

2021

AP[®]

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AP[®] European History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Long Essay Question 2

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Question 2: Long Essay Question, Effects of the Printing Press

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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 most significant effect of the printing press during the period 1450 to 1650.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p>Row A Thesis/Claim (0–1 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</p>		
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <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>Do not focus on the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The most significant factor affecting the development of the printing press was the demand for religious texts during the Reformation.”</i> <p>Do not provide a historically defensible claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The most significant effect of the printing press in the period 1450–1650 was to encourage governments to create mass public education systems.”</i> <p>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Gutenberg’s development of the printing press was so significant, it even led to an edition of the Bible being named for him.”</i> <p>Restate the prompt or are overgeneralized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The printing press had an enormous effect on early modern Europe.”</i> • <i>“The printing press allowed ideas to spread faster.”</i> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the most significant effect of the printing press in the period 1450–1650. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reasoning for making that claim OR establish the analytic categories of the argument. <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The most significant effect of the printing press in the period was the spread of knowledge beyond a narrow intellectual elite, resulting in major religious and social changes.”</i> <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 effect of the printing press was its ability to rapidly spread new religious and scientific ideas, like heliocentrism, to a large part of Europe’s population.”</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“During the sixteenth century, the most significant impact of the printing press was the spread of Protestant ideas during the Reformation.”</i> (Minimally acceptable thesis/claim) </td> </tr> </table>			<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>Do not focus on the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The most significant factor affecting the development of the printing press was the demand for religious texts during the Reformation.”</i> <p>Do not provide a historically defensible claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The most significant effect of the printing press in the period 1450–1650 was to encourage governments to create mass public education systems.”</i> <p>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Gutenberg’s development of the printing press was so significant, it even led to an edition of the Bible being named for him.”</i> <p>Restate the prompt or are overgeneralized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The printing press had an enormous effect on early modern Europe.”</i> • <i>“The printing press allowed ideas to spread faster.”</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the most significant effect of the printing press in the period 1450–1650. 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<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			
<p>Row B Contextualization (0–1 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.</p>		
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <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>Provide an overly generalized attempt at contextualization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“There were numerous reasons why Europeans needed more written material and books in the 1400s.”</i> • <i>“Before the printing press, ideas didn’t spread easily.”</i> <p>Provide a passing phrase or reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1400s.”</i> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately describe a context relevant to the effects of the printing press in the period 1450–1650. <p>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased commercial activity and urbanization • Medieval church’s effective control of most book production • Growing interest in classical texts during the Renaissance • Discontent with the Catholic Church • Only elites were literate and educated • Protestant Reformation • Hand copying of books before the printing press <p>Examples of acceptable contextualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Prior to the invention of the printing press, most books were produced by members of the Catholic Church, which could largely control the spread of ideas.”</i> • <i>“At the same time the printing press was being developed, there was mounting criticism against many aspects of the Catholic Church.”</i> </td> </tr> </table>			<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>Provide an overly generalized attempt at contextualization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“There were numerous reasons why Europeans needed more written material and books in the 1400s.”</i> • <i>“Before the printing press, ideas didn’t spread easily.”</i> <p>Provide a passing phrase or reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1400s.”</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately describe a context relevant to the effects of the printing press in the period 1450–1650. <p>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased commercial activity and urbanization • Medieval church’s effective control of most book production • Growing interest in classical texts during the Renaissance • Discontent with the Catholic Church • Only elites were literate and educated • Protestant Reformation • Hand copying of books before the printing press <p>Examples of acceptable contextualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Prior to the invention of the printing press, most books were produced by members of the Catholic Church, which could largely control the spread of ideas.”</i> • <i>“At the same time the printing press was being developed, there was mounting criticism against many aspects of the Catholic Church.”</i>
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<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		
<p>Row C Evidence (0–2 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</p>	<p>2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			

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			

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	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.
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Mandatory
Question 1

Question 2

Choose one
Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Prior to the 15th century, literature was available only to the elite upper class. Monks copiously copied classical texts, as well as medieval literature, thus preserving the Greek and Roman works that would fuel the Renaissance. Given the scarcity of the written word, the invention of the Gutenberg printing press truly revolutionized society. The most significant effect of the printing press from 1450 to 1650 is arguably the spread of Protestant ideals, which brought both ^{religious} ~~political~~ and ^{political} ~~religious~~ upheaval.

Before the invention of the printing press, the Bible was almost exclusively limited to the church, which stood as the sole authority of scripture. ~~The church anti-clericalism, corruption, and pluralism.~~ However, the church corrupt church practices, like the selling of indulgences and pluralism to accumulate wealth, caused people to begin questioning their faith in the church. Martin Luther's 95 Theses, a reaction to the sale of indulgences, hit upon popular discontent. Luther's view spread through Europe, as the printing press printed his works in vernacular languages. As a result of this spread of ideas, people began to follow Luther's teachings — to make education more widely available so that others could read the Bible, and to preach in vernacular languages. The spread of Luther's ideals gave rise to other Protestant sects, like Calvinism, Anabaptism, and Presbyterians. Calvinist, Anabaptist, and Presbyterian works also spread with the help of the printing press, ~~sparking~~ the enflaming the Protestant Reformation, which, without the printing press, would have had a significantly lessened impact.

The printing press not only capitalized on religious unrest, but also resulted in political change. Inspired by the works of Martin Luther and disgruntled by manorialism, German peasants revolted and demanded

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

~~increas~~ greater rights on the basis of scripture. The German Peasants' Revolt was one of numerous political uprisings. ~~the~~ The Anabaptists, for instance, captured the city of Münster to build a New Jerusalem, though Catholic and Lutheran forces quickly reclaimed Münster and executed the Anabaptist leaders. Meanwhile, the printing press spread news of the Peace of Augsburg, which declared Lutheranism a legally permissible creed. Leaders of German states within the Holy Roman Empire also read Protestant works. Those who adopted Protestantism may have used the new religion as a cloak for political dissent, claiming sovereignty over papal and monarchical authority. The Thirty Years' War, begun over religious differences, ~~devastated~~ wrought devastating death tolls and involved not only the German states and the Holy Roman Empire, but also the countries of Sweden, Denmark, Bohemia, and France. Widespread communication which would have increased military advantage, was also brought about by the printing press. The Peace of Westphalia reestablished peace, declared Calvinism a legally permissible creed, and also ushered in ~~an~~ an era of political wars fought over a balance of power. The printing press not only informed Europe of ongoing political and religious issues, but also served as a military ^{asset} ~~asset~~ ~~and monarchical~~ ~~asset~~, as monarchs could issue decrees.

The printing press made the Protestant Reformation possible, and from it, the religious and political changes that ensued. While the Catholic Reformation could serve as a potential qualification, ~~that~~ as Catholics also spread their works through the printing press to counter Protestant ideals, it can be argued that, by then, ~~the~~ the printing press' spread of Protestant works was already so extensive

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

that no degree of papal control could ~~quell~~ ~~the~~ douse the spark that had already been lit. ~~the printing press~~ The impact of the printing press is almost incomparable to any other invention, except the internet, which also revolutionized communication. ~~to~~ To conclude, the impact of the printing press was profound, ~~a~~ most importantly, in the protestant reformation.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

As the Renaissance began to spread out from Italy, its ideas spread with it and became more commonplace. In the Northern Renaissance especially, increasing emphasis was placed on Christianity, reform, and common people. Ultimately this culminated with Martin Luther posting his 95 theses in 1517. Around the same time Machiavelli was ~~writing~~ outlining how to rule effectively in *The Prince*. Although the printing press allowed for mass publication of a variety of books, the most significant effect of the printing press is the spread of Lutheranism, and more broadly, Protestantism.

Martin Luther's ideas were met with heavy opposition from the Catholic church. At the start of wars, Luther is excommunicated from the church after failing to recant. The Catholic church also bans Lutheranism in the Holy Roman Empire, keeping Catholicism as the only religion. If these events had happened in the ~~late~~ 1100s or 1200s, that may have been the end of Lutheranism. But, because of the printing press, Luther's ideas and messages were spread all across central Europe. Unfortunately, the conflict between Catholic and Protestant hung around until the late 1800s, but Luther's ~~theses~~ theses were necessary. Both to halt the corruption of

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

the Catholic church, and to offer another religion for people to follow. Lutheranism wouldn't have been spread without the printing press increasing both literacy and access to ~~the~~ written ideas.

The printing press was not solely used for religious texts, however. Many pamphlets and how-to books ~~were~~ were also published, in addition to the plethora of philosophical works. Ultimately, there did not have as profound an effect on ^{larger} society.

While the printing press was beneficial for the overall spread of information, many of these pamphlets and ideas ultimately ~~went out of style~~ faded out of ~~popular~~ daily life. Lutheranism has stuck around to this day, which is the reason why the printing press's most significant effect was the spread of Lutheranism.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The most significant effect of the printing press was by far the ability to copy books, scrolls, letters, ~~etc~~ and any other source they wanted, quickly and efficiently. Before the printing press, books and literature were for the rich because there was not a fast way to copy them besides hand-writing them over and over. After the invention of the printing press thousands of copies of books, letters, and articles could be made quickly, allowing for many ~~copies~~ different books to be available for everyone since the prices of books went down now that there were more copies available. This effected society around the world greatly by allowing different versions of books like the bible to be made and it effected the economy of almost every country greatly. Books became popular around the world and became a common household item. The printing press also increased peoples reading skills greatly, allowing for everyday people to become more sophisticated. overall, the

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Printing Press is arguably one of the most effective inventions in history, and changed the world.

Question 2 — Long Essay Question

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

Overview

The Long Essay Question (LEQ) asked students to formulate a thesis/claim in response to a prompt about a particular historical development or episode in European history. In 2021, each LEQ asked students to determine the most significant effect of historical events or processes in European history. LEQs require students to formulate arguments, utilize evidence, address historical context, and display an ability to employ historical reasoning skills.

In the case of LEQ 2, the question asked students to evaluate the most significant effect of the printing press in Europe between 1450 and 1650 (Key Concept 1.4). Responses were expected to relate the topic of the prompt to the broader historical events, developments or processes that occurred before, during, or continued after the time frame specified in the prompt. Responses were expected to provide specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the effects of the printing press in the period 1450–1650 and to use this specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt. Responses were expected to demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or to structure an argument that addresses the prompt and, although the prompt directed students toward the historical reasoning process of causation, responses could also frame their arguments around other types of historical reasoning (comparison, continuity, and change over time).

Responses were expected to demonstrate a complex understanding of the effects of the printing press during the period 1450–1650. This demonstration of understanding could be achieved in various ways: for instance, by explaining that the spread of Protestant ideas during the Reformation was the most significant immediate effect of the printing press, while the rise of literacy had greater long-term effects or by evaluating the spread of subversive ideas. Also, the Protestant Reformation and new scientific concepts, such as heliocentrism, operated in tandem to disrupt the power of the Catholic Church. Responses were assessed on the extent to which they performed in the following four categories: thesis and/or claim, contextualization, evidence, and analysis and reasoning.

Sample: 2A

Score: 6

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 2

Analysis and Reasoning: 2

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis/claim because in the first paragraph it identifies the spread of Protestant ideas as the most significant effect of the printing press.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization because in the introduction it discusses the fact that prior to the invention of the printing press, manuscript texts were only available to elites and the Catholic Church.

Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

Providing Specific Examples of Evidence

The response earned 1 point for providing specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt because it discusses multiple pieces of evidence including the spread of the writings of Martin Luther, the use of printing in political and military communications, and the Catholic Church’s banning of books.

Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument

The response earned 1 point for using specific evidence in support of an argument because it uses evidence to support an argument about how the printing press led to the Protestant Reformation and the devastation of the religious wars, as well as showing how the banning of books by the Catholic Church served as evidence for the power of the written word.

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

Using Historical Reasoning

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument because it systematically demonstrates how the Protestant Reformation was a consequence of the invention of the printing press.

Demonstrating Complex Understanding

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating a complex understanding because it provides a nuanced understanding of different ways that print affected the intertwined religious, political, and military history of the period.

Sample: 2B

Score: 4

Thesis/Claim: 1

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: 1

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis/claim because in the first paragraph it identifies the spread of Protestantism as the most significant effect of the printing press.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization because of the discussion of the Renaissance at the outset of the essay. The discussion of the Protestant Reformation throughout also serves as context.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1

Providing Specific Examples of Evidence

The response earned 1 point for providing specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt

Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

because the response discusses two pieces of relevant evidence—the spread of Luther’s ideas through printing and the spread of nonreligious pamphlets.

Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument

The response did not earn the point for using specific evidence in support of an argument because it only connects the evidence related to the spread of Luther’s ideas through printing to an argument about the effects of the printing press.

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

Using Historical Reasoning

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument because it demonstrates how the Protestant Reformation was a consequence of the invention of the printing press.

Demonstrating Complex Understanding

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because it does not use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify its argument.

Sample: 2C

Score: 1

Thesis/Claim: 0

Contextualization: 1

Evidence: 0

Analysis and Reasoning: 0

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for thesis/claim because it does not make a historically specific claim that establishes a line of reasoning about the most significant effect of the printing press.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization because it discusses the fact that prior to the invention of the printing press, books were only for the rich because they were so difficult to copy.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 0

Providing Specific Examples of Evidence

The response did not earn the point for providing specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt because it only provides one piece of specific evidence, the reduction of the price of books with the introduction of the printing press. The mention of many different versions of the Bible is not specific enough to have earned the point because it does not note that the Bible was becoming available in vernacular languages.

Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument

The response did not earn the point for using specific evidence in support of an argument because it does not offer sufficient evidence in support of an argument about the impact of the printing press.

Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

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

Using Historical Reasoning

The response did not earn the point for using historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument because it does not use historical reasoning such as comparison, causation, or continuity and change to frame or structure an argument in response to the prompt.

Demonstrating Complex Understanding

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because it does not use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify its argument.