

2024



AP[®] United States History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Question 3: Short Answer No Stimulus**3 points****General Scoring Notes**

- Each point is earned independently.
- **Accuracy:** These scoring guidelines require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 responses 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.
- **Describe:** Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic. Description requires more than simply mentioning an isolated term.
- **Explain:** Provide information about how or why a historical development or process occurs or how or why a relationship exists.

[a] Briefly describe one United States government policy from 1783 to 1840. **1 point**

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- The United States remained neutral during the war between Great Britain and France.
- The United States avoided permanent foreign alliances.
- The United States created a system for admitting new states through the Northwest Ordinance.
- The United States expanded west by purchasing Louisiana.
- The Missouri Compromise drew a line determining whether new states were free or slave states.
- The United States formed treaties with Native Americans in an attempt to gain control of more land.
- The federal government fought wars with Native American nations to gain control of more land.
- The federal government created the First National Bank.
- The federal government assumed the Revolutionary War debts of the states.
- Jefferson and Hamilton made a deal to place the national capital in Washington, D.C.

[b] Briefly explain one similarity OR difference in how two groups responded to political change in the United States from 1783 to 1840. **1 point**

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- Democratic-Republicans and Democrats both resisted the centralization of the federal government.
- Black and White abolitionists opposed the expansion of slavery.
- The Federalist Party encouraged a stronger central government, while the Democratic-Republican Party supported a weaker central government.

- While some groups argued that slavery was protected by the Constitution, others sought to limit its growth or end it altogether.
- Advocates for western expansion championed efforts to use federal power to forcibly remove Native Americans, while Native Americans and others resisted their efforts through warfare and the court system.
- The Democratic Party formed to oppose federal involvement in the economy, while the Whig Party formed to encourage government promotion of economic development.
- As immigration to the United States grew, recent immigrants from Ireland and Germany attempted to preserve elements of their language and culture, while nativists tried to limit immigrants' political power.

[c] Briefly explain how one historical development from 1840 to 1860 contributed to regional divisions. **1 point**

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- The growing power of the abolition movement in the North contributed to political conflict with the South.
- The Compromise of 1850 increased sectional tensions over government protections for slavery.
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act increased sectional tension and led to Bleeding Kansas.
- The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act intensified Northern abolitionists' opposition to Southern measures to protect and expand slavery.
- The Mexican-American war intensified regional divisions on whether slavery should be allowed to expand into western territories.
- Southern states seceded from the United States following the election of Abraham Lincoln.

Total for question 3 3 points

A) The United States adopted a policy of neutrality during the end of the 18th century and for the first few years of the 19th century. This policy was first adopted and declared by George Washington, and continued into the presidencies of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. This was during a time of European conflict (the Napoleonic Wars) and when the two political parties at the time sided with different parties of the war. Regardless, the country remained neutral and isolated themselves from European affairs for a time.

B) The Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans responded differently to the advent of the war of 1812 and the subsequent end to US neutrality/isolationism. Prior to the beginning of this war, the US had declared neutrality and aimed to stay out of the European conflict; however, through a combination of factors (primarily British impressment of US citizens and their support to Indians on the frontier), a small group of Democratic-Republicans convinced most of their party to support a war with Britain. Eventually, Congress granted President James Madison a declaration of war and the Federalist party staunchly opposed it. The Democratic-Republicans largely supported the war, whereas the Federalists worked day in and day out to put an end to it. The opposition to the policy grew to such an extent that they even contemplated secession during the Hartford Convention in New England.

C) The acquisition of the Mexican Cession following the Mexican-American War had profound effects on the unity of the nation. Before the land was even integrated into the country, many Northerners worked to prevent the institution of slavery from ever taking foot in the new land. This was chiefly done through the Wilmot Proviso which would make slavery illegal in the new territory. Southerners, who wanted to have slavery in the new land, argued that the Compromise of 1820 secured slavery in at least parts of the land that fall under the line that was established during the compromise. In general, Northerners opposed the introduction of slavery into the new region (on combination of moral and economic grounds), whereas Southerners wholeheartedly supported its expansion. The ambiguity on the topic of slavery eventually led to the North-South division seen during the Civil War.

- a. One United States government policy from 1783 to 1840 was the Missouri Compromise. This Compromise was passed in order to help ease tensions about slavery. The Compromise declared that if one state was to be inducted into the union as a slave state, one free state also had to join. This was intended to keep the balance between slave states and free states so as not to increase political tensions.
- b. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups both responded to political change in the United States from 1783 to 1840 by aggressively going to one side of the argument. The groups held different beliefs but they both polarized the issue of slavery where you had to be one or the other. There was no inbetween, either you were for slavery or you were against it. Political change made these groups become more aggressive in defending their beliefs.
- c. The historical development of the compromise of 1850 increased regional divisions even more. By letting new states choose slavery or not through popular sovereignty, both North and South fought hard for influence in the West. If they could get people in the West to make these states slavery or not they gained more power. This pit the north and south together even more, making a clean cut split for the Civil War right after this time period.

- a. One United States government policy from 1783 to 1840 is the policy of isolationism in which the United States attempted to stay out of European affairs. This was recommended by George Washington in his Farewell address when he warned about the conflicts that would arise in the case of involvement.
- b. One difference in how two groups responded to political change in the United States from 1783 to 1840 is through the Southern American states trying to obtain more political control from Lincoln while the Northern American States kept political control. This led to extreme debates between the two regions.
- c. One historical development from 1840 to 1860 that contributed to regional divisions is the development of the Civil War. This led to extreme divisions between the northern and southern states politically, economically, and socially through large debates and fights between the emancipation of slavery and the continuation of slavery.

Short Answer Question 3

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

Overview

- Responses were expected to describe one United States government policy from 1783 to 1840.
- Responses were expected to explain one similarity or difference in how two groups responded to political change in the United States from 1783 to 1840.
- Responses were expected to explain one historical development that contributed to regional division in the United States from 1840 to 1860.
- The questions addressed many topics, including Topics 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.12, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7.

Sample: 3A

Score: 3

The response to (a) earned 1 point by accurately describing the United States government policy of neutrality initiated by George Washington.

The response to (b) earned 1 point by explaining that the Federalists opposed the War of 1812 while the Democratic-Republicans under President James Madison generally supported it.

The response to (c) earned 1 point by explaining how the Mexican-American War and the Mexican Cession sparked debates between Southerners and Northerners over the extension of slavery into western territories.

Sample: 3B

Score: 2

The response to (a) earned 1 point by accurately describing one component of the Missouri Compromise as an example of a United States government policy from 1783 to 1840. Minor errors in the description of the Compromise do not detract from the response.

The response to (b) did not earn a point because the discussion of proslavery and antislavery groups is too generalized, lacks specifics, and does not explain a change in the period from 1783 to 1840.

The response to (c) earned 1 point by explaining the popular sovereignty component of the Compromise of 1850 as a historical development from 1840 to 1860 that was a catalyst of further regional divisions between the North and the South.

Sample: 3C

Score: 1

The response to (a) earned 1 point by accurately describing the government policy that the United States “stay out of European affairs” advocated by George Washington in his Farewell Address.

The response to (b) did not earn a point because its attempted explanation about different states seeking “political control” lacks specifics and is overly vague.

Short Answer Question 3 (continued)

The response to (c) did not earn a point because its explanation lacks specifics about the debate over slavery that led to regional divisions and about the political, economic, and social differences between the Northern and Southern states. In addition, the historical development provided, the Civil War, is outside of the time period of 1840–1860.