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# AP<sup>®</sup> World History: Modern

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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#### **Long Essay Question 2**

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## Question 2: Long Essay Question, Economic and Commercial Practices in Afro-Eurasia

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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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.

In the period circa 1200–1450, commerce along exchange networks such as the Silk Roads, the Indian Ocean, and the trans-Saharan networks involved a number of new economic and commercial practices.

Develop an argument that evaluates the extent to which developments in economic and/or commercial practices in Afro-Eurasia affected trade in this period.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis/Claim</b>  <b>(0–1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are not historically defensible.</li> <li>• Only restate or rephrase the prompt.</li> <li>• Do not respond to the prompt.</li> <li>• Do not establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>• Are overgeneralized.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the extent to which economic or commercial practices in Afro-Eurasia affected trade in the period circa 1200–1450, with some indication of the reasoning for making that claim.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do not focus on the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The expansion of empires increased trade in Afro-Eurasia.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“New commercial practices affected trade in Afro-Eurasia in the period 1200–1450.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning, but do not provide a historically defensible claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The establishment of joint-stock companies in Afro-Eurasia in the period 1200–1450 greatly increased trade because they allowed investors to pool large amounts of capital.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“New commercial practices such as letters of credit greatly increased trade in Afro-Eurasia because they made it easier for merchants to purchase goods.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The development of new forms of credit and the formation of cooperative commercial partnerships were the most significant factors in expanding trade in Afro-Eurasia in the period 1200–1450.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Trade increased because of the spread of new commercial infrastructure.”</i> (Minimally acceptable thesis/claim)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row B</b> <b>Contextualization</b>  (0–1 points)</p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.</p>
<p><b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b></p>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt.</li> <li>Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt.</li> <li>Provide a passing phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately describe a context relevant to commercial practices in Afro-Eurasia in the period circa 1200–1450.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Provide an overly generalized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The period 1200–1450 was a time of great change all over Eurasia as empires rose and fell.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide historically inaccurate contextualization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The Portuguese and Spanish voyages of exploration fundamentally changed the economy and trade in Eurasia during this period.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The establishment of large empires, such as the Mongols and the Empire of Mali</li> <li>The growth of cities across Afro-Eurasia</li> <li>The increasing commercialization of states such as Song China</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of acceptable contextualization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The Mongols established an empire that stretched from China to Eastern Europe, giving them control of the Silk Roads and the ability to dictate terms of trade.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
<p><b>Row C Evidence</b> <b>(0–2 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the <b>topic</b> of the prompt.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> Supports an <b>argument</b> in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
<p><b>Responses that do not earn points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a single piece of evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of prompt.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt.</li> <li>Repeat information that is specified in the prompt.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Identify at least two specific historical examples</u> relevant to developments in economic or commercial practices in Afro-Eurasia in the period circa 1200–1450.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Use at least two specific historical examples</u> to support an argument regarding how economic or commercial practices in Afro-Eurasia affected trade in the period circa 1200–1450.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn points:</b></p> <p><b>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt.</b> <i>“The trans-Saharan trade routes were vital for the growth of the Mali Empire.”</i></p>		<p><b>Examples of evidence that are specific and relevant include the following (two examples required):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific technologies that facilitated increased trade such as the camel saddle and the dhow</li> <li>Economic practices such as the use of camel caravans to transport goods</li> <li>The development of commercial partnerships in the Mediterranean region and the Indian Ocean</li> <li>The development of the <i>ortaq</i> system under the Mongols to facilitate commerce across Eurasia</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The development of specific commercial practices such as banking or issuing bills of exchange, letters of credit, or paper money occurred in this period.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The establishment of specific commercial infrastructure such as caravanserais, ports, and postal relay stations greatly facilitated trade along major trade routes during this period, by providing safe resting stations for merchants or speeding up written communications between traders living in different cities.”</i> (Uses multiple, specific pieces of evidence to support the argument that new economic and commercial practices affected trade in Afro-Eurasia during the period circa 1200–1450)</li> <li><i>“New commercial practices emerged during this period as merchants tried to manage the risks of long-distance trade. For example, the Mongol ortaq system involved merchants forming partnerships that involved cooperation both in the actual trade of goods and in the financing of trading voyages. Likewise, in the Italian city-states, new financial practices gave rise to commercial banking and letters of credit.”</i> (Uses multiple, specific pieces of evidence to support the argument that new economic and commercial practices affected trade in Afro-Eurasia during the period circa 1200–1450)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization.</li> <li>If a response has a multipart argument, then it can meet the threshold of two pieces of evidence by giving one example for one part of the argument and another example for a different part of the argument, but the total number of examples must still be at least two. (For example, changes in commercial practices affected trade more significantly in some regions than others; changes in commercial practices significantly affected trade across all of Afro-Eurasia.)</li> </ul>			

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
<p><b>Row D</b> <b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>  <b>(0–2 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Uses historical reasoning (e.g., comparison, causation, continuity and change) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> 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.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Illustrating that the introduction of new economic practices did not always significantly impact trade in some regions because the positive economic effects of the introduction of new practices were sometimes negated by political events such as war. For instance, a response could highlight the rise in prosperity that occurred in the Mongol Empire, while qualifying the argument by noting the destructiveness of the Mongol conquests—the sack of Baghdad for instance—and how this destruction harmed economies and trade in the short term. (Qualifies an argument)</li><li>• Demonstrating how the introduction of the same new economic practice in different regions led to increased trade in both regions. For instance, a response could discuss how the development of letters of credit in Europe and China led to economic growth in Song China and during the Italian Renaissance. (Corroborates an argument, considers both causes and effects)</li></ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li></ul>			

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.

In the early 1000's to 1450 many new empires started to become interconnected. The Abbasid Caliphate and Song China traded with ~~each~~ each other regularly, promoting the diffusion of ideas and technology. These large states also traded with smaller Indian states. ~~and~~ Even African nations such as Ghana traded with the Abbasids. Combined, all this connection through all of Afro-Eurasia set the stage for lots of ideas being spread everywhere quickly. The developments of new economic practices affected trade in Afro-Eurasia to a massive extent because of the increase in trade caused by new technology and new systems of trade.

Most of the new technology that caused a boom in trade was sebased technology. The invention of the Astrolabe allowed sailors to calculate their latitude at night when they viewed the stars. The magnetic compass allowed sailors to ~~always~~ always know where they were. These new inventions helped sailors to be able to find their exact positioning, which made maritime trade safer. New sailing techniques ~~and~~ and shipbuilding innovations allowed more efficient trade. Once monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean were charted, trade flourished because of merchants' ability to surely go back and forth between ~~East~~ East Africa and India via the Indian Ocean. With the invention of the junk ship and dhow ships, merchants could bring more goods back and forth between areas. Since these ships came from different ~~of~~ regions of the world, more merchants from more places had more contact causing more ~~interregional~~ interregional trade.



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.

In addition to new maritime technology, new land based systems arose, facilitating trade. Along the Silk Road and in the Trans-Saharan trade routes, caravanserais, places for merchants to stop and spend the night at, were established. This led to trade growth across ~~other~~ regions, such as merchants travelling from the Middle East went all the way to Timbuktu safely through the caravanserai system. In addition to this, desire for luxury products helped facilitate and grow trade along the Silk Road and Trans-Saharan trade network. Finally, systems like the Abbasid Caliphate or periods like the Pax Mongolica helped trade flourish because of the safety and sponsorship they provided.

~~Because of new products and developments,~~  
Because of increased trade caused by new technology and new systems that facilitated trade, new developments of economic practices affected Afro-Eurasia to a great extent. Although most of these developments hardly reached Europe because of their feudalistic state, they still had a great impact on Europe once they got there. These developments that were only really in Africa and Asia helped trade flourish there, but once they reached Europe, the exact same thing happened. After Europe comes out of feudalism, the Age of Exploration starts. In this period, the Europeans travel all across the globe and involving themselves in large trade networks such as the Indian Ocean. This proves that while the developments took longer to reach some areas of Afro-Eurasia, they did in fact impact them all.

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.

Many commercial and economic practices have been adopted to make trade safer, more efficient, and much more profitable. ~~It~~ Inventions and ideas have been adopted to optimize the process of trade across the Silk Roads and Indian Ocean.

Economic practices have been ~~applied~~ best applied to land routes such as the Silk Roads and trans-Saharan networks. Creating a standardized currency between countries ~~is key to~~ provides a large step in making trade much more efficient. ~~A standardize~~ Beyond trade, a standardized currency also provides a group of countries with protection against monetary issues such as inflation. Countries were also able to establish some of the first forms of banks that provide promises of currency to merchants.

New commercial practices involving navigational technologies helped make sea-based trade routes such as the Indian Ocean route much safer and efficient. Lateen sails and stern rudders were installed on ships to help merchants travel quicker in the direction they want to go. Merchants were also able to carry compasses to help them navigate the large trade routes. By combining these three technologies, merchants were able to navigate sea-based trade routes with ease, speed, and safety. This increased the desire ~~to~~ for overseas trade which in return increased the amount of resources being imported and exported.

Trade across the Silk Roads, Indian Ocean, and trans-Saharan networks has been made much more profitable and safer as a result of new commercial and economic practices. From a standardized currency to lateen sails, trade between merchants has been made much easier and far more reliable across seas. Without new technologies being developed for trade, ~~that~~

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.

traveling through the seas would be close to impossible

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.

Developments in economic ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> commercial practices in Afro-Eurasia affected trade in the period circa 1200-1450 along exchange networks such as the Silk Road, the Indian Ocean and the trans-Saharan networks. For example developments in new or better transportation methods allowed better ways for merchants to travel and for better and more exports and imports from places. Making trade routes easier and just overall trade ~~the~~ easier and more convenient. Like the Indian Ocean trade network was hard to predict when is the best ~~way~~ time to travel so being able to predict the tides was less dangerous and faster to get to where <sup>merchants</sup> ~~merchants~~ wanted. Some other developments in economic or commercial practices are developments in manufacturing and labor, and other technology advancements.

## Question 2 — Long Essay Question

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

### Overview

Responses to this question were expected to demonstrate students' ability to analyze the role that economic and/or commercial practices played in affecting trade between 1200 and 1450 C.E. It prompted students to address topics included in 2.1: The Silk Roads, Topic 2.3; Exchange in the Indian Ocean, Topic 2.4; Trans-Saharan Trade Routes; and/or 2.7, Comparison of Economic Exchange in the AP World History Curriculum and Framework. The question was open geographically to allow responses about multiple regions and a time period that guided students to the topics listed above, but also open to student responses that demonstrated familiarity with developments in European trade toward the end of the period.

The question was designed to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the impact of economic and commercial practices on trade, and the students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context, use at least two specific examples of evidence, use the evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame an argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development. Students could use any historical thinking skill to demonstrate this understanding, and we saw successful responses that compared the developments of different trade routes, discussed effects of specific developments on individual trade routes, or evaluated the extent of the changes and impact on trade routes over time.

### Sample: 2A

#### Thesis: 1

#### Contextualization: 1

#### Evidence: 2

#### Analysis and Reasoning: 2

### Total Score: 6

#### A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned the point at the end of the first paragraph, by arguing that “new technology, and new systems of trade” affected trade in Afro-Eurasia to a “massive” extent.

#### B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned the point in the first paragraph for outlining the background of long-distance trade in Afro-Eurasia, mentioning trade between the “Abbasid Caliphate and Song China” as well as between these “large states” and Indian states and Ghana. The statement also mentions the “diffusion of ideas and technology” as an effect of the trade in this period.

#### C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point by identifying specific new technologies such as the astrolabe, magnetic compass, new sailing techniques, Chinese junks, Indian Ocean dhows, and caravanserais. There is additional evidence throughout the response.

The response earned the second evidence point by using the evidence it identifies in support of an argument about how new sea-based technologies caused a boom in trade. For example, the response explains, “Once monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean were charted, trade flourished because of merchants' ability to surely go back and forth between East Africa and India via the Indian Ocean.” There are several additional arguments

## Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

supported by evidence (for example, an argument that the Trans-Saharan trade grew because of the building of caravanserais).

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

The response earned the point for historical reasoning by using numerous arguments demonstrating how new commercial and economic developments led to historical change.

The response earned the point for demonstrating complex understanding through a nuanced discussion of multiple technologies and their impact on various world regions. The response also makes several insightful connections across historical contexts—for example, the response explains how periods of increased political support for trade such as the Pax Mongolica and the reign of the Abbasid Caliphate helped trade flourish. In the last paragraph the response shows how increases in trade contributed to the decline of feudalism in Europe and led to the age of European exploration, ultimately allowing Europeans to become directly involved in the Indian Ocean trade network.

### **Sample: 2B**

**Thesis: 1**

**Contextualization: 0**

**Evidence: 2**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 1**

**Total Score: 4**

### **A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned the point in the last two sentences, by stating, “From a standardized currency to lateen sails, trade between merchants has been made much easier and far more reliable across seas. Without new technologies ... traveling through the seas would be close to impossible.” This statement addresses a commercial/economic practice and an effect on trade. There is another attempt at thesis in the first sentence: “Many commercial and economic practices have been adopted to make trade safer, more efficient, and much more profitable. Inventions and ideas have been adopted to optimize the process of trade,” but it is not as well developed.

### **B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0**

The response did not earn the point. There is not a clear attempt to explain historical context.

### **C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2**

The response earned 1 point by identifying relevant evidence such as lateen sails, stern rudders, and compasses. There is also additional evidence (for example, a reference to standardized currency) later in the response.

The response earned the second evidence point by using the evidence provided in support of an argument that “navigational technologies helped make sea-based trade routes ... much safer and efficient.” There is also a secondary argument that new commercial and economic practices also made long distance trade “much more profitable,” but it is not well supported.

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

The response earned the point for historical reasoning by explaining changes that had an effect on trade due to new commercial practices, including navigational technologies. This is demonstrated in several places,

## Question 2 — Long Essay Question (continued)

including the third paragraph, where the response argues that “[b]y combining these three technologies, merchants were able to navigate sea-based trade routes with ease, speed, and safety. This increased the desire for overseas trade which in return increased the amount of resources being imported and exported.”

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating complex understanding. There is no complex or nuanced analysis of the evidence or insightful connections to other periods or historical contexts.

**Sample: 2C**

**Thesis: 1**

**Contextualization: 0**

**Evidence: 0**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 0**

**Total Score: 1**

### **A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned the point for the second sentence in the first paragraph: “For example developments in new or better transportation methods allowed better ways for merchants to travel and for better and more exports and imports from places.” This constitutes a minimally acceptable thesis because it references both commercial practices (“better transportation methods”) and its impact on trade (increased imports and exports). There is another thesis attempt in the last sentence, but it would not have earned the point because it addresses practices but not an effect on trade.

### **B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0**

The response did not earn the point. The attempt in the first sentence is a restatement of information found in the prompt.

### **C. Evidence (0–3 points): 0**

The response did not earn the point for using evidence. The only attempt is the last sentence, which makes a vague reference to developments in manufacturing, labor, and technology advancements but does not include specific examples.

The response did not earn the point for supporting an argument with evidence. There is an attempt to formulate an argument in this sentence: “Making trade routes easier and just overall trade easier,” but no specific evidence is used, and the argument is not fully developed.

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

The response did not earn the point for using historical reasoning. The only attempt to address an effect on trade is within the thesis.

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating complex understanding as it does not offer a complex understanding.