

2023

AP®



AP® United States History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Question 2: Long Essay Question, Transatlantic Trade

6 points

General Scoring Notes

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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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

Evaluate the extent to which the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial society from 1607 to 1776.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis/Claim (0-1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are not historically defensible. Only restate or rephrase the prompt. Do not respond to the prompt. Do not establish a line of reasoning. Are overgeneralized. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Provide an overly generalized response to the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The growth of transatlantic trade led to major economic and social changes in society."</i> <p>Provide a restatement of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"North American society changed as a result of the growth of trade in the Atlantic."</i> <p>Provide a claim that is not historically defensible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The growth of transatlantic trade led to the development of a diverse economy in the British colonies that included the large-scale manufacturing of consumer goods and extensive silver mining."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about how the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial societies from 1607 to 1776. The thesis must suggest at least one main line of argument development or establish the analytic categories of the argument.</p> <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The most significant and lasting impact of the growth of transatlantic trade was the increase in the racial, religious, and ethnic diversity of the colonies, while another important but less significant impact was the Anglicization of colonial society."</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning with analytic categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The growth of trade in the Atlantic led to the spread of Enlightenment ideas and debates about British taxes, both of which contributed to the movement for independence."</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The growth of transatlantic trade led to more slavery in the colonies."</i> (Minimally acceptable thesis/claim) 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis or claim must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion (which may not be limited to the first or last paragraphs). The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row B Contextualization (0-1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt. Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. Provide a passing phrase or reference. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The ancestors of the Native Americans migrated from Asia long ago on a land bridge across the Bering Sea."</i> <p>Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Europeans built tons and tons of boats between 1607 and 1776. These boats were used to travel all over the world."</i> 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <p>Accurately describe a context relevant to how the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial societies from 1607 to 1776.</p>
<p>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native American society before the colonization of North America Spanish (or other European) colonization before 1600 The economic motivations for exploration Initial British colonization of North America in the 1600s East Asia trade (e.g., tea) Imperial competition among European powers The Revolutionary War <p>Example of acceptable contextualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The Spanish and Portuguese established large profitable colonies in the Americas before the English successfully founded a permanent settlement at Jamestown. The wealth of these early Spanish and Portuguese colonies from things like silver inspired other European countries to start colonies and eventually led to massive trade in the Atlantic."</i> <i>"Throughout the early 1600s colonies started forming for different reasons such as religious and economic reasons. This is seen as the Jamestown colony created for profit."</i> (Minimally acceptable context) 		
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row C Evidence (0-2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.	2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
<p>Responses that do not earn points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a single piece of evidence. Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of prompt. Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt. Repeat information that is specified in the prompt. <p>Examples that do not earn points:</p> <p>Provide evidence that is outside the time period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The British impressed sailors on American merchant ships which made Americans very mad and contributed to another war with Britain."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn 1 point:</p> <p><u>Identify at least two specific historical examples</u> relevant to how the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial societies from 1607 to 1776.</p> <p>Examples of evidence that are specific and relevant include the following (two examples required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indentured servitude Transatlantic slave trade Fur Trade Mercantilism First Great Awakening Enlightenment Anglicization Declaration of Independence Salutary neglect Navigation Acts Tobacco, sugar, rice Sugar Act Townshend Acts Tea Act <p>Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The British regulated colonial trade with things like the Sugar Act and Tea Act."</i> 	<p>Responses that earn 2 points:</p> <p><u>Use at least two specific historical examples</u> to support an argument regarding how the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial societies from 1607 to 1776.</p> <p>Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The growth of the fur trade led colonists to form relationships with Indigenous societies in northern colonies that contributed to cultural exchange."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about changes in colonial society that resulted from interactions with Indigenous Americans) <i>"The growth of trade in the Atlantic helped spread religious ideas from Europe to the colonies which contributed to the first Great Awakening."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about the impact of transatlantic trade on culture) <i>"The British allowed the colonists a fair amount of freedom to trade during salutary neglect, but when that changed, it led to resentment in colonial society."</i> (Uses evidence to support an argument about changes in the colonist loyalty to Britain) 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization. If a response has a multipart argument, then it can meet the threshold of two pieces of evidence by giving one example for one part of the argument and another example for a different part of the argument, but the total number of examples must still be at least two. (For example, supporting a two-part argument about increases in ethnic and intellectual diversity, using evidence about the New Netherlands and Enlightenment.) 			

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row D Analysis and Reasoning (0-2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses historical reasoning (e.g., comparison, causation, continuity, and change) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.	2 points Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
Responses that do not earn points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument. May assert the use of historical reasoning but does not use it to frame or structure an argument. 	Responses that earn 1 point: Must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to explain how the growth of transatlantic trade changed British North American colonial societies from 1607 to 1776, although the reasoning may be uneven, limited, or imbalanced.	Responses that earn 2 points: May demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables. Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects. Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods. Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes. Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence. 	
Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Mercantilism was an economic system used by the British in their colonies. It was designed to regulate trade."</i> 	Using a historical reasoning process to frame or structure an argument could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining how transatlantic trade caused the spread of plantation agriculture that led to an increase in slavery. Discussing how transatlantic trade led to an increase in the presence of different European religious and ethnic groups, which contributed to a significant degree of pluralism and intellectual exchange. Example of acceptable use of historical reasoning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Early on, tobacco proved to be a very profitable crop for the Virginia colony in transatlantic trade. This created a demand for labor which at first brought in a significant number of European indentured servants and later enslaved Africans."</i> (Indicates a change resulting from transatlantic trade) 	Demonstrating complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response argues that transatlantic trade led to a steady increase in the diversity of colonial society from 1607 to 1776. The response corroborates this argument with evidence from across themes about how various factors like cultural exchange, economic incentives, and imperial competition contributed to this steady increase in diversity over time. The response argues that British attempts to regulate transatlantic trade led to a decreasing loyalty to Britain in colonial society that culminated in the Declaration of Independence. The response then qualifies that argument with evidence of a gradual Anglicization of colonial society that in some ways brought the colonies and Britain closer. The response argues that transatlantic trade changed the ethnic, racial, and religious makeup of the colonies. It then qualifies that argument with evidence of demographic continuities, including a consistent Native American presence and constant migration from Britain. 	
Additional Notes: This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.			

Since the beginning of the Era of Exploration, European nations had been funding groundbreaking navigation trips to never-before-explored areas, developing colonies, and establishing trade. Explorers such as Vasco De Gama, Ferdinand Magellen, Christopher Columbus were funded by monarchs such as Isabella of Spain and aided by technology such as carvel ships and astrolabes. Once landed, nations quickly established colonies, with those such as Spanish conquistadors using immense force to combat Native populations. The unique resources and immense wealth brought about by these colonies were exchanged throughout trade routes, one of the most notable being the transatlantic trade route. Although it furthered the British North American colonies' ties to England, transatlantic trade succeeded in drastically changing the British North American colonial society to large extent by leading to the development of distinct regions throughout the colonies and leading to the dependence of Southern society on slave labor.

To begin with, the transatlantic trade involved many of the British North American colonies, but, at each port, different items were exchanged, leading to the development of distinct economical regions between these colonies; these unique economies, in turn, shaped British American colonial society. For example, the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the northern region had originally been founded on the principle of religious tolerance (for select religions excluding Catholicism and Judaism). Located along the coast, this colony quickly became apart of transatlantic trade, which led to the formation of the colony's economy. The economy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony became based around fishing, but, more importantly, shipbuilding, as a merchant class evolved within this economy and sought to partake in the transatlantic trade. As a result, this colony was more reliant on commerce than agriculture, leading to tightly spaced and closer knit communities, allowing these societies to become more connected and reliant on the church. In the South, the colony of Virginia was originally founded upon the principles of "God, Gold, and Glory". However, after harsh seasons and the discovery of the absence of gold, the colonists grew discontent. But, the transatlantic slave trade gradually increased the wealth of Virginian colonists by encouraging these colonists to grow and trade crops, such as tobacco, a cash crop, in the profitable transatlantic trade. As a result, the Virginian economy became reliant on agriculture, a lot of land was dedicated to farming, and societies became more spread out and less tightly knit than Northern colonies.

In addition to creating distinct regions, the transatlantic trade introduced Southern colonies to slave labor and gradually increased these colonies' dependence on slave labor over time. For example, in 1607, the first Africans arrived in Virginia, but it was a very small amount. More importantly, these Africans arrived as indentured servants, with freedom promised to them after a designated number of years of service. However, the development of the transatlantic trade made the South reliant on slaves not only by demanding more and more agricultural output from the South, but also by supplying the South with the slaves through the transatlantic slave trade. In the transatlantic slave trade, Europeans in Africa would kidnap Africans or bribe African tribes to kidnap rival tribe members put on ships destined for British North America. Once these ships reached the South, the slaves were auctioned off. The increase of slave labor in the South also led the creation of Southern plantations, a unique characteristic of Southern society that represented the South even after the transatlantic slave trade ended (this is evident in media such as *Gone with the Wind*).

While the transatlantic trade may have created regions and developed slavery, it did act as a continuity in furthering the British North American colonies' ties with England. As a crucial part of transatlantic trade, the colonies sold much of their raw materials to consumers in England. The profits from this trade constituted a large part of the colonial economy and made the colonies dependent on England. For example, when the colonists were angry at the Tea Act, which gave the British East India Company a monopoly over the tea trade, colonists rebelled through the Boston Tea Party, in which vast amounts of expensive tea were dumped into the Boston Harbor. The colonists retaliated in this way because they were angry that England had the ability to grant monopoly rights to the British East India Company but they also acknowledged that by ruining the tea, they were harming the crucial economic tie between the colonies in England. Considering this example and others, it begins to be revealed that the transatlantic trade actually did cause change in relation to the colonies and England in that it stirred political activism in colonial society by creating a tie so strong that the colonists felt no choice but to retaliate and break this economic bond with England as part of a way to obtain independence in their economies, politics, and society.

The arrival of Columbus in the Americas had set off a large and immense movement of people from all the major countries of the Netherlands, Spain, France, and the British to North and South America. The British, however, was the main power as their navy was the strongest amongst any of his other opponents, and had the wealth and resources to be able to take the area of land East of North America to form its colonies. They had established the city of Jamestown, the first permanent colonial settlement, and were able to expand with the ability of their large military power to form a total of 13 colonies connecting each other through the Atlantic Ocean. From the period of 1607 to 1776, the growth of the transatlantic slave trade changed British North American colonial society as it started to bring an exchange of large amounts of goods and resources while also prioritizing the idea of mercantilism in the colonies. However, the trade had also established the use of slavery in the predominant Southern colonies whose effect would last for years to come even after American independence.

The transatlantic slave trade had established a network of exchange of resources, however heavily implanted the idea of self-profit through mercantilism. Resources such as tomatoes, corn, and turkey was introduced to the British society while bringing resources such as potatoes and horses to the colonies. They had established the ability to exploit colonists and people born in the Americas for their own will and profit their home nation of Britain. Although the colonists also profited from this form of trade, they were being used by the British to work for them as they also constructed the social classes of people to take charge of the ability, strength, and uprisings of the others.

The form of trade had also introduced slavery into the nation, to replace Indians for a form of indentured servitude. Slaves were purchased from Africa and brought to the Americas to work in the Southern plantations set up in the colonies. As the colonies in the South had better climate, they were able to use a form of labor that would not have to ask for any form of pay or reward. This had forced the southern economy to be enrooted towards the idea of slavery and run its economy off the profits made from agriculture and slavery. The pattern of southern slavery continued all throughout decades all the way to the idea of sectionalism, nullification, and the Civil War as the slave-established states of the new country had started to separate due to the issue of slavery, containing it, and abolishing it,

In 1492, Christopher Columbus had fled from Europe founded the Americas caused a chain of events where he led several countries in Europe including the Spanish, French, and British to colonize the land and have and exchange of goods called The Columbian Exchange of which allowed them to have access to goods from the Americas but as a result brought in diseases of which killed millions of Native Americans which only gave them access to more land and caused more migration over to the New World causing several colonies to settle down continuously traded with Europe with their new goods from the Americas which helped grow the transatlantic trade route. The growth of this route allowed for a lot of change in the British North American colonial society like helping them realize their want for representation and ending up independent from the British.

Long Essay Question 2

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

Overview

- 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 the 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.

Sample: 2A

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 2

Analysis and Reasoning: 2

Total Score: 6

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for a thesis that responds to the prompt with a clear and historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning. The overall argument asserts that transatlantic trade changed colonial society while qualifying those changes with reference to some continuities in colonial society. Located in the first paragraph, the thesis states, “Although it furthered the British North American colonies’ ties to England, transatlantic trade succeeded in drastically changing the British North American colonial society to large extent by leading to the development of distinct regions throughout the colonies and leading to the dependence of Southern society on slave labor.”

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization. The response starts with a description of the endeavors of several European explorers who had monarchial support and whose voyages were facilitated by newer navigation innovations.

Long Essay Question 2 (continued)

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for using evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. For example, in the middle of the second paragraph, the response identifies that “the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the northern region had originally been founded on the principle of religious tolerance.” Also, in the same paragraph, the response identifies a second example that this colony’s economy was “based around fishing, but more importantly shipbuilding.”

The response earned 1 point for using at least two specific historical examples to support an argument. The response identifies and explains the growing differences among colonial regions due to religious motivations behind colonial settlement and the economic development of different colonies. The response correctly identifies and explains further distinctions in the development of the southern colonies due to the introduction of and reliance on enslaved African laborers.

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

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt. In the fourth paragraph, the response claims that transatlantic trade also provided continuity in the development of the colonies by “furthering the British North American colonies’ ties with England.” The response then goes on to demonstrate an understanding of this continuity by identifying the economic linkage between raw materials being exported from the colonies and sold to consumers in England.

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating a complex understanding. The response corroborates its argument about economic developments across colonial regions. The second paragraph contains a nuanced discussion of the evolving merchant class in Massachusetts and the Virginian economy that grew to become reliant on agriculture after the introduction of tobacco. The conclusion of the fourth paragraph also extends the discussion of the continuity of economic ties by claiming that colonists who were angered by the Tea Act began protesting by destroying tea specifically because it was such a strong symbol of their ties with the mother country.

Sample: 2B

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: 1

Total Score: 4

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The thesis can be found in the last two sentences of the introductory paragraph. The claim responds to the prompt with a historically defensible line of reasoning.

Long Essay Question 2 (continued)

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization. The opening paragraph of the response describes the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas and migration to the Americas from other European countries. The response continues by describing how the British came to dominate trade.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for using evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. For example, the response describes mercantilism in the second paragraph. A second example of evidence is identified in the third paragraph and describes indentured servants and enslaved labor.

While the response contains at least two specific historical examples relevant to the prompt, they are not used in support of an argument in response to the prompt sufficient to earn the second point.

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

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning. The response uses the historical reasoning skill of causation to structure an argument that addresses the prompt. The second paragraph successfully explains how Great Britain used mercantilism to benefit from resources acquired from American colonies to benefit Great Britain. The third paragraph successfully explains the change from indentured servitude to enslaved labor and changes in the economy of the southern colonies.

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

Sample: 2C

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 0

Analysis and Reasoning: 0

Total Score: 2

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The final sentence makes a claim about transatlantic trade: “The growth of this route allowed for a lot of change in the British North American colonial society like helping them realize their want for representation and ending up independent from the British.” This claim responds to the prompt with a historically defensible line of reasoning.

Long Essay Question 2 (continued)

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization. The first sentence describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt by noting that the actions of Christopher Columbus started a chain of events involving multiple European countries in the quest for land and commerce as part of the Columbian Exchange.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for evidence because it does not provide specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.

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

The response did not earn the point for using historical reasoning because there is no relevant analysis using the reasoning of causation, continuity and change, or comparison to structure an argument that addresses the prompt.

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