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# AP<sup>®</sup> African American Studies

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

### **Inside:**

#### **Short-Answer Question 1**

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
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**Question 1: Text-Based Source****4 points****General Scoring Notes**

- Each point is earned independently.
- **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.
- **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.

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**A**      **Describe one claim the author makes in the source.**      **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- The condition of slavery is dreadful.
- No one who escaped enslavement is willing to return to being enslaved.
- If a person could send another into enslavement, then they are bad enough to send a person into hell.
- Staying in their “native land” would have been preferred if people could be free.

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**B**      **Describe one piece of evidence not included in the source that supports a claim the author makes.**      **1 point**

**Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- The prospect of being enslaved was horrible enough to cause captives to resist using hunger strikes, violent resistance, or even suicide.
  - At some auctions, those who resisted sale were punished severely by whipping, at times in front of their families and friends.
  - During the cotton boom in the first half of the nineteenth century, many African Americans were forcibly relocated through the domestic slave trade from the upper South.
  - In the gang system, enslaved laborers were forced to work in groups from sunup to sundown.
  - Enslaved African American women endured physical abuse and assault.
  - Narratives by enslaved African American men and women detailed the abuse and exploitation they faced.
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<b>C</b>	<b>Explain how Harriet Tubman contributed to change for African Americans in the nineteenth century.</b>	<b>1 point</b>
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**Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- Harriet Tubman helped enslaved people flee the South, which helped change their lives because they were free in the North.
- Harriet Tubman freed enslaved people through the Underground Railroad, which provided safe routes for enslaved people looking to resettle in the northern United States, Canada, and Mexico.
- Harriet Tubman served as a spy and nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War, which supported the Union cause and led to eventual freedom for enslaved people.
- During the Combahee River raid, Tubman became the first American woman to lead a major military operation, which led to the freedom of enslaved people.

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<b>D</b>	<b>Using a specific example, explain how an African American woman or African American women’s political activism in the twentieth or twenty-first century helped overcome the legacy of enslavement.</b>	<b>1 point</b>
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**Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- Ella Baker was known as the “mother of the Civil Rights movement.” Her grassroots organization of young people into the Civil Rights movement helped to combat both racism and sexism.
  - Activist Fannie Lou Hamer played a key role in the Civil Rights movement. Her work in the Freedom Summer helped to register thousands of African Americans to vote in state and national elections.
  - African American authors like Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about the lived experience of Black women and how race, gender, and social class affect how they are perceived in an effort to overcome the legacy of enslavement and systemic racism.
  - Shirley Chisholm became the first African American woman elected to Congress. She helped found the Congressional Black Caucus, a group that promoted African American candidates to elected office across the nation.
  - Black and African American women such as Condoleezza Rice, Kamala Harris and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson have held high positions in federal leadership. They have advocated for the rights of African Americans in an effort to overcome the legacy of enslavement.
  - Nannie Helen Burroughs, an early civil rights activist, helped establish the National Association of Colored Women (1896) and founded a school for women and girls in Washington, D.C. (1909). Her actions helped Black women in their quest to find greater inclusion in American society.
  - Black women leaders advocated for the rights of Black women during the Women’s Suffrage movement of the early twentieth century. Their work helped to ensure that generations of Black women would finally have a voice in American government.
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A. A claim the author makes in the source is that a person who would send another into slavery is bad enough to send that person to hell. Tubman's reflection says this as in the excerpt she had previously described the institution of slavery as "dreadful" and "the next thing to hell" due to the constant fear slaves lived in and the mistreatment they suffered. With this Tubman shows how dehumanizing the institution of slavery is, and the evil of those who kept it alive.

B. A piece of evidence not included in the source that supports the claim of the dreadful condition that slavery is would be drawings of the arrangements of ships in the Atlantic trade. The depictions of the arrangement of enslaved people in the ships of the Atlantic trade show how inhumane the trade of enslaved people was, as it depicted them with barely any room to move and often times with enslaved people on top of each others in order to be able to transport more people in the ships. This would support the argument as it would show the hell-like circumstances enslaved people would have to go through.

C. Harriet Tubman contributed to change for African Americans in the 19th century through her work in the underground railroad. This is because Tubman would aid enslaved people in the south in running away to the north to obtain freedom. This changed the lives of many African American individuals, and gave them the chance of a fresh start without the mistreatment and violence from plantations and white people in the south. When her work was brought to the attention of wider audiences a wider support for anti-slavery movements began.

D. An African American woman who has participated in political activism in the twenty-first century that has helped overcome the legacy of enslavement would be Michelle Obama. Obama has been an advocate for racial equality in many aspects with one of them being education. She advocates for more people to pursue higher education as well more opportunities for people to be able to attend higher education institutions. She has helped overcome the legacy of enslavement by letting people now that access to education and work opportunities are more widely available to communities like the African American community now more than ever.

One claim the author makes in the source is that they "grew up like a neglected weed,---ignorant of liberty", which makes me think as the reader that she feels that she was like that because she were a slave. But didn't after because she contributed to a lot of changes for African Americans in the nineteenth century, because. Not only did she help free a lot of slaves by helping them escape with the underground rail road but she also, was the first black African American woman to be a spy and, be the leader of an army force.

- A. One claim is that they have never saw an escaped slave that was willing to go back and be a so slave.
- B. One piece of evidence quotes " I think slavery is the next thing to hell" meaning slavery is the second worse thing to ever nobody wants to be there.
- C. She changes african americans by giing them the confidence they needed to want to escape and be free
- D. The african american women helped overcome the legecy of enslavement because there words and powerful movements allowed them to stand out compared to the rest of everybody

## Short-Answer Question 1

**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: 1A

**Score: 4**

**SAQ Part A Score: 1**

**SAQ Part B Score: 1**

**SAQ Part C Score: 1**

**SAQ Part D Score: 1**

The response earned 1 point for part A for correctly identifying the author’s claim that slavery is “dreadful” and the “next thing to hell.”

The response earned 1 point for part B for describing the experiences of enslaved people during the transatlantic slave trade. The response mentions “the arrangement of enslaved people in the ships” and “how inhumane the trade of enslaved people was.” This evidence is not included in the source and supports Harriet Tubman’s claim.

The response earned 1 point for part C because it correctly explains how Harriet Tubman contributed to change for African Americans in the nineteenth century through her work with the Underground Railroad.

The response earned 1 point for part D by using a specific example to explain how an African American woman in the twenty-first century, Michelle Obama, helped overcome the legacy of enslavement through her advocacy “for more people to pursue higher education as well more opportunities for people to be able to attend higher education institutions.”

**Short-Answer Question 1 (continued)****Sample: 1B****Score: 2****SAQ Part A Score: 1****SAQ Part B Score: 0****SAQ Part C Score: 1****SAQ Part D Score: 0**

The response earned 1 point for part A because it identifies the author’s claim that while enslaved, she “grew up like a neglected weed,---ignorant of liberty.”

The response did not earn a point for part B because it did not address or attempt to address this portion of the prompt.

The response earned 1 point for part C by explaining how Harriet Tubman contributed to change for African Americans in the nineteenth century by working to “free a lot of slaves by helping them escape with the underground rail road” and by serving as “a spy” in the armed forces.

The response did not earn a point for part D because it did not address or attempt to address this portion of the prompt which called for a specific example explaining how an African American woman or African American women’s political activism in the twentieth or twenty-first century helped overcome the legacy of enslavement.



**Short-Answer Question 1 (continued)****Sample: 1C****Score: 1****SAQ Part A Score: 1****SAQ Part B Score: 0****SAQ Part C Score: 0****SAQ Part D Score: 0**

The response earned 1 point for part A for identifying the author's claim that she has seen hundreds of escaped slaves, but never one who was willing to go back to being a slave.

The response did not earn a point for part B because it did not describe a piece of evidence beyond the source that supports a claim Harriet Tubman makes. Instead, the response identifies evidence within the provided source ("I think slavery is the next thing to hell").

The response did not earn a point for part C because it did not explain how Harriet Tubman contributed to change for African Americans in the nineteenth century. The response mentions that Tubman provided enslaved individuals with "confidence" but does not provide information explaining how or why that process occurred.

The response did not earn a point for part D because it did not adequately address the prompt. Although the response mentions African American women's "words and powerful movements," this is not a specific example. Furthermore, the response did not provide information about how or why those words or movements helped overcome the legacy of enslavement.