism versus interventionism.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some students began with a sophisticated thesis and consistently followed through with that complex analysis throughout the essay. Others began with a more basic thesis and initial argument but developed a more nuanced analysis in the last paragraph or two of the essay. Most students who demonstrated a complex understanding did so through corroboration, analyzing multiple aspects of territorial growth. Some students qualified an argument by analyzing various reasons for and consequences of territorial growth. A few students modified a nuanced argument that foreign policy did not contribute to territorial growth.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responses demonstrated chronological misconceptions.Many responses described developments before or after the time period in an attempt to support an argument within the time period, such as the Louisiana Purchase, the Monroe Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary, Dollar Diplomacy, or the First World War.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stronger responses primarily focused on and adhered to the chronology of the question.“For example, in 1845, the United States formally annexed the Republic of Texas, which, until decade earlier, had been part of Mexico. The opposition of Mexicans to the annexation, combined with other factors like cultural differences and tensions between American-Texans and Mexican-Texans, led to the beginning of the Mexican-American War. In 1848 the United States finally won the war, and both countries signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded over a half million square miles to the U.S., including California, Texas, and New Mexico.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responses overgeneralized Manifest Destiny or referenced Native Americans without identifying specific policies or impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stronger responses focused on motivations, causes, and results of the Mexican-American War and the Spanish-American War.“Towards the end of the 19th century, the arguments for greater sea power by figures such as A. T. Mahan, resulted in the construction of a powerful modern navy with the capabilities to defeat global empires, such as Spain.”“Motivated by economic factors, American sugar planters, led by Samuel Dole, in Hawaii pushed for Hawaiian annexation to avoid a hefty tariff.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responses exaggerated or mischaracterized the extent to which George Washington’s Farewell Address influenced isolationism, the Monroe Doctrine (often attempted as evidence to support an argument instead of contextualization), and Manifest Destiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stronger responses focused on accurate portrayals of developments prior to 1840 for contextualization, such as expansion through the Louisiana Purchase and the Monroe Doctrine.“During the presidency of James Monroe, the United States indulged in a period of

	<p>domestic political peace, known as the Era of Good Feelings. Accordingly, Monroe also sought foreign peace with the Monroe Doctrine that stated the U.S. would not and Europe could not intervene in the affairs of Latin America. Monroe's isolationist policies were overturned by economic and territorial desires later in the century.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses conflated the era of expansion in the early nineteenth century under Thomas Jefferson with mid- and late-nineteenth-century expansion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses demonstrated an understanding of the chronology of expansion and clearly used the Louisiana Purchase as context rather than evidence to support an argument within the time period. “Throughout the 1800s, the nation continued to expand westward, primarily for land to grow cotton in the south. … Meanwhile, northern industry continued to expand, hungering for more resources and markets overseas.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses misunderstood foreign policy and wrote about domestic policy in relation to internal migration instead. Responses misunderstood foreign policy and focused on the immigration of foreign-born people instead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses demonstrated an understanding of foreign policy in the mid-nineteenth century, which focused on gaining territory from Mexico, British Canada, and Native Americans as opposed to migration within the United States. Stronger responses used causation to analyze immigration for factory jobs alongside imperialism. “American foreign policy led to significant territorial growth due to land acquired from the Mexicans via the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexican cession, and the Gadsden Purchase.” “The period of 1840–1898 also saw an increase in immigration, earlier in the period from Germany and Ireland and later from Southern and Eastern Europe. The increased factory workers contributed to rising industry, which led to a quest for greater resources and markets overseas.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teachers should encourage students to develop a thesis with a more specific line of reasoning.
 - Consider posting a prompt as a bell ringer and having students create two or three analytic categories to become topics for the body paragraphs. As students' skills develop, they can experiment with a corroborated or qualified thesis, providing a framework for a complex understanding throughout the essay.
 - "Though the argument could be made that recognition of Canada as Britain's was a continuity of isolationism . . . foreign policy shifted to interventionism, as seen under the Tyler and Polk administrations with the Mexican-American War and the acquisition of Oregon in the era of Manifest Destiny, and later Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines with the Spanish-American War in the era of imperialism."
- Teachers should encourage students to develop more specific contextualization connected to the prompt.
 - Consider assigning a topic and having students individually write a paragraph with as much context as they can think of in a given/short amount of time. Next, have students work in pairs or trios to create the most concise and specific contextualization paragraph with their combined ideas.
 - "George Washington set the precedent of isolationism in his Farewell Address, which was mostly respected in the first half of the 19th century, as evidenced with the Monroe Doctrine, stating the U.S. and Europe would both stay out of the affairs of Latin America. However, with increased Manifest Destiny and the want for more territory, the country expanded, beginning with the Louisiana Purchase, and continuing with more interventionist policies in the second half of the 19th century."
- Teachers should encourage students to present evidence explicitly and provide explanations that make a connection to the prompt.
 - Consider assigning a broad topic and having students identify two to three proper nouns that relate to the topic. Next, have students work in pairs or trios to provide specific descriptions of each term and explain how each explicitly connects to the topic.
 - "After the Mexican-American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, adding significant territory to the United States, including Texas, California, and New Mexico, which exacerbated the domestic debate over slavery, in addition to fulfilling Manifest Destiny through foreign policy."
- Teachers should encourage students to practice chronology to improve their analysis of causation and continuity and change.
 - Consider providing a topic or an entire APUSH period and have small groups create a timeline of specific events in a few minutes. Next, draw a line on the board with events marking the beginning and end of the time period and have students from each group fill in events from their group work. Discuss as a class to conclude.
- Teachers should encourage students to evaluate corroborating or qualifying arguments that address the question.
 - Consider having students practice writing a counterargument in relation to the prompt. Have students brainstorm individually and then work in pairs or trios to combine their ideas and create a counterargument (or a corroborating or modified argument) paragraph. As students' skills develop, they can experiment with more sophisticated, nuanced, complex understandings.

- Teachers should encourage students to read the directions on the exam carefully.
 - For example, some students attempted all three LEQs when they were only required to choose one for which to write a response.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 5: 1844–1877, Period 6: 1865–1898, and Period 7: 1890–1945, which address some of the content and skills related to this question.
- The 5.2: Daily Videos 1 and 2, and 7.2 Daily Video 1 in AP Classroom review some of the content and skills related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 1.7 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an early opportunity to practice the skill of causation.
- The Unit 4 University Faculty Lecture video addresses some of the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 4.5 offers students an opportunity to practice scaffolding a more sophisticated argument.
- Through the optional activity for Topic 4.14, students can practice developing sophisticated arguments through peer review.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>

Long Essay Question 4

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: National Security and Changes to Foreign Policy

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.57

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- 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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses succeeded in meeting many of the content demands of the question while demonstrating required historical thinking skills in framing responses arguing about the changes in United States foreign policy due to growing concerns about national security.
- The more common content knowledge used in the responses focused on Cold War events both domestically and abroad. Responses often demonstrated accurate content knowledge on the topic of the prompt, commonly referencing developments such as the Second Red Scare, the Korean War, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Vietnam War. Fewer responses expanded upon these topics by adding additional specifics. Some of those introduced errors or lacked chronological understanding. For example, many responses displayed an understanding of containment policy regarding the Korean War, but fewer displayed an understanding of the Korean War occurring before the Vietnam War. Moreover, only some responses added depth and specificity to the different outcomes of those two wars.
- Responses showed a high degree of success in framing an appropriate historical thesis in response to the prompt. The most common incorrect thesis attempts were either restating the prompt without a line of reasoning or failing to clearly address foreign policy or national security.
- Responses showed a high degree of success with contextualization. The most common contextualization focused on the Second World War. Many others focused on the First or Second Red Scare. Overall, most responses approached the prompt by singling out the Cold War and fear of communism as the central focus.
- Responses most commonly demonstrated historical reasoning of causation to frame an argument that addressed the reasons for new foreign policies to contain communism. A much smaller number of responses addressed continuity and change despite “change” being in the prompt.
- Analytic shortcomings of responses were in the overgeneralization of specific foreign policies, including the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some students began with a sophisticated thesis and consistently followed through with that complex analysis throughout the essay. Others began with a

more basic thesis and initial argument but developed a more nuanced analysis in the last paragraph or two of their essay. The most common pathway for complexity for this prompt was to explain insightful connections across time periods and qualify an argument. Comparatively few responses qualified an argument through differentiating between foreign and domestic events (e.g., proxy wars vs. McCarthyism) or through explaining both escalating foreign policies and de-escalating policies (e.g., proxy wars vs. détente or the Cuban missile crisis vs. the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT)).

- Responses that attempted to explain relevant and insightful connections within and across periods often succeeded, usually by comparing the Cold War to the First or Second World Wars, interwar isolationism, Washington's Farewell Address, September 11th, or the current war in Ukraine.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many responses had a chronological misconception regarding presidents during the Cold War and their policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses included proper chronological analysis of presidential policies."Truman and Eisenhower supported a foreign policy of 'Containment.' ... Ronald Reagan came in, guns blazing, not willing to take a backseat in foreign policy anymore. He declared the Soviet Union as 'an evil empire' and flowed a massive amount of money into the defense budget of the United States."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many responses had a chronological misconception regarding the Korean and Vietnam Wars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses discussed these wars in chronological order while also noting their different outcomes."Although South Korea was safe from communism, later during the Vietnam War the results were not the same."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many responses generalized Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses established that though the United States and the Soviet Union never fought each other directly, they did fight through a series of proxy wars."With both the States and the USSR just stacking nuclear weapons in order to not fall behind, the amount of power accumulated by both sides was exponentially more than enough to destroy each other and the world in the process. Because of this however, they both became deathly afraid of conflict"

	<p>with one another as it would result in a loss on both sides. This is why proxy wars such as Vietnam and Korean were fought.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses generalized the Truman Doctrine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses explained why President Truman asked Congress for the allocation of assistance to Greece and Turkey to help them defend against communism. “Truman also enacted the Truman Doctrine into US foreign policy, which stated that the United States will provide economic aid to any democratic nation that is fighting against communism. This was put into place when the US helped Greece and Turkey fight against the Soviet Union, preventing them from falling into the hands of the Soviets and preventing communism from spreading further.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses generalized the Marshall Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses primarily focused on both naming the Marshall Plan and explaining why the monetary assistance was needed. “The U.S. started initiating policies like the Marshall Plan which provided billions of dollars in relief to European countries and helped them get back on their feet.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses exaggerated the domino theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses recognized that the domino theory applied to Vietnam and Southeast Asia. “Communism represented everything opposite of what the US wanted for the world. This meant that stopping communism from spreading was the number one goal for each president during their time in office. Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson all believed in Domino Theory, the idea that if one country in southeast Asia turns communist then another one close to it will, then another, etc. until all of Asia is red, was a driving force behind Americas new, aggressive foreign policy, the most tragic being Vietnam.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses exaggerated McCarthyism.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses recognized that while many of the victims of McCarthyism were innocent, public perceptions leading to increased fears of communism were more significant as they increased the government's willingness to spend money and send troops to combat the perceived threat elsewhere. "The McCarthy trials, led by Joseph McCarthy were fear-based, widely televised trials meant to find communist spies in America, such as in the government, Hollywood, and later the military. They essentially embraced the concept of guilty until proven innocent, which is not the American ideal, and they destroyed the lives and careers of many innocent individuals who got blacklisted and stigmatized because of these trials. The hysteria impacted government willingness to fight against communism across the globe."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses exaggerated fear of nuclear war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses recognized the growth of nuclear arsenals and the growing concern for limiting their numbers. "This was resolved by a mutual retraction of weapons. Cuba would remain nuke free, and the US would have to remove the weapons they held in Turkey. This situation led to SALT, an agreement to limit arms. This changed foreign policy to shift from military buildup to military limitations all in the name of national security."

	<p>other resources. The United States overthrew the leader of Indonesia to protect interests there. The United States fought the spread of communism in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan (among others) because the spread of communism would threaten US corporations. The Roosevelt doctrine stating the US was the police force for the western hemisphere is just a smaller precursor to the post WWII doctrine stating the US was the police force for the world. The behavior of the United States benefited the same interests—corporate interests—before and after the rise of the USSR, the only difference is that the cold war was a war against an ideology that had the support of superpowers like the USSR and China.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses mischaracterized and oversimplified Cold War proxy wars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses discussed both similarities and differences regarding the United States' involvement in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. “There were proxy wars in Korea and Vietnam to prevent the spread of communism that were previously insignificant to America. The outcome of the Korean War resulted in South Korea remaining free, but Vietnam ended up falling completely to communism following the withdrawal of American troops.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses mischaracterized the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union as a military confrontation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses emphasized the distinction between capitalism and communism, referring to the Cold War as an ideological war that led to economic, diplomatic, and military actions. “The Marshall Plan is a great example of efforts by the US to oppose the spread of communism through supporting struggling nations. The Plan ensured that economic aid was provided to nations that shared United States beliefs in capitalism and freedom.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses confused the period of 1918 to the 1920s of the post-First World War First Red Scare with the period 1945 to 1950s of the post-Second World War Second Red Scare.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Attorney A. Mitchell Palmer arrested suspected socialists in the Wilson administration (the Palmer Raids), but only during the Cold War did such a stark dichotomy arise: the capitalist U.S. and the communist Soviet.”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses confused presidential policies, matching them with incorrect presidents. Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, and Ronald Reagan were most likely to be misidentified. Better responses correctly linked the presidents with foreign policies and generally understood the escalation and de-escalation of various policies and the efficacy of those policies. “During Johnson’s presidency, the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred which led to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to be passed in congress which gave the President the ability to start and command a war without having to ask congress for approval. This power was later reduced during Nixon’s presidency.”

	try to keep each other from gaining too much international power.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses confused the meaning of “national security” with domestic law enforcement, for example, interpreting national security as police action toward civil rights activists or antiwar protesters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses explained the domestic fears of communist infiltration and connected them to foreign policy changes to limit the expansion of communism. “This pursuance of internal communist threats is immortalized with the trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, two scientists who were executed for giving away nuclear information to the USSR in combination with McCarthyism being a potent (though often untrue) source of mistrust of ‘communists’ in the United States, and the actual discovery of unfaithful American communists, American concerns of communism at home created a reason to mistrust communism abroad, that could eventually infiltrate the United States just as those like McCarthy showed would be detrimental to the republic. With this anti-communist sentiment strong at home, a policy of containing communism abroad became prevalent in foreign affairs, through works like the Marshall Plan.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses confused the meaning of “foreign policy” with policy toward foreign-born citizens in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses explained examples of foreign policy actions in response to national security concerns. “This policy of containment was upheld throughout the Cold War, even though the methods of enforcing it were subject to change based on the different situations of different countries. For example, in many Latin American countries, the United States enforced containment by assassinating democratically elected leaders who leaned more toward communism or socialism, only to replace them with leaders who were committed to upholding a capitalist economy. In Vietnam and Korea, the United States sent weaponry, ammunition, and troops to aid the capitalist section of the country in the fight against the communist

section of the country. In both of these instances, the actions of the United States aimed to prevent the spread of communism. Later on in the Cold War, the United States also adopted a policy of detente, which aimed to ease the tension between America and the Soviet Union by slowing the arms race and being open to diplomatic meetings.”

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Although most students are earning the baseline thesis point, students should be encouraged to clearly develop a line of reasoning with specified evidence.
- Teachers can work to help students move beyond generalizations while contextualizing the topic of the prompt.
 - Encourage students to center their context on an explicit event or development. For example, instead of saying, “The United States developed weapons of war in 1945 that could be very destructive,” include an example such as atomic bombs. The context is much stronger with examples. A stronger contextualization reads, “In 1945, WWII ended with American atomic weapons being used in Japan, forcing their surrender.”
- Teachers can work to help students present their evidence explicitly and offer explanations. For example, the common use of “McCarthyism” needs to be developed beyond just a description, making a connection to the prompt, which is about foreign policy. Working on how and why the evidence supports an argument would improve the essay.
 - Some teachers reference the skill of argumentation as “closing the loop.” This can serve as a simple way to repeatedly encourage students to explain how or why their piece of evidence supports an argument.
- Teachers can work to help students understand the historical themes in the AP United States History course. One of the themes, America in the World, is more commonly known as “foreign policy.” Pre-Revolution, we focus on the foreign policies of Great Britain, France, and Spain. After independence we focus on United States foreign policy. Clarifying this theme with students in addition to ensuring they know the difference between the words “foreign” and “domestic” will help them avoid simple mistakes in essays such as this one.
 - When covering eras with heavier emphasis on government policies, encourage students to classify actions into two categories, foreign and domestic. This can be done verbally or with a graphic organizer.
- Teachers can work to help students avoid using absolutes. They lead to an oversimplified analysis of history. For example, “All communist sympathizers were put on trial and put in jail.” This is a weak analysis. Simply replacing “all” with “many” often improves the quality of the analysis.
- Teachers can work to help students embrace the many opportunities for complexity. Helping students understand the various ways to earn the complexity point can open their minds to higher-level analysis.
 - Encourage students to break down an essay prompt by describing the expectations of the prompt. Then ask students to identify ways they can go beyond those expectations. The expectations of this prompt include addressing changes in foreign policies from the Second

World War to the breakup of the Soviet Union due to growing concerns over national security.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 8: 1945–1980 and Period 9: 1980–present, which address the content and skills related to this question.
- Among others, the 8.3: Daily Video 1, 8.7 Daily Video 1, and 9.2 Daily Video 1 in AP Classroom review some of the content and skills related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 1.7 in the [Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an early opportunity to practice the skill of causation.
- The Unit 9 University Faculty Lecture video addresses some of the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 9.7 offers students an opportunity to write, review, and score an essay on periods 8 and 9.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>