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

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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#### **Short-Answer Question 2**

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
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**Question 2: Non-Text Source****3 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.

**A Describe the broader historical context of the image.****1 point****Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics during a time when Black people were discriminated against because of their race.
- Owens represented the United States at the 1936 Olympics but was subjected to discrimination at home.
- Owens excelled at the Olympics even though, in 1936, African Americans and whites were not allowed to participate in the same sports leagues in the United States.
- Owens participated in the Berlin Olympics when Adolf Hitler was the ruler of Germany.

**B Describe one example of an African American athlete, other than Jesse Owens, who broke discriminatory barriers in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries.****1 point****Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- In 1908, boxer Jack Johnson became the first Black heavyweight champion of the world.
- In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first Black player in Major League Baseball.
- Wilma Rudolph won gold medals in the 1960 Summer Olympics and became a civil rights activist in her post-Olympic career.
- In 1974, baseball player Henry Aaron broke the long-standing Major League Baseball home run record, despite living through segregation and receiving death threats during his career.

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| <b>C</b> | <b>Using a specific example, explain how African Americans' increased access to education contributed to overcoming discrimination in the twentieth or twenty-first century.</b> | <b>1 point</b> |
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**Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- The Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregated public schools, allowing African Americans to have access to schools previously denied to them. This provided countless people the ability to improve their education and secure better jobs.
  - Booker T. Washington advocated for African Americans to get an industrial, vocational education in order to make economic gains. His Tuskegee Institute was able to provide this throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.
  - HBCUs were able to provide African Americans with access to education and economic improvement long before traditionally white colleges commonly accepted students of color.
  - African American Studies was founded in the 1960s after Black students entered predominantly white colleges, finding that the history of Black people was underrepresented. This would lead to generations of scholars who were not only well-versed in African American Studies but who would expand the discipline further.
  - Education was a major focus of the Black Panther Party. By encouraging its members to advocate for and achieve formal education, its members, and all Black Americans, were able to find more and better employment opportunities.
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A. The broader historical context of the image was the rise of anti-semitism in Nazi Germany, leading to hatred toward marginalized groups, especially on the basis of racism. As this sentiment grew, there was a desire for Nazi Germany to prove that people of the "Aryan race" were best equipped for the activities in the 1936 Summer Olympics. However, Jesse Owens won the 200-meter race, beating out Nazi Germany and disproving the preconceived notion of the nation's supposed "dominance" in athletics.

B. One example of an African American athlete, other than Jesse Owens, who broke discriminatory barriers in the 20th century is Jackie Robinson. As a baseball player, Jackie Robinson was heavily involved in the movement to dismantle segregation in the sport. Having broken many records and scored many home runs, his success in baseball advanced the desegregation movement in athletics in the 20th century, thereby breaking discriminatory barriers.

C. One example of how African Americans' increased access to education contributed to overcoming discrimination in the 20th century is the rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As African Americans sought out educational institutions that tailored to their needs after the Civil War, many founded and attended HBCUs. Such colleges included Howard University and Fisk University, among others. By creating a haven for African American intellectual advancement, African Americans' increased access to education contributed to overcoming discrimination in the 20th century.

(A) Black athletes started competing with white athletes in the olympics and other sports events. They demonstrated black achievement and resillaince through competing.

(B) Jackie Robinson is an athlete who broke discrimintary barriers in history. Playing on the all white dodgers team during a time period that Black people were not allowed to play in the same sports as white people---broke barriers. He constantly faced discrimination during games as people would throw food at him or boo him. Regardless of the discrimination he faced, he continued playing baseball and became one of the most famous baseball players in history.

(C) African Americans learning about their history from civil rights groups, slavery, African Diaspora, and more helped overcome discrimination in the twentieth or twenty-first century. By learning about their past, they can understand and develop their own ideas about how history in the past and present affected their lives. This can lead them to become more aware about racial injustices and become more involved in civil rights. These civil rights can include speaking up about injustices, joining civil rights organizatiions, and continue advocating for themselves.

A) The broader historical context of this image is related to African oppression and slavery. African enslaved people were not allowed to do anything that their masters told them not to, and they were not given the same rights as the white people.

B) An example of an African American athlete who broke discriminatory barriers was Michael Jordan. He created a huge impact on the game of Basketball in America, leading millions of people to be inspired by him.

C) African Americans' increased access to education contributed to overcoming discrimination in the twentieth century by helping them fight for their rights. In the twentieth century, many anti-slavery movements and abolitionist and equality movements started happening. Leaders like Martin Luther King, because he was so learned, so educated, he influenced so many African American people to fight for their rights, and stand up for themselves.

## Short-Answer Question 2

**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: 2A

**Score: 3**

**SAQ Part A Score: 1**

**SAQ Part B Score: 1**

**SAQ Part C Score: 1**

The response earned 1 point for part A because it accurately describes the broader historical context of the image as being during “the rise of anti-semitism in Nazi Germany” which led to “hatred toward marginalized groups.”

The response earned 1 point for part B for presenting Jackie Robinson as another African American athlete who broke discriminatory barriers in the twentieth century, as he was “heavily involved in the movement to dismantle segregation in the sport.” The response continues: “his success in baseball advanced the desegregation movement in athletics in the 20th century.”

The response earned 1 point for part C by explaining how “the rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)” increased African Americans’ access to education and contributed to overcoming discrimination. The response notes that this occurred because HBCUs functioned as “educational institutions that tailored to [African Americans] needs” and created “a haven for African American intellectual advancement.”

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

The response did not earn 1 point for part A because the statement, “Black athletes started competing with white athletes in the olympics” is true of other time periods and does not describe the historical context of the image in question. Therefore, this response is too vague to earn the point.

The response earned 1 point for part B for describing Jackie Robinson as breaking discriminatory barriers while playing for the Dodgers: “Playing on the all white dodgers team during a time period that Black people were not allowed to play in the same sports as white people---broke barriers.”

The response earned 1 point for part C by explaining the Black Studies movement without specifically naming it; therefore, descriptions such as “learning about their history from civil rights groups” through which African Americans “can understand and develop their own ideas about how history in the past and present affected their lives” serve as an example, while statements such as “This can lead them to become more aware about racial injustices and become more involved in civil rights” provide adequate explanation.



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

The response did not earn a point for part A because it did not accurately describe the historical context of the image of Jesse Owens during the 1936 Olympics. Instead, the response addresses a relationship of the image to an overly broad history of “African oppression and slavery.”

The response did not earn a point for part B because the response did not describe a twentieth century African American athlete who broke discriminatory barriers. While Michael Jordan is mentioned, the response states that he “created a huge impact on the game of Basketball in America, leading millions of people to be inspired by him.” This is a description of accomplishments but not of a barrier broken.

The response earned 1 point for part C for using Martin Luther King Jr. as an example of how African Americans’ increased access to education helped overcome discrimination. The response explains that King was “so learned, so educated” that he led African Americans to “fight for their rights and stand up for themselves.”