

Advanced Placement United States History Exam

Examination Format

The examination is three hours and five minutes in length. It consists of a 55-minute multiple-choice section and a 130-minute free response section. It will be held **on Friday, May 8, 2009** in the morning.

Multiple Choice - 50% of the examination grade

The multiple choice section consists of 80 questions designed to measure student's knowledge of American history from the first European explorations of the Americas to the present, **although the majority of the questions are on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.** Approximately one-sixth of the questions deal with the period through 1789, one-half with the period 1790-1914, and one-third with the period 1915 to the present.

The following is an approximate breakdown of the question subject matter.

35%	Political Institutions and Behavior and Public Policy
35%	Social Change
15%	Diplomacy and International Relations
10%	Economic Developments
5%	Cultural and Intellectual Developments

Note: A substantial number of the social and economic history questions deal with such traditional topics as the impact of legislation on social groups and the economy, or the pressures brought to bear on the political process by social and economic developments. Because historical inquiry is not neatly divided into categories, many questions pertain to more than one area.

The questions in the multiple-choice section are designed to test students' factual knowledge, breadth of preparation, and knowledge-based analytical skills. The distribution among themes, level of difficulty, and chronological periods are set at such a level that a candidate (that is YOU!) generally has to answer about 60% of the multiple choice questions correctly, in addition to writing effective essays, to receive a score of a 3.

The multiple-choice exam is scored by **crediting each correct answer with one point and deducting one-fourth of a point for each incorrect answer.** Unanswered questions receive neither a credit or a deduction. AP examinations have scoring adjustments to correct for random guessing. Each question has 5 answers. If the candidate cannot eliminate even one of the choices, there is little to gain from randomly guessing. If the candidate is fairly sure that even one of the choices is wrong, it may be worthwhile to answer the question. If the candidate is able to eliminate two or three choices as incorrect, the chance of gaining credit becomes even greater.

Free Response Essays 50% of the examination grade

This section is composed of three essay questions designed to measure the student's ability to write effective, coherent, intelligent, and well organized essays on a variety of historical topics. The essays require the student to demonstrate mastery of historical interpretation and the ability to express views and knowledge in writing. They may relate documents to different areas, analyze common themes of

different time periods, or compare individual and group experiences which reflect socioeconomic, racial, gender, and ethnic differences.

Part A consists of a mandatory 15 minute reading period, followed by 45 minutes in which the candidate must answer a document-based question (DBQ). Parts B and C each include two standard essay questions that, with the DBQ, cover the period from the first European exploration of the Americas to the present. Students are required to answer one essay question in each part in a total of 70 minutes. Students are recommended to spend 5 minutes planning your essay and 30 minutes writing for each essay question selected in parts B and C.

In determining the score for the free-response section, the DBQ is weighted 45 percent while the two thematic essays are weighted 55 percent. **The entire free-response section counts for fifty percent of the final grade**

Document-Based Essay Questions (DBQ)

The primary purpose of the DBQ is to evaluate the candidate's ability to formulate and support an answer from documentary evidence. Documents vary in length and are selected to illustrate interactions and complexities within the material. The DBQ will typically require students to relate documents to a historical period or theme, and thus to focus on major periods and issues. For this reason, you **MUST INCORPORATE OUTSIDE INFORMATION** into your essay which is a requirement not asked of you in AP European History. **The DBQ is an exercise in both analysis and synthesis, not historical narrative. DO NOT SUMMARIZE OR SIMPLY PARAPHRASE THE DOCUMENTS. YOU MUST ANALYZE AND ANSWER THE QUESTION USING THE DOCUMENTS AND OUTSIDE INFORMATION!!**

Thematic Essay Questions

The free-response thematic essay questions provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate the range of skills and information mastered in the course in two broad interpretive essays. Answers to the standard essay questions will be judged on the strength of the thesis developed, the quality of historical argument, and the evidence offered in support of the argument. You must formulate a persuasive argument using historically relevant details, not list facts in a laundry-list fashion.