
AP[®] African American Studies

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Question 4: Document-Based Question

7 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:** These scoring guidelines require that students demonstrate historically defensible or discipline specific 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 or disciplinary 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.

Explain how the cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis/Claim (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are not defensible. Only restate or rephrase the prompt. Do not respond to the prompt. Do not establish a line of reasoning. Are overgeneralized. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible thesis or claim about how the cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reason for making that claim OR establish categories of the argument. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Provide a restatement of the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation.”</i> Provide a defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“A sense of culture was crucial to African Americans in era of Jim Crow segregation.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning, but do not provide a defensible claim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Political progress during the era of Jim Crow segregation was slowed by the cultural achievements of African Americans.”</i> 	Examples that earn this point: Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“African American culture helped promote resilience during the Jim Crow era by using music to provide hope and inspiration during the most difficult times.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Even during the nadir, African Americans used the arts and music to find inspiration to overcome the effects of segregation and to demonstrate to the country and to the world their talents and achievements.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“African American culture helped promote resilience during the Jim Crow era through the use of music.”</i> [Minimally acceptable thesis/claim]
	Additional Note: <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 is not limited to exclusively the first or last paragraphs]. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row B Context (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the topic of the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an overgeneralized statement about the topic referenced in the prompt. Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. Provide a passing phrase or reference. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately describe a context relevant to how the cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Jazz is thought to be the only true American form of music.”</i> Provides only a passing phrase or reference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“African American culture flourished in the 1920s.”</i> Provides inaccurate contextualization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Until the Civil War was over, there were no segregation laws in areas outside of the South.”</i> 	Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nadir Segregation The Black press The New Negro movement The Harlem Renaissance Barriers to political participation Examples of acceptable contextualization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Music was prevalent throughout the nadir, providing hope for people that change was possible.”</i> <i>“The Harlem Renaissance of the early twentieth century was a time when many African Americans expressed themselves through cultural contributions.”</i> [Minimally acceptable contextualization]
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response must describe broader events, developments, processes, or disciplinary connections that are relevant to the topic of the prompt. To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row C Evidence from Sources	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses the content of at least two sources to address the topic of the prompt.	2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least three sources.
(0–2 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use evidence from less than two of the sources Misinterpret the content of the source Quote the content of the sources without providing an accompanying description Address sources collectively rather than considering separately the content of each source 	Responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately describe—rather than simply quote—the content from at least 2 of the sources to address the way the cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation. 	Responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support an argument in response to the prompt by accurately using the content of at least 3 sources.
		Examples of describing the content of a source: Describe evidence from the sources relevant to the topic but do not use that evidence to support an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Source 1]: <i>“The Fisk University Singers traveled around the United States to perform.”</i> [Source 5]: <i>“The author of Source 5 recounts the positive effect Fannie Lou Hamer had on people before a civil rights protest in 1962.”</i> 	Examples of supporting an argument using the content of a source: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Source 1]: <i>“The Fisk Jubilee Singers brought African American musical traditions to domestic and international audiences, thereby helping to breakdown racist stereotypes held by many who attended their performances.”</i> [Uses evidence from the source to support an argument about the importance of the Fisk University Singers.] [Source 5]: <i>“Moses’ account of meeting Fannie Lou Hamer shows the importance of music and spirituals during the era of Jim Crow to offer encouragement and uplift to people. The songs comforted and reassured the people who were about to participate in a protest against segregation.”</i> [Uses evidence from the source to support an argument that African American culture offered comfort to people in a time of stress and uncertainty.] [Source 4]: <i>“Campbell’s argument that the arts inspired hope and pride for African Americans further supports the idea that arts and cultural contributions were very important during the Jim Crow era as a source of inspiration and uplift for Black communities.”</i> [Uses evidence from the source to support an argument about the possibilities for reconciliation and progress provided by art.]
	Additional Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn two points, the three sources do not have to be used in support of a single argument—they can be used across sub-arguments or to address counterarguments. 		

Row C Evidence Beyond Sources (0–1 points)	Evidence beyond the Sources:	
	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses at least one additional piece of specific evidence [beyond that found in the sources] relevant to an argument in response to the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide evidence that is not relevant to an argument about the prompt. Provide evidence that is outside the topic specified in the prompt. Repeat information that is specified in the prompt or in any of the sources. Provide a passing phrase or reference. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must use at least one specific piece of evidence relevant to how the cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation. Examples of specific and relevant evidence beyond the documents that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuance of “jumping the broom” tradition Family reunions Black churches Black entrepreneurship HBCUs and BGLOs Photography/James Van Der Zee Jazz, blues, spirituals Theatre, movies Carter G. Woodson’s “Negro History Week” The UNIA Négritude and Negritismo movements Visual arts/Jacob Lawrence Examples of evidence beyond the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“African American churches provided many services crucial to the lives of people trying to survive through the Jim Crow era: they offered spiritual hope, community support, and a place to meet in order to coordinate events and policies during the Civil Rights movement.”</i> [Provides a piece of evidence not in the sources relevant to an argument about the prompt.] <i>“Movements like The New Negro movement and the Négritude movement helped to build dignity within the Black community and stressed the cultural pride of their heritage in the face of ongoing Jim Crow segregation.”</i> [Provides a piece of evidence not in the sources relevant to an argument about the prompt.]
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization. To earn this point, the evidence provided must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization. To earn this point, the evidence provided must be more than a phrase or reference. The point for evidence beyond the sources may be awarded for evidence that appears in any part of the response. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Source Use (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point For at least two sources, explain how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, context and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain sourcing for fewer than two of the sources. Identify the point of view, purpose, context, and/or audience but fail to explain how or why it is relevant to an argument. Summarize the content or argument of the source without explaining the relevance of this summary to the point of view, purpose, context, and/or audience. Examples that do not earn this point: <p>Identify the perspective, purpose, context, and/or audience, but do not explain how or why it is relevant to an argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Source 4 is from an article that looks at the importance of art in Harlem.” <p>Summarize the content of the document without explaining the relevance of this to the perspective, purpose, context, and/or audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “As evidenced by Source 2, people across the United States listened to the blues.” 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must explain how or why—rather than simply identifying—the source’s point of view, purpose, context, or audience is relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt for each of the two sources. Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the author’s point of view: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Source 5]: “The author recounts meeting Fannie Lou Hamer as she was inspiring and comforting people before a protest. As he was present at the protest, he can speak to the way African American culture was used to provide strength and resilience during the Jim Crow era.” [Identifies the point of view of the source and how this affects the source’s perspective on the effect spirituals had on people in the Civil Rights movement.] Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the author’s purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Source 1]: “Source 1 shows the Fisk Jubilee Singers who traveled through parts of the South that had, until recently, allowed enslavement. By showing the singers dressed in fine clothing, the image counters some stereotypes that white audiences may have had.” [Connects the purpose to an argument about how music was important to African American identity and acceptance.] Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Source 3]: “Source 3 was written for the national magazine Harper’s Monthly, so the author’s words were very likely intended for the ‘Nordic’ people he calls out in the last line.” [Connects the audience of the source to an argument that Black culture was rich and could erode the prejudice of others who saw the culture as empty.]

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row E Reasoning (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses reasoning (e.g., causation, comparison, change or continuity across time or geography) to set up an argument that addresses the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must demonstrate the use of reasoning to frame or structure an argument that is relevant to the prompt. The use of reasoning might be uneven in places, or the evidence may lack specificity. Demonstrating reasoning might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A response may compare the community impact of African American art and music, as seen in Sources 1, 2, and 5, with that of other Afro-descendants coming to the United States during the era of Jim Crow segregation. (Addresses comparison) A response may look at how the resilience differed between African Americans experiencing segregation in the lower South and the resilience experienced by African Americans in other parts of the country during the same time period. (Addresses continuity and comparison across geography) A response may address the way African American art and/or music gained a following with non-African Americans, resulting in a breaking down of societal patterns of discrimination and racism. (Addresses causation, change)

Source Summaries

Source	Summary of Content	Explains the relevance of point of view (POV), purpose, situation, and/or audience by elaborating on examples such as:
1. Jubilee Singers of Fisk University, 1875	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The photograph shows members of the Fisk student choir in 1875, close to the official end of the Reconstruction period. Six women and four men are depicted in what appears to be formal performance attire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Fisk Jubilee Singers brought African American musical traditions to domestic and international audiences, helping to break down racist stereotypes held by many who attended their performances. (context) The Fisk Jubilee Singers often traveled through parts of the South that had, until recently, allowed enslavement, so showing the singers dressed in fine clothing worked to dispel some stereotypes that white attendees may have had. (purpose)
2. Map of Black Female Blues Singers' Performances, 1910 to 1930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The map shows the places where African American female blues singers performed on the Theater Owners Booking Association (T.O.B.A.) touring circuit for Black artists. The map includes all states east of the Mississippi River—including the lower South—and several states west of it. Many states have multiple cities that were located along the touring circuit, including most of the states in the lower South. The cities are generally ones with large populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The locations of these performances tended to be in large, sometimes capital cities, which likely had larger concentrations of African American population than other areas of the state at this time. (context) This map is a result of scholars who likely used the information to show readers in the twenty first century the wide geographic reach of female blues singers during part of the Jim Crow era. (audience)
3. James Weldon Johnson, author and NAACP activist, article published in mainstream United States magazine Harper's Monthly during the Harlem Renaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author, writing during the early twentieth century, addresses the myths regarding African American stereotypes, namely as being "beggars" who were "empty" of intellect, culture, and morals. He notes that artists of the day are "smashing" this stereotype. He credits artistic achievements with challenging the perceived superiority of whites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period of the Harlem Renaissance, African American artists produced many ground-breaking works, achieving success within their community and on a larger, sometimes national or international scale. Such successes inspired other artists, gave hope and happiness to those who were entertained, and even challenged the preconceived notions of many whites in the United States. (context) As the article was written for the national magazine Harper's Monthly, Weldon's words were very likely intended for the very "Nordic" people he calls out in the last line. (audience)
4. Mary Schmidt Campbell, author, published in Renaissance Art of Black America.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author, writing in the 1990s, stresses the importance of art in the elevating of African American culture. She suggests that art could offer a bridge, a chance at "reconciliation" between the races. The arts could demonstrate that African Americans have "something positive to contribute" at a very high level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With its intellectual and artistic achievements, Harlem became the center of the Black arts in the early twentieth century. (context) Intellectuals in the early twentieth century showed that art by Black artists could both serve as a bridge between the races and elevate Black art to new and equal heights. (purpose)

<p>5. Interview with Bob Moses, a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer, where he recalls meeting Fannie Lou Hamer in 1962, interview conducted in 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The source is an excerpt from a leader of SNCC. He recounts meeting Fannie Lou Hamer in 1962 on the way to a protest in Mississippi. He describes her leadership while on the bus, leading people in church songs and hymns, which was a way to ease people’s fears and inspire them to carry out their protest. The author notes that as soon as they reached their destination and began their protest, they were all arrested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses recollects the use of music or spirituals as a means of calming the fears of protesters and giving them inspiration to carry out their objective. (purpose) • The author recounts with some honor meeting Fannie Lou Hamer as she was inspiring and comforting people before a protest. As he was present at the protest, he can speak to the way African American culture was used to provide strength and resilience during the Jim Crow era. (POV)
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In the end of the 19th century, African Americans faced extreme discrimination. Following the end of the civil war where Black Americans experienced improvements in rights and opportunities during a period of Reconstruction, the compromise of 1877 organized to decide the disputed election resulted in the election of president Rutherford Hayes on the condition that the remaining troops were removed from the South. This led to the end of Reconstruction as the South continued their practices of racial discrimination and the court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, created a doctrine of separate but equal, allowing for segregation in public facilities. This ushered in a period known as Jim Crow segregation in which African Americans demonstrated their strength in light of harsh oppression. The cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation by advocating for pride for African American culture and heritage and using shared culture to organize movements.

One way that African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation was through encouraging pride for African American identity and culture despite racism. Mary Schmidt Campbell describes the Harlem Renaissance and New Negro movement in her 1987 book *Renaissance Art of Black America*. She describes the importance of art as the "bridge the gap between the Black and White worlds" and describes how art allowed one to showcase their heritage and "ethnic pride" (Source 4). Campbell describes how during these two movements, artists embraced their heritage despite the racism of Jim Crow that tried to teach society that African Americans were inferior, displaying their resistance and strength. Additionally, Campbell notes how this artistic movement helped bridge the gap between these groups. Artists during this time, by producing their work and gaining fame while staying true to their culture, demonstrated the importance of perseverance and gaining appreciation for African American contributions to protest the notion that African Americans were lesser during a time of intense segregation. The time period in which Campbell writes is important as she is writing after the emergence of the Black Power Movement. The Black Power Movement advocated for the self-determination and pride in identity of Black Americans. This likely influenced Campbell as she reflects on how earlier movements connected to the idea of personal empowerment among Black individuals. This is important as it displays that movements continued to outshoot from artistic and culture movements Campbell describes during Harlem and New Negro, reflecting that resilience in the face of oppression the Black community gained from these movements. Another example of the persistence of black cultural contributions that promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation were the Fisk Jubilee Singers, as displayed in an 1875 image titled "Jubilee Singers at Fisk University" that showcases the singers, dressed in lavish attire and posed in front of a camera with the label "Jubilee Singers" (Source 1). This image reflects their confidence in their identity despite the racism of the era that deemed Black Americans inferior. They are posed as respectable citizens while the title, "Jubilee Singers", reflects an element of Black culture. Jubilee songs harken back to the roots of spirituals or songs developed during times of slavery that combine Christian Hymns with the realities of slavery. This posture reflects pride in an element of their culture, displaying that they will not allow the segregation of Jim Crow that deems their culture inferior impact them. The historical context of this image is also notable as the singers were members of Fisk University, a historically black college or university (HBCU) that was established to provide education to black individuals while Jim Crow segregation excluded them from white educational institutions. This further demonstrates the resilience of African Americans as they found their own means of gaining education during this time and continued to practice their culture within these institutions. Another example of a cultural contribution that demonstrated pride in Black identity that is not seen in the sources is Marcus Garvey's "Black is Beautiful" Movement. This movement rejected the notion that African Americans must conform to the conventional beauty standards of white Americans that often resulted in African women attempting to tame their curly hair to mirror the hair of white women.

Garvey advocated for pride in one's African identity in this movement, once again reflecting resilience to the racism of Jim Crow and the idea that in order to ever defeat segregation, one needed to abandon their African culture and assimilate into white society. The cultural contributions of African Americans showcase pride in their heritage and culture, demonstrating resilience in face of Jim Crow Segregation which attempted to alienate them from society and deem them inferior. In addition to the views reflected within cultural contributions, these contributions could serve to unite African Americans to push for reform during Jim Crow Segregation, demonstrating resilience in the face of oppression. In a 2014 interview, Bob Moses, a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer, recalls meeting Fannie Lou Hamer. Moses describes that while traveling on the bus, Hamer was singing church songs that were common in Black churches to try and prevent the passengers from being afraid (Source 5). The events that Moses describes occurred during the Mississippi Freedom Summer in which students took buses to Mississippi to expand voting in the region. Moses describes that Hamer used Black Church songs, a cultural contribution that many of participants were familiar with as many attended Black churches and heard these songs. She uses these songs to help unite others and also to spread resilience as Moses describes they were arrested at the end of this ride so this familiar aspect of their culture conveys a sense of unity and helps drive this political campaign. This unity, brought about by a shared culture, helps these students push for change as expanding suffrage among Black individuals gives them more power in government and thus helps combat the institution of segregation. Moses' background is important as a member of SNCC. SNCC was an organization founded by Ella Baker after students demonstrated interest in the civil rights movement by participating in sit-ins at segregated lunch counters. Moses likely experienced this sense of unity from a shared culture as the members of SNCC were mainly students from HBCUs, a contribution of African Americans during this time that expanded education. Moses and others founded strength in this unity and used it to push for change despite the danger of the racism in communities, police forces, and political institutions during Jim Crow Segregation. The shared culture from the cultural contributions of African Americans such as Black churches and studies programs led to a sense of unity that promoted resistance and resilience to Jim Crow Segregation.

African American resilience in the face of harsh segregation happened in the context of community practices. After the Civil War had ended in America, formerly enslaved peoples were granted an end to slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation and passing of different amendments. However, many white southerners and slave supporters did not support freedom for black people in America. This caused a system of Jim Crow laws to spring up in the south, created to take away all freedom and hope granted to African Americans. As a result of this, African Americans had to fight increasingly harder to keep their cultures alive and win the battle for their freedom and rights. Cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation by bringing communities together and providing a sense of hope.

With Jim Crow laws harshly beating down on black communities all throughout the south, African Americans had to find different ways to connect and encourage each other to rise up against discrimination. One of the main ways that African Americans were able to share their culture and come together was through song. Source 1, an image from the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University, highlights the impact of song by showing an image of a significant singing group. By singing together and sharing culture through their voices, this group of singers was able to connect with each other and find a sense of community. This sense of community was present in many other singing groups and groups in other fields, which then allowed these groups to stay resilient despite the harsh segregation laws surrounding them. Source 2, a map of black female blues singers performances from 1910 to 1930, further highlights the coming together in the Jim Crow time period. Created with a purpose of showing the large amount of places where African American singers performed on tours for black artists, this source demonstrates how the performances of songs or other cultural practices brought communities together. All of these performances allowed for black artists to share their music and create a sense of community that would not have been created in a lack of culture. Having these communities and places to share skills and talents gave African Americans the ability to come together and rise above the segregation laws created to keep them down, which promoted a huge sense of resilience and empowerment in these communities.

In addition to providing a sense of community and togetherness in the time of Jim Crow segregation, cultural contributions of African Americans also provided them with a sense of hope that allowed them to thrive for better experiences. Source 5, an interview by SNCC organizer Bob Moses, highlights this sense of hope by showing how the cultural practice of singing decreased peoples fears. Spoken with the purpose of describing the impact of Fannie Lou Hamer, this interview describes how Fannie sang songs on a bus ride into the country to "[drive] away" the "fear" of the African Americans on the bus. By singing these songs and showing this sense of culture, Fannie Lou was able to ease the emotions of others and provide them with a sense of hope on their journey. This same thing happened in many other instances of cultural expression like literature, art, and more. In the Black Arts Movement, for example, African American artists created pieces that highlighted the changing status of black people in America and allowed anyone seeing these pieces to feel a changing sense of hope and encouragement. By making these contributions to culture and art, African Americans on the outside were able to feel more pride for themselves and their communities. This promoted an overall sense of resilience against Jim Crow laws and allowed them to fight against racism and segregation.

During the Jim Crow era, African Americans faced oppression and discrimination. Despite these challenges their cultural contributions served as powerful tools through music, blues, jazz and gospel to express the emotional feels African Americans were going through during this time period. The music had expressed to others that music can help you through the struggle and pain you may be feeling during a hard time period. The church was also a reason why Black African Americans had overcome their challenges during the Jim Crow era. The black church served as a spiritual guidance on how to support the issues they had been going through. The work of art helped black african americans on how they could be heard from the issues and problems that they were facing with the goverment about. In the South black peoople told the stories for years on how African Americans had faced their depression and issues during the time Blacks weren't being treated with respect. For years and years to come Black African Americans will continue to share stories on more historical things black people have acomplish. Sources teach that through the years history has repeated it self by explaining others what our race had put many African Americans through.

Document-Based Question

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

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses* on [AP Central](#).

Sample: 4A

Score: 7

Thesis/Claim Score: 1

Context Score: 1

Evidence from Sources Score: 2

Evidence Beyond Sources Score: 1

Source Use Score: 1

Reasoning Score: 1

Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis/claim because it states, “The cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation by advocating for pride for African American culture and heritage and using shared culture to organize movements.” This claim responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning.

Context (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for context for describing the broader historical context of the topic in the first paragraph (“In the end of the 19th century, African Americans faced extreme discrimination”). The response provides additional contextual information with references to “period of Reconstruction” and “the court case Plessy v. Ferguson” which “created a doctrine of separate but equal.”

Evidence from Sources (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for using content from Sources 1, 4, and 5 and describing relevant information related to the topic of how cultural contributions contributed to resilience in African American communities.

The response earned a second point for using evidence from multiple documents to support an argument in response to the prompt. The response uses Source 4 to support an argument about the use of art to promote “resilience during Jim Crow segregation ... through encouraging pride for African American identity and culture.” The response uses Source 1 to support the argument by highlighting the image in Source 1 as a display of resilience during the Jim Crow era.

The response uses Source 5 to support the argument by highlighting Fannie Lou Hamer’s use of singing to encourage fellow protestors to continue their fight for equal rights: “She uses these songs to help unite others and also to spread resilience.”

Evidence Beyond Sources (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for using evidence beyond sources relevant to an argument in response to the prompt. The response supports the argument with a discussion of Marcus Garvey as a leader of a movement that promoted Black Pride during the Jim Crow era.

Document-Based Question (continued)**Source Use (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for source use for using Sources 4, 1, and 5 and explaining the purpose of one and the point of view of the other. The response explains the purpose of Source 4 stating, “Campbell describes how during these two movements, artists embraced their heritage despite the racism of Jim Crow that tried to teach society that African Americans were inferior, displaying their resistance and strength.” In Source 1, the response uses the point of view to describe the Fisk Jubilee Singers: “This image reflects their confidence in their identity despite the racism of the era that deemed Black Americans inferior. They are posed as respectable citizens while the title, “Jubilee Singers”, reflects an element of Black culture.” The explanations of these sources support the argument and address the prompt.

Reasoning (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for reasoning by establishing an argument based on causation that shared culture and cultural contributions led to “a sense of unity” that promoted resistance and resilience which helped inspire African Americans in the era of Jim Crow.

Document-Based Question (continued)**Sample: 4B****Score: 5****Thesis/Claim Score: 1****Context Score: 1****Evidence from Sources Score: 2****Evidence Beyond Sources Score: 0****Source Use Score: 0****Reasoning Score: 1****Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for thesis/claim because it responds to the prompt with a defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning: “Cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation by bringing communities together and providing a sense of hope.” While this claim is minimally acceptable, “bringing communities together and providing a sense of hope” gives enough specificity to establish a line of reasoning.

Context (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for context because in the first paragraph the response refers to the Civil War (“After the Civil War had ended in America”), the Emancipation Proclamation (“formeley enslaved peoples were granted an end to slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation”), and Jim Crow laws and segregation (“This caused a system of Jim Crow laws to spring up in the south, created to take away all freedom and hope granted to African Americans”).

Evidence from Sources (0–2 points): 2

The response earned 2 points for evidence by using the content from Sources 1, 2, and 5 to address the topic of the prompt. The response uses Source 1 to address the topic of the prompt by describing the Jubilee Singers as an example of African Americans coming together through song. The response uses Source 2 to address the topic of the prompt by showing that the map implies that communities were brought together through Black music and cultural practices. The response uses Source 5 to support the claim by showing how Hamer used song to “provide a sense of hope on their journey.”

Evidence Beyond Sources (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for evidence beyond sources. In the final paragraph, the response provides specific relevant evidence by describing how the later Black Arts movement created a “sense of hope and encouragement.” However, the Black Arts movement (late 1960s into the 1970s) is outside of the period specified in the prompt and therefore does not count for the point.

Source Use (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for source use because it did not explain how or why the sources’ points of view, purposes, contexts, or audiences are relevant to the argument.

Reasoning (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for reasoning because the argument is set up as a causative discussion of how the different aspects of African American development (coming together to rise up, contributions to art and culture, etc.) led to resilience.

Document-Based Question (continued)**Sample: 4C****Score: 2****Thesis/Claim Score: 1****Context Score: 0****Evidence from Sources Score: 0****Evidence Beyond Sources Score: 1****Source Use Score: 0****Reasoning Score: 0****Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for the Thesis/Claim because it provides a minimal response to the prompt, by stating, “During the Jim Crow era, African Americans faced oppression and discrimination. Despite these challenges their cultural contributions served as powerful tools through music, blues, jazz and gospel to express the emotional feels African Americans were going through during this time period.”

Context (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for context. Although “the Jim Crow era” is mentioned in the first sentence, the reference is too general to provide a broader historical context for the topic (“During the Jim Crow era, African Americans faced oppression and discrimination”).

Evidence from Sources (0–2 points): 0

The response did not earn 1 point because it does not use content from at least two sources to address the topic of the prompt. The response did not earn 2 points because it did not support the argument with at least three sources.

Evidence Beyond Sources (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for using evidence beyond the sources because it references to the institution of the Black Church: “The church was also a reason why Black African Americans had overcome their challenges during the Jim Crow era.”

Source Use (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for source use because it makes no attempt to explain how or why any source’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to the argument.

Reasoning (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for reasoning because it does not frame the argument using causation, comparison, change, or continuity across time or geography to address the prompt.