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# AP<sup>®</sup> United States History

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

### Inside:

#### Short-Answer Question 4

- ☒ Scoring Guidelines
- ☒ Student Samples
- ☒ Scoring Commentary

**Question 4: 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timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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.

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**A** Briefly describe one political development during Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877. **1 point**

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

- During Reconstruction politicians debated whether to extend suffrage to formerly enslaved men.
- Congress ratified the Thirteenth Amendment.
- African American men held political office.
- Reconstruction resulted in debates over the process of readmitting states back into the Union.
- The Compromise of 1877 resulted in the end of Reconstruction.

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**B** Briefly describe one effect of the end of Reconstruction from 1877 to 1900. **1 point**

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

- The end of Reconstruction resulted in the passage of segregation laws throughout the South.
- The Democratic Party regained its political power in the South as a result of the end of Reconstruction.
- Sharecropping remained the dominant agricultural system in the South as African Americans' access to land decreased.

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**C** Briefly explain how one group responded to debates about the federal government from 1900 to 1945. **1 point**

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

- Progressives responded to debates about the federal government by arguing that the federal government had additional powers to intervene in the economy, and they called for the federal government to regulate big business.

- The Supreme Court believed the federal government had asserted too much power and handed down rulings that limited its power.
  - Labor unions called for the federal government to better protect workers during the New Deal.
  - Women believed the federal government should pass a constitutional amendment granting them the right to vote.
  - The NAACP believed the federal government should provide more protection for the civil rights of African Americans.
  - Conservationists believed that the federal government had the responsibility to protect natural resources.
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## Sample 4A 1 of 1

- A. One political development during Reconstruction was the institution of the Freedman's Bureau. This bureau aimed to help newly freedmen adjust to American life and receive economic and social support. This bureau was created and supported by the federal government to assist freedmen in creating their new lives in which they had no economic, social, or political grounding.
- B. One effect of the end of Reconstruction was the creation voting restrictions in the South like poll taxes and literacy tests (a part of Jim Crow laws). Southerners, who disagreed with abolition and had previously kept slaves, wanted to keep freedmen from exercising their new rights as much as possible. To do this, new laws like poll taxes were implemented to create barriers to voting.
- C. New Deal supporters wanted to expand the federal government and have it directly involved in peoples' lives during the Great Depression in the 1930s. FDR wanted to create policies that would bring the US out of the Depression and directly help citizens. Policies like the CCC, Social Security, and other policies that supported employment, infrastructure, and welfare all directly assisted people in need. New Deal supporters believed this was the best way to help the economy recover and improve.

## Sample 4B 1 of 1

A: political development during reconstruction from 1865 to 1877 is sharecropping for example after the civil war the southern states still found ways to replicate slavery using the practice of share cropping allowing freed african americans to rent farm tools and they had to pay it off but they barely earned any money because of this they were stuck in an endless loop of debt trying to pay off the rent of farm tools used for farming for white plantation owners.

B: one effect of the end of reconstruction from 1877 to 1900 is the union troops leaving the south but then jim crow laws now being enacted for example now that the union troops left the south after making sure that reconstruction polices were being enacted the south was still bitter but now plessy vs ferguson was basically allowing segregation in the united states including the south which allowed the seperation of buses, schools and water fountains which still set apart african americans from society and this was unfair towards them because although they got the 13th,14th, and 15th amendments passed they still weren't being treated as equal.

C: one group responded to the debates about the federal governemnt from 1900 to 1945 is protests for example people like martin luther king jr. and Rosa Parks and gropus like the NAACP tried to adovate for rights people like W.E.B du bois went to harvard as a black male and tried to show that your skin color doesnt matter you can have a good education and tried to stand up for their rights like Rosa parks was on a bus and she refused to give up her seat and protests and boycotts for buses rose primarily because they tried to fight for their rights agaisnt the segregation because they wanted to be treated equally since their skin color was being viewed as lesser than because they weren't white.

One political development during reconstruction was the loss of political power in the south, as many former slaves left the south the souths representation in congress plummeted. One effect of the end of reconstruction was the south reverting back to former ways, without military enforcement in the south many policys such as literacy tests and segregation developed to discriminate against african americans. Many college students and liberals of the time belived it was the federal governments responcebilty to protect african americans and stop the discrimination they were facing, as a result they started protesting in many ways such as the Freedom Riders, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the March on Washington.

## Short Answer Question 4

**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

**SAQ Part A Score: 1**

**SAQ Part B Score: 1**

**SAQ Part C Score: 1**

#### Total Score: 3

The response to Part A earned 1 point by correctly describing the impact of the Freedman’s Bureau and the role of the Federal government in establishing the agency.

The response to Part B earned 1 point by showing the effect of the Jim Crow laws which established restrictions, like poll taxes and literacy tests, to negate any gains made by African-Americans during Reconstruction.

The response to Part C earned 1 point through its explanation of how the New Deal and its supporters pushed for the expansion of the Federal Government to “help the economy recover and improve.”

#### Sample: 4B

**SAQ Part A Score: 1**

**SAQ Part B Score: 1**

**SAQ Part C Score: 0**

#### Total Score: 2

The response to Part A earned 1 point by describing sharecropping and the attempt to “replicate slavery.”

The response to Part B earned 1 point by describing the withdrawal of federal troops from the South and for the description of *Plessy v. Ferguson* as “allowing segregation.”

The response to Part C did not earn a point because the response does not explain how its discussion of W.E.B. Du Bois and the NAACP relates to a debate about the federal government. The discussion of Rosa Parks is outside of the time period.

### Short Answer Question 4 (continued)

**Sample: 4C**

**SAQ Part A Score: 0**

**SAQ Part B Score: 1**

**SAQ Part C Score: 0**

**Total Score: 1**

The response to Part A did not earn a point because it does not cite a specific political development relevant to the time period from 1865 to 1877.

The response to Part B earned 1 point because it correctly describes segregation and literacy tests as effects of the end of Reconstruction.

The response to Part C did not earn a point because the explanation about Freedom Riders, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the March on Washington are all outside of the time period of the prompt.