
AP[®] World History: Modern

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Short-Answer Question 4

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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timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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** Identify one technological development in communication or transportation in the twentieth century. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The development of the internet was a major development in communication.
- During the twentieth century, one important technological development was the airplane.
- The development of cellular communications was a life-changing development.

Scoring Note: Some technologies that originated in the late nineteenth century but were further developed, commercialized, and/or became widespread in the early twentieth century can be credited toward Part A. Examples include the radio and the automobile.

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- B** Explain one way nuclear technologies affected international relations in the second half of the twentieth century. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The invention of nuclear weapons complicated international relations as some countries sought [and sometimes acquired] nuclear weapons, which resulted in international efforts to limit proliferation.
 - The threat of nuclear war kept the major superpowers at peace because they both believed in the MAD doctrine and did everything possible to avoid direct war between themselves.
 - The practical impossibility of a direct nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union led the two superpowers to engage in proxy wars around the world instead.
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| C | Explain one way the spread of new technologies contributed to increased economic activity in the twentieth century. | 1 point |
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Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Widespread use of fossil fuels enabled the growth of the transoceanic cargo shipping industry, which increased international trade and stimulated economic growth.
 - Nuclear-generated power was used to operate new factories and production facilities, increasing the capacity of electrical grids and leading to greater economic productivity.
 - Fossil fuels helped the airline industry grow as more people traveled for work and leisure, increasing the revenues of hospitality and tourism industries.
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A. One technological development in transportation in the twentieth century is airplanes, which allowed people to travel faster to farther places, as well as increase tourism between countries.

B. One way nuclear technologies affected international relations in the second half of the twentieth century is by creating global tensions. The Cold War, a communist versus capitalist battle between the United States and the USSR, consisted of a display of power through the nuclear arms race, which picked up dramatically after WWII ended. Because of the sheer destruction that nuclear weapons could cause, there were constant threats to use them, as both sides faced the threat of the world being destroyed by these nuclear weapons. In particular, the Cuban Missile Crisis was the peak of this conflict; the USSR had supplied missiles to Cuba because the United States had been refusing to trade with them due to their communist-leaning policies. Because of this threat, the United States worked quickly to de-escalate the conflict peacefully so as not to face destruction, and so the world wouldn't end up being destroyed by nuclear weapons.

C. One way the spread of new technologies contributed to increased economic activity in the twentieth century is through speeding up the process of transportation of goods. Things like standardized shipping containers were invented, as well as the adjustment of train sizes to fit those containers sped up the process of transporting goods. Because shipping containers were standardized, it sped up the process of transporting goods because they were so big and of the ease of using cranes to move them from a boat to a train to then send the goods to where they needed to go. In addition, these shipping containers could fit a lot of goods, so because they enabled products to be transported easily and in quantity, more goods were able to be sold and sent around the world.

- a) One technological development in communication was the telephone, which allowed for faster communication.
- b) Nuclear technologies negatively affected international relations in the second half of the twentieth century, as it led to the Cold War concept of Mutually Assured Destruction, which prevented the two countries from invading each other, but the Soviet Union and the United States still participated in proxy wars, which led to the destabilization of the Middle east, and East Asia.
- c) The spread of new technologies led to increased economic activity in the twentieth century through shipping lines, as new technologies such as GPS made it easier for ships to navigate, allowing for greater mass maritime trade.

One technological development in communication in the twentieth century was the development of the telegraph.

One way that nuclear technologies affected the intraregional relations in the second half of the 20th century was through the nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States during the 2nd half of the 20th century. The nuclear technology sparked fear between the nations and caused them both to make more and more nuclear weapons which resulted in the global cold war.

One way the spread of new technologies contributed to the increase of economic activity in the 20th century was through innovations in technology which made transportation of goods for trade easier. Transportation technologies like the steam engine in boats made it easier and faster to transport goods for trade over water, leading to increased trade and economic activity.

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 earned 1 point for Part A because it identifies the airplane as a twentieth-century technological development.

The response earned 1 point for Part B because it explains how nuclear technologies affected international relations. The response states that nuclear technologies created tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and the threat of nuclear weapons prompted attempts at deescalating conflict.

The response earned 1 point for Part C because it discusses standardized shipping containers as a factor that contributed to increased economic activity in the twentieth century.

Sample: 4B

SAQ Part A Score: 0

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Total Score: 2

The response did not earn the point for Part A because it incorrectly identifies telephones as a technological development in communication of the twentieth century. The invention and early commercial use of the telephone took place in the nineteenth century.

The response earned 1 point for Part B because it explains that nuclear technologies affected the international relations of superpowers by creating the fear of Mutually Assured Destruction, which dissuaded them from invading each other directly. The response further notes that the practical impossibility of direct war between the United States and Soviet Union led to proxy wars.

The response earned 1 point for Part C because it explains that GPS technology allowed for more shipping with easier navigation, contributing to increased economic activity in the twentieth century.

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 did not earn the point for Part A because it incorrectly identifies the telegraph as a technological development in communication of the twentieth century. The invention and early use of the telegraph took place in the nineteenth century.

The response earned 1 point for Part B for explaining that fear of the dangers of nuclear technology affected international relations by prompting an arms race, which resulted in the Cold War.

The response did not earn the point for Part C because it incorrectly explains “the steam engine in boats” was a new technology that contributed to increased economic activity in the 20th century. Steam engines began to be used in boats in the nineteenth century.