



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2023 AP® United States History Set 2

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: Gordon-Reed and Breen on American Revolution

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.17

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 effects of the American Revolution on different populations in society. The first excerpt by Annette Gordon-Reed argues that enslaved African Americans found hope in the ideals of the American Revolution that they would gain freedom. Gordon-Reed also pointed out the irony of the language of the Revolution. Colonists used metaphors of enslavement and freedom while African Americans were actually enslaved. The second excerpt by T. H. Breen argues that colonists gained opportunities and participated in politics in ways that they could not prior to the Revolution.
- Students had to understand the fundamental differences between the two authors' arguments, use evidence not found in the excerpts between 1763–1800 to support Gordon-Reed's argument, and then use evidence not found in the excerpts between 1763–1800 to support Breen's argument.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and secondary sources.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, 6.2, and 6.3.

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?

- Students were able to understand Breen's argument fairly well, as it is the more prevalent position taught about the Revolutionary War.
- Students struggled more with Gordon-Reed's main points. The first sentence of Gordon-Reed's excerpt states that White colonists began to see themselves as enslaved by Britain, and this is used to contrast to African Americans' view of this language used in both the irony and hope that it might extend to them. Some students read the first sentence of the excerpt and took that as the main argument or did not understand that it was used to set up the author's main point.
- The skills needed for this response are connected to understanding and comparing the main point of two different authors based on the excerpts provided (Skills 3.A and 3.C). Students then needed to explain how the evidence supported the different views (Skill 3.D).
 - Students understood that they needed to compare the two author's main points by describing each argument.
 - Students seemed to have a good understanding of how to use evidence. It was clear that they knew how to bring in outside information to support the authors' points and explain the connection.
 - Many responses contained general knowledge of other events and developments related to the Revolutionary War and African Americans when they understood the authors' arguments.

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 issue was misunderstanding Annette Gordon-Reed's argument in the excerpt. The first sentence of the excerpt is a context for her larger point about the perspective of enslaved people that the Revolution could bring their emancipation.A related concern was that some responses solely framed the argument about White colonists and their relationship to England and did not touch on Black perspectives of the Revolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stronger responses addressed the perspectives of enslaved African Americans as central to Gordon-Reed's interpretation."A major difference between Gordon-Reed's and Breen's interpretation of the American Revolution is that in Reed's excerpt, she argues that the revolution empowered ideas of liberty among the slaves. Breen, however, believes that the revolution mainly empowered previously unconnected figures to take part in their government even though they would not have before the revolution."Better responses understood the more nuanced point about the irony of the colonists feeling "enslaved" by Britain, while they enslaved others."One difference between Gordon-Reed's and Breen's interpretation is that Gordon-Reed interprets the American Revolution as a period with ironic beliefs while the colonists viewed themselves as slaves to Great Britain and wished to be freed, however, they too had slaves that they excluded from their movement for liberty."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many responses used examples of "founding fathers" to highlight Breen's argument about the rising in power and opportunity of common colonists. This line of reasoning is historically defensible with Alexander Hamilton, but some responses used George Washington and Thomas Jefferson and mistakenly identified them as commoners without resources who rose to power solely on merit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses looked at the average colonist's participation in protests such as the Sons of Liberty. Alexander Hamilton was also accepted as his experience fits within Breen's argument."Alexander Hamilton rose to immense prominence in the United States government despite being of mixed ethnic heritage and coming from a family that was not wealthy or significant."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A common content problem was responses using evidence from outside the time period, such as the Stono Rebellion, the Missouri Compromise, or the 15th Amendment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses used evidence clearly situated in the time period.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The question of slavery came up when the Constitution was drafted and in terms of representation, the 3/5 Compromise said that out of every 5 slaves, only 3 would count toward state representation in the House of Representatives. This compromise essentially reestablished the idea that African Americans are not going to have the same rights (few if any) as white citizens.” “The widespread use of pamphlets and papers that fueled anti-British sentiments like Thomas Paine’s Common Sense serve as evidence to the increase in activity by local men who began to speak up. Paine, while not a government figure, shared many of the same enlightenment-inspired beliefs that many wealthy, educated men of the time had. He would use his pamphlet to argue for separation from the mother country and drastically change mid-1770s political culture.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses often did not distinguish between the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, often labeling the Declaration of Independence but writing about the Constitution or vice versa. A common concern was also claiming that the Constitution or new government provided voting rights and equal political opportunities for all citizens, confusing the late 18th century with developments in the 19th century, such as the extension of suffrage to men without property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses that understood the difference between the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights, along with recognizing that the Constitution did not provide voting rights for everyone, were better responses. “Breen’s interpretation is supported by the Declaration of Independence, and the outbreak of the Revolution. The Declaration asserted the rights of the Americans and denounced tyranny in a way that was truly unheard of at the time. The Revolution expanded upon Enlightenment principles, and those that partook it had the chance to greatly increase their social status in ways seemingly impossible beforehand.” “One specific development from 1763–1800 that supports Breen’s interpretation was the ratification of the US Constitution. The US Constitution included a Bill of Rights that granted the average white male of the time certain rights such as free speech and assembly. This proves Breen’s interpretation because it allowed people with previously no political

power to stand up for their rights and legally come forward about political injustices.”

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 struggled to identify the main point of an excerpt.
 - Teachers could work with students to practice reading excerpts, whether a single paragraph or multiple excerpts, and have students read through the entirety of the excerpts before they decide what the main argument is.
 - Teachers can encourage students to read a variety of argument styles so that they are able to recognize when a statement is used to set up the author’s main argument. Seeing different types of styles used to support an argument will help students differentiate and understand the main point better.
 - Teachers can have students work on annotating the key ideas in excerpts to help identify the main points in the readings.
 - Each time the teacher introduces a primary or secondary source, they can lead a short whole-class discussion on whether the author is from the time period or a historian and how that impacts their connection to the meaning of the excerpt.
 - Teachers can give students writing assignments to paraphrase a scholar’s argument in their own words. Students struggled to come up with evidence to support a historian’s assertion. Teachers can do an exercise where they give students two excerpts, and then provide a handout of 4–8 historical events or developments. Students can work in groups to decide whether those pieces of evidence are most helpful to support the first or second excerpt.

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 3: 1754–1800, which addresses the skills and content required in this question.
- The Focus on Assessment and Focus on Teaching activities in Teaching and Assessing Module Period 1: 1491–1607 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 Woman Suffrage Pamphlet

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.43

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- This question asked students to describe one purpose of a primary source pamphlet from a women's organization in Mississippi produced in the early 1900s. The pamphlet urges southern women to forego their traditional roles and become independent. The pamphlet alludes to women's struggles during the Civil War and argues that because of the new responsibilities women shouldered during that conflict, they learned the importance of being active in public life to protect their private interests.
- Students had to understand the fundamental meaning of the document as an argument in favor of women's suffrage.
- Responses had to provide and explain relevant evidence between 1840–1900 not mentioned in the document that resulted in ideas expressed in the excerpt.
- Responses had to provide and explain relevant evidence on how ideas expressed in the excerpt resulted in a specific effect between 1900–1945.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence.
- This question primarily addresses Topics 4.11, 6.3, 6.4, 6.11, 7.4, 7.6, 7.12.

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 successfully addressed basic aspects of the women's suffrage movement. Most students understood at least one event or development connected to the women's suffrage movement. Many responses recognized the excerpt as a call for the right to vote.
- Many responses had general knowledge of events and developments related to the excerpt but were either not political in nature or did not connect the events or developments to the excerpt.
- Responses frequently were able to identify and describe a claim or argument (2.A and 3.A), such as the political fight for ratification of the 19th Amendment or the ideas of the Seneca Falls Convention, but many responses had trouble identifying connections between historical developments (5.A).

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students struggled with chronological knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better response correctly linked events in the time periods.• “One effect of these arguments in the excerpt can be seen in women working in the factories in WWII. They got the right to vote in 1919 and they were not shy to take part in society. The “Rosie the Riveter” women in the factories were

	a result of women's organizations encouraging women to take part in America outside the home."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common misperception was that students attempted to respond to the question with broad statements about equal rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses demonstrated an understanding of the women's suffrage movement or other social reform movements. "The liberation of Black Americans and the Reconstruction Amendments (13–15) developed the ideas expressed on this pamphlet. As women watched other marginalized groups gain political and economic freedoms, they became upset with their being ignored. Seeing what the US had done for the Freedmen only furthered the feminist movement." "A specific event from 1840 to 1900 that led to ideas such as shown in the excerpt was the Seneca Falls Convention. The Seneca Falls Convention was a meeting of female activists who had advocated for women's suffrage. Under leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, they published the Declaration of Sentiments to announce their liberation from the Cult of Domesticity."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another common issue was a lack of connection between the ideas in the pamphlet and how that had an effect on the women's suffrage movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses clearly linked women's activism to the passage of the 19th Amendment. "One specific effect of the ideas in the excerpt was the passage of the 19th amendment. After decades of campaigning, women finally gained the right to vote in 1920 with the 19th amendment. This amendment was a major achievement for female activists who had been pushing for women's suffrage for years."

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 struggled with separating the political, social, and economic changes in this question.
 - Teachers can practice linking social and moral reform with political action. Antebellum reform movements such as abolition and temperance provided women with experiences, which led to calls for greater rights in the political sphere.

- Students struggled with placing events in the correct time period and making the proper connections between movements and eras. Teachers can have students practice linking movements with results. Teachers can also compare related movements in different time periods, such as the Second Great Awakening of the antebellum period and the Social Gospel movement of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Teachers can have students play a game where groups are given five to ten events in women’s history mixed up on a worksheet. The group that successfully orders them correctly first wins.

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.
- 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 Religion and European Colonialism

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.25

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Responses were expected to describe how religion influenced European migration to the Americas from 1500 to 1700.
- Responses were expected to explain one similarity and one difference in how religion influenced the development of two colonies in North America from 1600 to 1700.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, and 2.3.

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?

- Responses successfully described English and Spanish religious motivations for migration to North America between 1500 and 1700.
- Responses often demonstrated the importance that religious freedom in North America played in colonization and why different European groups wanted to migrate.
- Successful responses demonstrated that English colonies were frequently established by groups seeking religious freedom, which influenced the internal structures and beliefs of the colony.
- Successful responses demonstrated that while colonies were established by Protestants and Catholics, the colonies of North America were predominately Christian.
- Responses often demonstrated that a difference between colonies was their practice and acceptance of different Christian religions.
- Successful responses demonstrated that Puritans of New England sought religious freedom in the Americas but were not accepting of other religions, unlike the Quakers of Pennsylvania.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most common problem was that students did not identify a European group's religious motivations for migration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses identified a specific group's religious motivation for migration.• "Puritans migrated to America as a result of religious persecution in England."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A common challenge was that responses demonstrated generalities in identifying how religion influenced the development of the colonies rather than demonstrating specific similarities and differences between how colonies developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses had concrete details about how religion influenced similarities and differences to emerge in North American colonies.• "In Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, their religions of Protestant and Quaker, allowed

	<p>religious and social tolerance that created a familiar and communal society. In both colonies this resulted in greater democratic political representation and acceptance of different religious groups.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Massachusetts Bay colony, by the Puritans, had a greater focus on religion and community. Puritans’ strict religious views resulted in less religious diversity compared to Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, Quakers welcomed any religious group which resulted in greater religious freedom.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common misunderstanding was that southern colonies did not have religious views and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses identified that southern colonies remained loyal to the Church of England, but that factors other than religion had greater influence on the development of their colonies. “The Virginia colony, was less focused on religious freedom and more focused on agricultural practices. The colony was still Protestant and had religion, but this did not influence the colony as much because they were more concerned about growing tobacco.”

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 continue to emphasize how changes in the Catholic Church and religious intolerance in Europe contributed to European migration to the colonies.
 - This should include an explanation of the differences in religious beliefs between Protestant groups.
 - This should include the reinforcement that Protestants and Catholics are both Christians.
- Teachers should explore how religious beliefs influenced colonial culture and laws.
 - This should include specific examples of religious influence on religious tolerance.
 - Teachers should provide specific examples of how religious beliefs influenced colonial law and government structures rather than generalizations of laws being religiously motivated.
- Teachers should have students examine the difference between Spanish, English, and French religious conversion practices.
- Teachers should have students practice comparing and contrasting colonial religious views.
 - This should include providing a greater focus on religion in the southern colonies.
 - This should include providing specific examples of how religious practices in Rhode Island and Connecticut were similar to and different from those of Massachusetts.

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 Periods 1: 1491–1607 and Period 2: 1607–1754, which address 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 2.3 Daily Video 1 in AP Classroom reviews some of the content related to 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 4

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Explain Post WWII Regional Economies

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 0.85

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- This question asked students to demonstrate an understanding of economic development and how economic development impacted internal migration and regional development.
- The question asked students to describe one economic cause of internal migration in the United States from 1890–1945.
- The question asked students to explain one similarity and one difference in the impact of one economic development on two regions within the United States from 1945–2000.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 6.2, 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?

- Responses succeeded in meeting some of the content demands of the question while demonstrating the required historical thinking skills in framing responses arguing about the economic causes of migration.
- Responses demonstrated a general understanding of economic developments within the United States, but many lacked sufficient detail.
- Responses were mixed in demonstrating the skill of comparison. Explanations of how economic development led to similarities and differences across regions were frequently quite general.
- However, even when relevant economic developments were introduced, they were often not explained in the context of regional development. The regions being compared were often not specified.

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 issue was that responses often offered generalizations, such as using general terms like “technology” or “factories” that were not unique to the time periods of the prompt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many responses correctly described the Great Migration in connection with the ongoing development of industry in the North generally, or the desire to find work in war-related industries specifically.• “During the 1890s to 1945, developments in industry, such as the invention of the Model T and assembly lines, allowed for mass amounts of manual jobs to be created, specifically in the North. This boom in jobs led to the Great

	<p>Migration, a large movement of African Americans to the North in search of better jobs and opportunities.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some strong responses correctly described the impacts of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl on internal migration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another common problem was the failure to identify specific geographic regions. Many simply referred to “the North and the South” without any elaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses were quite sophisticated in comparing or contrasting the Sun Belt and the Rust Belt or urban versus suburban or rural regions. “One difference in the economic development that influenced two regions of the US in 1945 to 2000 is the mass migration to the Sun Belt from the Midwest and North. The North and Midwest grew in population in 1945–2000, but lost a significant amount of people in the mass migration to the Sun Belt. This migration was caused by economic prosperity and the desire to move to warmer areas with defense-based jobs such as those in Florida along with NASA.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common shortcoming was a gap in understanding how economic development led to regional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some stronger responses correctly explained that industry in the Northeast and Rust Belt generally flourished in the immediate post-WWII United States, but that later in the time period increasing foreign competition led to a decline in manufacturing in the Rust Belt, while growing defense industries and the computer revolution led to growth in the Sun Belt. “Economic developments influenced both the Northeast and West from 1945 to the 2000s. The creation of industrialized markets and focus on technology led to states and areas such as California and New York being the top places. Apple, Samsung, and other large corporations that build the economy had headquarters in the Northeast and west thus leading to migration to those places for work.”

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 often struggled to define and explain regional similarities and differences.
 - Teachers can ask students to compare and contrast regions using Venn Diagrams.

- Teachers can assign students to complete a Janus figure, an outline of a human form split down the middle, decorating each side of the figure with words, phrases, designs, or images relevant to two different regions or the same region in different time periods.
- Students often struggled to provide explanations of economic developments within the time period.
 - As a warm-up activity, teachers can provide students with a list of economic or technological developments. Students can Think-Pair-Share with a partner how they would order the developments chronologically. Teachers could extend the activity by asking the pairs to work together to produce an explanation of the significance of each development.
 - As an end-of-course review, teachers could ask students to prepare a Hall of Fame of inventors, inventions, or economic developments. Teachers could ask students to present their nominations and then have a class discussion around ranking the nominees in order of importance.
- Students often confuse internal migration with immigration into the United States.
 - Teachers should provide opportunities for students to identify and define important technical terms.
 - This could be done regularly in the form of a bellringer activity, like “Terms Tuesday.”

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 8: 1945–1980, which addresses the content related to this question.
- The 8.4: Daily Video 2 in AP Classroom reviews 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: Citizenship 1865–1920

Max Score: 7

Mean Score: 3.39

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- This question required students to evaluate the extent to which the definitions of United States citizenship changed from 1865 to 1920. The content tests Periods 5, 6, and parts of 7 of the course framework, focusing on the expanding definition of who was a citizen within the boundaries of the United States and the expanding inclusion of territories to the United States. The question also required an understanding of social issues involving race, gender, and immigration.
- The intention of the question was to determine if students could defensibly evaluate the extent to which the definition of American citizenship was growing and whether the pursuit of equality was a part of American national identity. The most frequent historical development to contrast with this growing definition of citizenship was continued discrimination against African Americans, Native Americans, women, and immigrants. The question allowed for flexibility in approach. Responses could address the role that the government played in expanding citizenship. They could also then address the societal issues surrounding African Americans, Native Americans, women, inhabitants of acquired territories, and immigrants.
- This question primarily focused on continuity and change, contextualization, analyzing primary sources, and argument development.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 5.10–11, 6.2–3, 6.8–9, and 7.2–3.

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?

- Responses succeeded in meeting some of the content demands of the question while demonstrating required historical thinking skills in framing responses arguing about the definitions of citizenship during the period. Overall, students tended to grasp that while there was an expansion in the definition of citizenship in this time period, there was also the limitation of rights and full citizenship for African Americans, Native Americans, women, and immigrants. Often the students missed opportunities to analyze, only describing the content of the documents. Students tended to connect citizenship with voting and the changing definitions for Native Americans and immigrants. The documents presented a variety of options, and students were able to develop arguments by grouping patterns or finding connections between the documents. Responses usually categorized the documents in terms of race, those living in acquired territories, and immigration.
- Responses showed a high degree of success in framing an appropriate historical thesis in response to the prompt and providing at least one claim and a line of reasoning.
- Responses that provided contextualization tended to refer to the end of the Civil War with the ideals of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery. Many students still struggled with contextualization. The majority of students who attempted contextualization did receive a point, but many students are simply not even attempting it.
- Students were generally able to accurately interpret the documents (with the exception of Document 4). However, they struggled with explicitly linking a document to a line of reasoning about a definition of citizenship. They tended to describe the content of each document and explain the issue associated with that document but fell short of tying it to a larger development associated with

citizenship. Stronger responses connected documents to an argument. A number of essays contained extensive block quotations of the documents, which is neither helpful nor effective for explaining the documents.

- Responses that included evidence beyond the documents often referenced one or more of the Reconstruction Amendments, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the Dawes Act. Stronger responses had multiple examples of evidence and linked such evidence to an argument in response to the prompt. Stronger responses also sometimes used evidence not immediately derived from the documents but that was still related to an argument relevant to the prompt.
- Many students struggled with sourcing documents. Responses that attempted sourcing usually were repeating content from the document rather than explaining how or why the sourcing element was relevant to an argument. The most common successful sourcing element was historical situation. The most attempted sourcing element was purpose, but many students only repeated the content of the documents. Simply identifying one of the sourcing elements—point of view, audience, purpose, or historical situation—does not meet the threshold for sourcing. Overall, teachers are encouraged to emphasize linking how and why the sourcing element is relevant to an argument in a more explicit manner.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some responses 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. Of the percentage of responses showing complex understanding, corroboration and qualification were much more commonly seen, while modification was found in very few responses.
- Many responses that successfully earned the complexity point effectively used evidence to argue that there was expanding citizenship for immigrants but qualified that the same expansion did not happen for African Americans, Native Americans, and women.

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 lacked a general chronology of the time period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stronger responses understood the chronological parameters of the question, especially in relation to the Civil War and/or imperialism.• “The Civil War changed its course with the Emancipation Proclamation which turned it into a moral war that would free the slaves. Once this war ended, the rights of freedom for these slaves were granted through the thirteenth amendment which then led to calls for further rights such as voting, but most importantly citizenship which was given through the fourteenth amendment to African-Americans.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses demonstrated a superficial understanding or a misunderstanding of Document 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses linked the Supreme Court ruling with an argument about the limitations of citizenship in acquired territories. “While the overall sentiment in the U.S. was to expand citizenship identity, there was still much backlash. ... Even the Supreme Court in <i>Downes v. Bidwell</i> stated that there will be an implied denial of citizenship as the ‘American Empire’ expands, until Congress makes it acceptable (Doc 4).”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attempts at identification of document sourcing often did not include an explanation of how and why it connected to an argument but rather just repeated content from the document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More successful responses analyzed the documents for how and why the sourcing element was relevant to the argument. “During this time, Chinese immigrants were being banned from coming to America through the Chinese Exclusion Act. The allowance of Chinese people, even if it is just those born in the US, to become citizens shows that the definition of citizenship is becoming more inclusive and more people are able to become citizens.”

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?

- Ensure students understand the expectation of contextualization.
 - One possibility is to emphasize that contextualization must be detailed enough to demonstrate both an understanding of the time frame of the prompt and a connection to the topic being discussed.
 - Have students brainstorm specific events that occurred before or right around the time period of the prompt, have the students identify and discuss items that are relevant to the prompt, and then have the students write opening paragraphs.
- Set clear expectations for students. The rubric requires students to demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt.
 - Teachers could review the rubric with students and translate the expectation for complexity into student-friendly language. For example, give them a prompt that says history is complicated. Write an essay that explains why there is not a simple answer to the question.
- Ensure students understand historical sourcing. One possibility is to have students work in groups and have each member address the historical situation, intended audience, purpose, or point of view using the questions below for a specific document.
 - Point of View: What about the author’s identity could have influenced what they said in the source? Consider race, class, gender, religion, political party affiliation, etc. How would this insight connect to an argument?
 - Purpose: What is the objective or goal of the author? What verb captures their motive? How would this insight connect to an argument?

- 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? How would this insight connect to an argument?
- Audience: Who is intended as the recipient? How would this affect the reliability of the source? How would this insight connect to an argument?

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 6: 1865–1898 and Period 7: 1890–1945, which address the content and skills related to this question. Of particular value may be the Focus on Teaching: Continuity and Change in Period 7 and the Focus on Assessment: DBQ in Period 6 activities.
- The 6.9: Daily Videos 1 and 2 in AP Classroom review the content related to this question, and the 6.8: Daily Video 3 addresses some of the skills 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 offers 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: Colonial Revolutionary Movement

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.35

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- This prompt required students to evaluate the extent to which changes in colonial societies in North America from 1700 to 1776 contributed to the growth of a revolutionary movement.
- The question expected students to be able to demonstrate the reasoning process of causation by connecting how the development of colonial societies caused the colonies to break away from Great Britain.
- The question expected students to be able to provide evidence to support their argument about changes to colonial societies as well as the growth of a revolutionary movement.
- The question expected students to be familiar with historical developments in the 18th century. Many students described the British taxes that angered colonists, but the question asked for more depth by requiring responses to demonstrate an understanding of dynamic changes over time in the colonies and how those changes led to tensions with Great Britain.
- The question primarily addressed Topics 2.1–2. and 3.1–3.

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?

- Responses generally provided a thesis statement in the opening paragraph, although some were in the conclusion.
- Many responses provided effective context by describing the growth of northern and southern colonies with increased economic and political sophistication. Responses that were less successful in crafting appropriate context were too vague without drawing a connection to the prompt.
- Most responses earned the first point for evidence by explaining various actions taken by Parliament, the British king, or local colonial officials.
- Fewer responses earned the second point for evidence with frequent explanations of the Seven Years' War and the British taxes levied on the colonies.
- Responses that earned the first point for historical reasoning overwhelmingly used causation, usually by explaining a British action and a colonial reaction.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some responses 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.

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 issue was chronological confusion such as placing Puritan colonization in the 1700s or having an incorrect timeline of events in the 1760s and 1770s such as the Tea Act, Stamp Act, and the Intolerable Acts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses had a clear understanding of change over time."The colonists united and organized as an effect of the Stamp Act with the Stamp Act Congress and then the colonies boycotted the stamped goods. Later after the Tea Act the colonials destroyed millions of dollars of tea at the Boston Tea Party. This demonstrates a change in the colonies' reactions over time from boycott to more rebellion.""The New England town meetings, House of Burgesses, and Navigation Acts began in the 17th century but continued into the 18th century."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A common error was combining the ideas and works of Thomas Paine and John Locke.Some responses demonstrated confusion about English rights in Britain or in the colonies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better responses clearly explained historical developments."The colonial English already had rights as Englishmen under the English Bill of Rights and Parliament denied them these rights with acts like the Intolerable Acts or with "virtual representation.""The colonists were angry because they were being treated like second class citizens, and their rights as Englishmen were being denied repeatedly by the crown & Parliament.""Locke's 'natural rights,' and Paine's 'Common Sense' spreading in the colonies caused the colonists to question the lack of these rights in the colonies.""Since Common Sense was written in a way that citizens rather than local elites could understand it, it profoundly facilitated the expansion of revolutionary fervor throughout the colonies, showing the efficacy of the Enlightenment."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “As the Americans faced oppression from the British, many of them were greatly inspired by enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, and they believed in natural rights, leading to a movement with the American colonists that eventually called for independence and caused revolution.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common error was confusion or overgeneralized assertions about British policies. A common error was an assertion that colonists always wanted independence or that independence was the only option colonists considered in the period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses provided historically accurate specifics about revolutionary events. “The Tea Act was designed to undercut smugglers and effectively lowered the cost of tea in the colonies, but monopolized tea purchasing.” “Women helped in carrying out the protest—they are the ones who actually implement the boycotts of tea, etc.” Better responses showed the change over time from loyalty to rebellion. “The Olive Branch Petition demonstrates the hesitancy of many colonists to declare independence even up to 1776.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common error was to lump all colonial societies and colonists together and assert they were the same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses provided clarity about regional differences. “New England specialized more in commerce and trade while Southern colonies specialized in cash crops like tobacco. The British acts and policies impacted them differently because of this. For example, the ending of salutary neglect was more difficult for the New England merchants than the southern tobacco plantations.” “With that being said, not everyone felt disdain for Britain. There were actually many who were loyal to the mother country. These colonists were known as the Loyalists or Tories. These Loyalists believed that Britain was necessary for survival and that Britain was actually helping the 13 colonies. These colonists became branded as traitors and became the targets of many attacks by radical patriot groups, such as the Sons of

	<p>Liberty. The rebellions aforementioned not only affected Britain and her economy but also affected Loyalists and their lives. These differences in beliefs about Britain caused chaos, division, and violence.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The colonies had already formed their own colonial legislatures before this time period and were angry at the British Parliament for taking powers from them, like taxing goods the local assemblies were already taxing.”
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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 often struggled with chronology.
 - Teachers could make a game of “Road to Rebellion” by having students work in groups to come up with their top three most important events that led to the Declaration of Independence with explanations of why they are important. After the small group work, teachers could then lead a whole class debate about the events and see which group is most persuasive about their picks. Teachers could do an exercise that asks students to write down what they think is the most important turning point of the revolutionary period, after which there is no going back. Then discuss with the class the different turning points identified and why students think some events are more critical than others. This can help students understand nuance and how the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain had multiple fractures of varying depth. This can also help with chronology.

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 2.8: Daily Video in AP Classroom reviews 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: 19th-Century Growth of Political Parties

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 2.66

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Responses to this prompt were expected to evaluate the extent to which changes in debates over the role of the federal government contributed to the growth of political parties from 1800 to 1854.
- Responses needed to address the theme of Politics and Power (PCE) and demonstrate an understanding of the role that governmental decisions had in causing the creation of political parties in the early 19th Century. Responses were expected to demonstrate an understanding of debates about government which could include: the influence of government decisions on the economy, foreign policy and war, western expansion, and the institution of slavery.
- Responses also needed to connect how such debates led to the development of the political parties, such as the First and Second Party Systems between 1800–1854.
- The question expected students to be able to demonstrate the historical reasoning process of causation. Responses needed to show a cause-and-effect relationship between debates over government and political parties.
- This prompt specifically addressed the following content from the Course and Exam Description: Topics 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.12, and 4.13.

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 succeeded in making a historically defensible thesis statement relevant to the prompt. Many responses focused on the size and scope of the federal government or the role of the federal government in promoting business, western expansion, or slavery as a line of reasoning.
- Responses demonstrated generally successful examples of contextualization of the topic of the prompt. Many responses identified the specific historical events and developments that situated the response within the broader historical context of the politics of the early 19th century.
- Responses demonstrated knowledge of the disagreements in the size and scope of the national government that occurred in the aftermath of the American Revolution. Responses were particularly able to show how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation caused the need for a stronger national government under the Constitution.
- Additionally, responses were able to establish the political divisions that emerged from debates over the power of the federal government under the Constitution, including debates over the Elastic Clause, Hamilton's Financial Plan, and the federal government's response to the Whiskey Rebellion.
- Responses demonstrated familiarity with debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists.
- Responses clearly understood that the creation of political factions and parties under Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson ran counter to George Washington's admonition in his Farewell Address to avoid the creation of factions or parties for the sake of national unity.
- Responses were mostly able to identify two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. However, many examples of this specific historical evidence came from the period of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. While Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton's political debates started in the late 18th century, the ripple effects of those debates bled over into the early 19th century. To that end, much of the specific evidence found in responses consisted of the ongoing debates

between Federalists and “Anti-Federalists” (read: Democratic or Jeffersonian Republicans) over the Bank of the United States or the protective tariff. Much of the successful evidence centered on the Jefferson and Madison presidencies with discussions of the debates over the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the Hartford Convention as a cause of the death of the Federalist Party.

- More sophisticated responses were able to illustrate the political divisions between the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans at the time of Thomas Jefferson’s presidency after the “Revolution of 1800” and the political realignment that occurred after the 1828 election of Andrew Jackson in the aftermath of the “Corrupt Bargain” of 1824 with the emergence of the Democrats and the Whigs. Additionally, responses were more successful when they recognized multiple factors causing the emergence of political parties, such as the government’s role in promoting western expansion through Manifest Destiny, which led to politically sectional debates over Missouri and Texas statehood. The more successful responses carried their discussion of political parties to the end of the timeframe (1854) when the debates over slavery in the West after the Mexican War and the passage of the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act resulted in the formation of the Republican Party.
- While responses demonstrated the ability to identify specific evidence relevant to the prompt, many did not use that evidence in support of an argument relevant to the prompt. Successful responses that earned the second evidence point used examples like debates over the tariff and the national bank to explain why the Jeffersonians opposed those issues and why the Federalists were in favor of them. Additionally, responses that successfully supported an argument relevant to the prompt recognized the divisions caused by Henry Clay’s American System or Andrew Jackson’s opposition to the Second Bank of the United States.
- Some responses successfully used analysis and historical reasoning skills to frame an argument relevant to the prompt that established the cause or effect of government action on the status of a political party. For example, several responses pointed to the Hartford Convention and the Federalist opposition to James Madison’s foreign policy as a cause of the party’s decline. Additionally, the opposition to Andrew Jackson was used as a cause for the formation of the Whig Party in the 1830s. A relative few carried their response to the end of the time frame to state how debates over slavery in western territories, especially after the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, caused the rise of the Republican Party.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some responses began with a sophisticated thesis and consistently followed through with 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. Some responses demonstrated a complex understanding, such as a discussion of the Era of Good Feelings as a modification to the political divisions of the era, with a discussion that the Era of Good Feelings was a temporary respite until the emergence of the Second Party System. Other complex arguments could be found in nuanced discussions of the political motivations of Andrew Jackson and his rivals Henry Clay or John C. Calhoun.

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 simply repeated the wording of the prompt as their thesis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong responses utilized a clear line of reasoning for their thesis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “While the acquisition of territories to expand the United States contributed to some political debate, the issue of whether the federal government should allow slavery to expand into new territories was the primary cause of political party growth from 1800 to 1854.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses demonstrated lapses in chronological understanding. Responses were limited to discussions of the period right before the year 1800 without understanding the broad scope of political history that occurred between 1800 and 1854. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses recognized that the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Constitutional debates and the debates between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson were the precursors to political debates of the 1800s. “Disagreement over the powers of the central government that began during the period of the Articles of Confederation persisted even after the United States Constitution was ratified, contributing to debates over economic policy and the formation of political parties.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses struggled with accurate descriptions and the use of key pieces of evidence. Responses often conflated the details of the Compromise of 1820, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, or conflated the Democrats and Federalists as well as other political parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong responses were clear and accurate in their use of evidence. “Henry Clay supported using federal funds to construct internal improvements like canals and roads through the American System.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses attempted to earn the complexity point by using historical developments outside the time period but were unable to make relevant and insightful connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses understood how to make relevant and insightful connections to other time periods. For example, one response explained how the debate over slavery expanded west and caused the acceleration of Republican Party growth. The response demonstrates that federal involvement in the slavery issue caused sectional tension and, ultimately, a Civil War with the election of Lincoln in 1860.

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 often struggled to craft a thesis with a claim and a line of reasoning.
 - Teachers can do a writing exercise where they give students a prompt and a claim and ask students to come up with at least two lines of reasoning relevant to the claim. Then teachers

- can lead a larger class discussion about the various lines of reasoning and group them on the board to demonstrate the multiple ways to develop a thesis.
- Teachers can give students practice prompts from AP Classroom or past exams, or teacher-generated prompts derived from Course and Exam Description language, then give students three pieces of relevant evidence. Teachers could then ask students to draw a conclusion from the evidence and practice writing a thesis statement in response to the prompt.
 - Some students did not even attempt contextualization partly because of chronological confusion.
 - Students could engage in classroom activities that ask them to take several pieces of historical evidence and place them in the correct order chronologically.
 - Students could work in a Pair and Share exercise where they are given a time period and use their textbooks to identify context before, during, and after that time period.
 - Many of the attempts to incorporate evidence seen in responses to this prompt were out of chronological order or were substituting one political party name for another (e.g., Anti-Federalists for Democratic-Republicans). Additionally, many times responses relied on general commentary rather than specificity.
 - Teachers can have students practice using elements of the Course and Exam Description to identify and define relevant specific evidence that would help address that element.
 - Teachers can guide students to present evidence more explicitly in their responses by using phrases like “For example...” or “A specific example of ‘x’ is...” This could be an exercise with a second draft of a practice essay.
 - Teachers can encourage students to go beyond identifying and describing evidence by explaining what the evidence demonstrates, reveals, or proves. This could also be an exercise with a second draft of a practice essay.

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 4: 1800–1848 and Period 5: 1844–1877, which address the content and skills related to this question.
- The 4.7: Daily Video 2 and 5.6 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 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: Civil Rights Activism

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 2.73

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were asked to evaluate the extent to which the growth of civil rights activism contributed to changes in government action between 1940 and 1980.
- Students were expected to display an understanding of civil rights activism. Many responses focused on the African American freedom struggle, but others incorporated an understanding of women's, Latino, Native American, Asian American, and LGBTQ+ movements as well.
- Students were expected to identify patterns or connections among a variety of events in the realm of civil rights. This was done by either focusing on patterns or connections within one movement or by drawing connections among multiple movements during the time period. Students drew on similar tactics used by different movements or highlighted the shifts in strategy within a movement after a period of governmental or societal resistance.
- Students had to accurately integrate broad historical movements or events to respond to the question. Many students achieved this by drawing connections with a variety of topics, primarily in Unit 8. Students often referred to the challenges to freedom and the establishment of segregation following the abolition of slavery, the increase in nativism and racism following the First World War, or the different levels of impact of New Deal programs on demographic groups if they were focusing on the context before the time period. Students often referred to the impact of the Second World War at home and abroad on different demographics, the role of the Red Scare and increasing tensions with the Soviet Union, the rise of youth activism and challenges to conformity, the increasing presence of the federal government, or the shift in political party dominance if they were focusing on the context within the time period. Students drew on the impacts of the rise of conservatism, the AIDS crisis, the end of the Cold War, and modern examples of women's and minority issues for context after the time period.
- For this question, students were expected to describe and explain the effects that growing civil rights activism had on governmental actions. To earn points, students had to demonstrate an understanding of what the executive, legislative, and judicial functions of government were and how they were utilized in the time period. After identifying relevant government functions, students had to provide specific examples of what those functions were to earn points for Analysis and Reasoning. This had to be above the level of generic descriptions of enforcing, passing, or ruling on civil rights laws. This required specificity, such as identifying presidential orders, specific legislation, or Supreme Court cases relevant to civil rights. Students had to corroborate, modify, or qualify an argument in order to demonstrate a complex understanding. Students often did this by analyzing multiple variables in the forms of different rights (public action, voting, and economic/educational opportunity). Students made connections within and across time periods but more often drew on youth culture and the idea of a society in transition to earn the point. Students could corroborate by analyzing state and federal governments and their responses to civil rights activism.

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 interpreted “extent to which” to mean how much and thought a thesis that said, essentially, “a lot” was a creditable thesis. They did not understand that “to what extent” was supposed to lead them to specific categories or instances of government action.
- Many responses earned the first Analysis and Reasoning point but did not extend their claim to develop their argument further. Stronger responses framed arguments using historical reasoning and connected that framing to a broader discussion using supporting details.
- Responses seemed to indicate an understanding that there were a variety of options for contextualization and used contextual information from before, during, and after the time prompt appropriately.
- A key problem was a struggle to connect civil rights activism to government action. Some responses misunderstood the question and made their thesis statement completely about civil rights activism without a connection to government action. Other responses contained overly vague phrases such as “the government promoted equality” or “the government encouraged civil rights,” thus not demonstrating an understanding of government actions.
- Responses reflected knowledge of civil rights activism, especially African American Civil Rights activism, but occasionally placed disparate historical individuals together in the same time frame.
- Responses often described that slavery did not exist, but legal and extra-legal techniques of oppression, especially segregation, operated in the American South at the beginning of the time period of the prompt.
- Responses often contained arguments that one civil rights-related activity led to another civil rights-related activity (i.e., Rosa Parks on the bus led to the Montgomery bus boycott or the Montgomery bus boycott leading to the end of segregation on the buses as a result of economic pressure) instead of showing how civil rights activism led to government action.
- The complexity point was earned in many ways. Some responses 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.

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 problem was that responses focused on the expansion of civil rights movements rather than showing a cause and effect between civil rights activism and government response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better responses argued that civil rights activism led to the government passing legislation to protect the voting rights of African Americans and equal funding in education for women.• Responses noted that the violence that emerged from the Little Rock 9’s attempt to integrate the school led President Eisenhower to send federal troops to enforce desegregation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common area of confusion was chronology. Responses confused the timeframe of different elements of the women's rights movement, focusing on evidence outside of the time period, such as the 19th Amendment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses came up with evidence within the time frame such as the formation of the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) and pushing for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common problem was that responses did not differentiate between government action at the state versus federal levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses had distinctions between federal and state governments. "Pressure by the NAACP led to the Supreme Court's ruling in <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, which declared "Separate but Equal" unconstitutional in Public Education. In response to this, Southern states attempted to limit the Brown decision by removing funds from Public Schools."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses had some chronological confusion around LGBTQ+ activism and included events from outside of the time period, such as the AIDS crisis and the enforcement of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better responses used evidence from the time period specified by the prompt. "Following the Stonewall Uprising, the Gay Liberation Front was founded and began pushing for legislation to protect the rights of openly gay Americans."

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 who struggled to get the thesis point often did not fully understand the question. Prepare students to break a question like this into component parts and generate a list of types of activism separate from (or showing causation for) a list of government actions. This would point the students in the direction of a claim and an organizational structure that would make their response more likely to achieve the point. A chart listing three rows for students to brainstorm something like:
 - Montgomery Bus Boycott = local desegregation of public transportation.
 - Brown v. Board of Education* = desegregation of schools, including Little Rock.
 - The standoff around Little Rock = Eisenhower's deployment of troops.
 - The events of Bloody Sunday = LBJ's announcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
 - Such a chart would make the structure of a successful response look clearer to the students.
- Students who struggled to earn the contextualization point frequently used simple references to slavery (as far back as 1619), the Civil War, or emancipation, but only as a passing reference. Responses seeking to describe the women's rights movement made oversimplified references to Abigail Adams or Seneca Falls.
 - Teachers could give students a specific historical event and have half the class do a short writing exercise describing the context immediately before that event, and the other half of the class do the same with context after the event. Then have a whole class discussion about context and add in questions about big picture context during that historical event.
- Students had trouble generating multiple examples of evidence.

- Teachers could do a Pair and Share exercise where they give the class a thesis statement and then ask students to individually come up with at least two pieces of evidence that support the thesis. Then they share with a partner, and then the whole class. Student responses showed that students know a lot of names, dates, facts, and events related to the civil rights movements of the mid-20th century, but there were some instances of chronological confusion.
 - Teachers can play the “Six Degrees of Separation” game with civil rights. Teachers give small groups or the whole class two chronological endpoints, such as *Plessy v. Ferguson* at the beginning and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 at the end, then ask students to find four events in between that are linked. Teachers should be encouraged to instruct students how to “stack” their pieces of evidence so that they connect to an argument being made in response to the prompt. In the case of this question, students were successful when they could connect a specific example of activism to a specific government action that resulted from that activism. Responses that did not achieve the second evidence point may have included examples of both activism and government action but lacked specificity when it came to the connection between the two.
- Many student responses attempted to show both changes and continuities in the types of civil rights activism (including nonviolent civil disobedience and violent protests) or between groups of activists (including African Americans, Latino/a Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and members of the LGBTQ+ community), but only described a change or a continuity and not both as would be required for a Complex Understanding of the topic.
 - Teachers could do a writing or discussion exercise where they give students two historical events separated by several years and ask students to first find a change between them. Then take the same two events and ask students to find continuity between them.

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 7: 1890–1945 and Period 8: 1945–1980, which address the content and skills related to this question.
- Among others, the 7.12: Daily Video 2, 8.10 Daily Videos 1 and 2, and 8.11 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 8 University Faculty Lecture video addresses 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/>