

2024

AP[®]



AP[®] African American Studies

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Short-Answer Question 4

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4. Respond to parts A, B, C, and D.

- a. Describe one aspect of a specific religious, spiritual, or faith tradition that was practiced in Africa before 1800.
- b. Describe an adaptation of an African religious, spiritual, or faith tradition by Afrodescendants in the Americas.
- c. Using a specific example from before 1865, explain how African Americans used religious, spiritual, or faith practices to resist oppression.
- d. Using a specific example from after 1865, explain how religious, spiritual, or faith practices contributed to activism during freedom movements.

Question 4: Non-Stimulus/Source**4 points**

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- (A) Describe one aspect of a specific religious, spiritual, or faith tradition that was practiced in Africa before 1800. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- The spiritual tradition that traces its roots to West Africa is the veneration of ancestors.
- Islam was brought to Mali through the trans-Saharan trade with North African merchants and scholars.
- Roman Catholicism was practiced in the Kingdom of Kongo after King Nzinga's conversion. Subjects of the kingdom blended indigenous practices with Christianity.
- King Ezana and the Kingdom of Askum converted to Christianity early on, and wide practice of Christianity followed.
- Polytheism, the belief in multiple deities, was widely practiced throughout Africa by peoples such as the Yoruba and Ashanti.
- Religious syncretism of African and Christian faith practices produced Vodun in its early form in West Africa during the Portuguese expeditions to Africa in the 15th century.
- Griots and Jelis served specific religious functions within their African tribes by preserving faith and tribal history through songs and storytelling.

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- (B) Describe an adaptation of an African religious, spiritual, or faith tradition by Afro-descendants in the Americas. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- Afro-descended people adapted Christian hymns with their spiritual and cultural practices like divination, and collective singing and dancing.
 - West African spiritual practices such as veneration of ancestors and divination were adapted and practiced across the African diaspora through religions such as Voodoo in Louisiana, and Vodun in Haiti.
 - Candomblé is a religion practiced in Brazil that combines spiritual practices of veneration from West Africa with Christianity.
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- The practice of Santeria or Regla de Ochafa in the western hemisphere blends West African religions with Roman Catholicism.

(C) Using a specific example from before 1865, explain how African Americans used religious, spiritual, or faith practices to resist oppression. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- Nat Turner, an enslaved African American, led a rebellion against slavery, was inspired by his religious belief that he should deliver African Americans from slavery.
- Many enslaved African Americans were inspired by resistance stories found in religious texts. For many their faith served spiritual and political purposes.
- Harriet Tubman, a well-known conductor of the Underground Railroad, helped free many African Americans from enslavement and oppression by using spirituals to alert people of escape plans.
- African Americans used spirituals as a way to resist oppression. Spirituals were sung to articulate their hardships and hopes for deliverance. They held double meanings of redemption and deliverance while also being used to help enslaved people escape North to free states and Canada.
- Frederick Douglass escaped enslavement to become a leading abolitionist. He used the bible as evidence in his abolitionist speeches and writings to strongly argue that slavery was amoral and violated the core of Christian principles.
- African Americans used the practice of Christian conversion and baptism to gain freedom and resist oppression in parts of colonial America, particularly the settlement of Spanish Florida.

(D) Using a specific example from after 1865, explain how religious, spiritual, or faith practices contributed to activism during freedom movements. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- During the Civil Rights era, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organized churches to launch major protests for equality. The SCLC was involved with the Selma Voting Rights March of 1965 and inspired the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to organize using nonviolent strategies.
 - During the Civil Rights movement, faith and music were important elements of mobilization. Freedom songs, adapted from spirituals and gospel songs, were used by organizers to inspire, and organize participants as they risked their lives in pursuit of freedom and equality.
 - Malcolm X and other ministers of the Nation of Islam founded *Muhammed Speaks*, the official newspaper of the organization. It was used to spread the teachings of
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Elijah Muhammad and to inspire people within Black American communities to embrace the Nation's religious and Black Nationalist ideologies.

- Christian missionary organizations drew upon their religious principles and social activism to help found HBCUs with a goal of social uplift for African Americans through formal education.
- Many Black churches established after the Civil War became places where activists gathered to organize and plan protests and demonstrations to push for equal treatment in society.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. used biblical passages and Christian principles during the Civil Rights movement to galvanize African Americans and white Christians in the fight against racism and oppression.

Total for question 4 4 points

One aspect of a specific religious, spiritual, or faith tradition that was practiced in Africa before 1800 is the Yoruba religion. The Yoruba people, primarily located in present-day Nigeria and Benin, practiced a polytheistic religion within a pantheon of gods and spirits. Central to their beliefs is the idea of *ashe*, a spiritual energy that connects all living things and has the power to bring about change and influence events.

An adaptation of an African religious, spiritual, or faith tradition by Afro-descendants in the Americas is Santería. Santería originated from the Yoruba religion and was brought to the Americas by African slaves, particularly to Cuba. In the Americas, it blended with elements of Roman Catholicism to form a syncretic religion. Santería retains the worship of Orishas, or Yoruba deities, but incorporates Christian saints and rituals.

Using a specific example from before 1865, African Americans used religious, spiritual, or faith practices to resist oppression through the formation of secret religious gatherings. For instance, during the time of slavery, African Americans held secret religious meetings in hidden locations such as the woods, where they would practice their traditional beliefs and incorporate Christian elements. These gatherings served as spaces for community building, resistance, and spiritual practices.

Using a specific example from after 1865, religious, spiritual, or faith practices contributed to activism during freedom movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., utilized Christian principles of nonviolent resistance and moral righteousness to mobilize African American communities and gain support for civil rights legislation. The involvement of churches and religious leaders in organizing protests, marches, and voter registration drives played a crucial role in the success of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was organized and sustained through the leadership of African American churches, demonstrating the power of religious faith in driving activism for social change.

A. In many parts of Africa Islam was a practiced religion. This was mostly due to Arabic influence in Africa and the ties between Arabic and African cultures. A great number of Africans were muslim before colonzation "forced" christianity on African communitites.

B. After Chrisianty was forced onto slaves in America, Black people adopted christianity while still keeping remnates of African influence. For example in black churches song and gosple is huge part of black churches. This takes infleunce from songs used in Africa to uplift and praise its higher power. Unknowingly Black people kept African religous pracitces alive by reforming christianity to include remnates of African deasent.

C. Black people spirital songs as a way to resist opperssion. Spirital songs provided Black people with a way to uplift themselves even in the darkest of times like slavery. Spirital songs helped black people not lose their pride or mental health. Spirital songs prevented the phycological damage needed in order to keep black people oppressed and subserveant to white people.

D. Black people used Chrisitanty as a way to difle slavery. Black people knew that chrisiantiy was not a justificaion for slavery so they used it as a way to prove slavery was unholy and unchristian. This untimtitly led to many christian white people understanding the hyporcisy of slavery in relation to chrisitaniy and led to the end of slavery all together. Black people recongized the hypocersy of white christans and used it as a tool to prove how unholy and evil slavery was.

A. One aspect of religious and spritual tradition that was practiced in Africa before 1800 was the practice of beliving in multiple gods. Each god in African faith varied depending on which tribe they were in. The gods were belived to have power over the land, skies, sea, and many other aspects. The African people would sometimes praise these gods in temples with valubles like gold and beads. Though there were tribes who belived in many god there were also tribes who belived in only one god.

Question 4 – Commentaries

Sample Identifier: 4A

Score: 4

- The response earned 1 point for Part A for describing the Yoruba religion and how “The Yoruba people, primarily located in present-day Nigeria and Benin, practiced a polytheistic religion within a pantheon of gods.”
- The response earned 1 point for Part B for accurately describing Santeria as an example of an existing faith tradition that was adapted into a new practice: “An adaptation of an African religious, spiritual, or faith tradition by Afro-descendants in the Americas is Santeria.”
- The response earned 1 point for Part C for explaining how religious gatherings served both as a faith practice and to aid in resisting oppression “through the formation of secret religious gatherings.” The response continues, explaining how “These gatherings served as spaces for community building, resistance, and spiritual practices.”
- The response earned 1 point for Part D for explaining how the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. “utilized Christian principles of nonviolent resistance and moral righteousness to mobilize African American communities and gain support for civil rights legislation.”

Sample Identifier: 4B

Score: 3

- The response earned 1 point for describing how “In many parts of Africa Islam was a practiced religion.” and before colonization “A great number of Africans were muslim.”
- The response earned 1 point for describing an adaptation by stating, “...Black people adopted Christianity while still keeping remnants of African influence.”
- The response earned 1 point for providing an example from before 1865, explaining how African Americans used religious, spiritual, or faith practices to resist oppression: “Black people spiritual songs as a way to resist oppression.” “Spiritual songs provided Black people with a way to uplift themselves even in the darkest of times like slavery.”
- The response did not earn a point for Part D as it fails to use a specific example from after 1865 to explain how religious, spiritual, or faith practices contributed to activism during freedom movements.

Sample Identifier: 4C

Score: 1

- This response earned 1 point for Part A by specifying the practice of polytheism: “One aspect of religious and spritual tradition that was practiced in Africa before 1800 was the practice of beliving in multiple gods.”
- The response did not earn any points for Parts B, C, and D.