



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses

2025 AP[®] World History: Modern Set 1

Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	412,964		
• Number of Readers	2099		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	57,264	13.9
	4	137,959	33.4
	3	70,200	17.0
	2	109,484	26.5
	1	38,057	9.2
• Global Mean	3.16		

The following comments on the 2025 free-response questions for AP[®] World History: Modern were written by the Chief Reader, Craig Miller, Professor, Pennsylvania College of Technology. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Short Answer Question 1

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Weatherford Effects of the European Discovery of the Americas

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.93
SAQ Part B	1	0.60
SAQ Part C	1	0.78
Overall Mean Score:	2.31	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions based on a passage from a secondary source by Jack Weatherford regarding various impacts of the European discovery of the Americas. For part A, students were asked to identify a claim the author made in the first paragraph of the passage regarding one effect the discovery of the Americas had on Africa. For part B, students were asked to describe an economic change that occurred in the Americas that was related to a development discussed in the second paragraph of the passage. For part C, students were asked to explain why, in the words of the author, “American Indians” became victims of the discovery of America. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

The overwhelming majority of responses successfully earned the point for part A. Students were able to identify claims made by the author regarding the decline of existing trade networks in Africa due to the discovery of New World gold and silver, such as the author’s claim that the abundance of precious metals from the Americas “destroyed the African gold markets and the dependent trade networks,” or his claim that “[c]ities such as Timbuktu and the Songhai Empire of which it was a part crumbled as merchants abandoned the ancient trade routes.”

A majority of responses were also able to earn the point for part B, with most students describing the effects of the arrival of large numbers of enslaved Africans in the Americas on changing American labor systems and giving rise to the chattel-slavery-based plantation system and the rise of cash-crop agriculture. Some students also effectively explained the rise of the Triangular Trade, often connecting their arguments to the author’s assertion in the passage that “with the opening of America, the slave trade became a boom.”

The point for part C was also earned by a large majority of the responses. Most student responses also were able to successfully explain the negative impact that the arrival of Europeans had on the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, citing effects like the loss of their ancestral homelands, the spread of disease, and a loss of culture.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Overall, this was a very high-scoring question, with little evidence of major student misconceptions or knowledge gaps. Some common reasons responses failed to earn points included misreading the document or the tasks and/or confusing Africa with Asia or Europe for part A, making the opposite mistake and describing economic changes in Africa (instead of in the Americas) for part B, and, for part C, failing to provide sufficient

explanation or argumentation as to why Indigenous Americans were victimized in their contact with Europeans

Although not very common, the author’s use of the term “American Indians” proved confusing for some students who tried to link their argument for part C to India or Indians.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Americas discovery of Africa led to the decline in their economy. Americas want for slaves caused Africa to have a decline in their population. The effect caused their economy to decline because their was no longer as many workers as before.” <p>(The response to part B incorrectly addresses an economic change in Africa; the question asks for an economic change in the Americas.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One economic change in the Americas that occurred because of the developments discussed in the second paragraph is the emergence of plantations. When Europeans came to the Americas, they realized the ability to grow and harvest valuable commodities like tobacco or sugar. Due to this, laborers were needed to work on the plantations. Because slaves from Africa were extremely cheap, many plantation owners imported them to work on the plantations.” <p>(The response to part B accurately describes an economic change in the Americas—the rise of plantations—that occurred because of the trade in enslaved Africans mentioned in the second paragraph of the passage.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The american indians were affected due to the fact that they no longer had india for trades anymore.” <p>(This example of an error in answering part C stems from misreading or misunderstanding the author’s use of the term “American Indians.”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One reason that ‘American Indians’ became ‘Victims of the discovery of America’ was that they were horribly mistreated by the new colonizers. When the Europeans arrived in America, they held an overwhelming technological and military superiority over the natives, who were quickly driven from their homelands and forced to live in areas the Europeans gave to them. Additionally, the Europeans brought with them diseases such as Smallpox that wiped out many native populations, as while the Europeans had developed a generational resitance to the disease, the Native Americans had not. The American Indians, while not forced into slavery as the Africans were, still suffered many grave injustices, and were just as much victims as the Africans were.” <p>(The response to part C explains at least two distinct ways in which Indigenous Americans</p>

	could be seen as victims of the European discovery of the Americas.)
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Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Teachers should impress upon students that the SAQ stimulus is provided to help students analyze and evaluate the historical developments that are the target of assessment in the three SAQ tasks. While in some cases responding to one of the three parts of the SAQ mostly by referring to a quote from the document might be enough to earn the point, in most cases it would not be.

Teachers should instruct their students to read each part of the SAQ task prompts thoroughly and carefully. Students should understand that in some cases the task prompts may direct them to a geographical region or a period of time that are different from those discussed in the source.

In preparation for the AP Exam, students should spend ample time analyzing primary and secondary source documents. This question emphasized the historical skill of causation, and so providing students with ample opportunities to practice linking cause and effect would have helped to improve student performance.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on the impact of the discovery of the Americas.
 - Unit 4 (Transoceanic Encounters), Topics 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.

- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Short Answer Question 2

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Otto-Peters Women’s Newspaper Primary

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.85
SAQ Part B	1	0.44
SAQ Part C	1	0.64
Overall Mean Score:	1.93	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions based on a passage from a primary source—an 1849 article by German writer Louise Otto-Peters in the first German newspaper for women. For part A, students were asked to identify one likely audience for the claims made by the author in the passage. For part B, students were asked to describe a historical context that would explain a claim made by the author in the passage that some individuals were living “in poverty and misery.” For part C, students had to explain how one ideology or set of ideas informed the ideas expressed by the author in the passage. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.8, and 5.9 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

A large majority of responses earned the point for part A, mostly by identifying the likely audience of the passage as “other women,” “feminists,” or “men and women who supported the women’s rights movement.”

Although the task in part B was more challenging for students, a fair number of responses accurately described one of the correct contexts contributing to poverty and suffering in nineteenth-century Europe. Such responses typically described the working conditions in the factories of the early Industrial Revolution, the cramped and unsanitary living conditions in workers’ quarters in industrial cities, or the rigid class structure of nineteenth-century bourgeois society that kept the workers at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Many responses successfully earned the point for part C. Responses typically identified Enlightenment thought, feminism, liberalism, socialism, or nationalism as ideologies that likely influenced the author’s ideas in the passage. Successful responses explained, for example, that the author’s call for women to “spread the great ideas of liberty and humanity” through the press reflect Enlightenment or liberal ideas about the perfectibility of the individual through self-expression, self-cultivation, and/or education. Other approaches included explaining how the appeal to collective action by women reflected the ideas of early feminism that women should seek to play a more active role in society and “uplift” themselves through “cultivat[ing] our human potential” and “act[ing] independently.” Yet other subset of responses explained that the call to help “those who anguish forgotten and neglected in poverty, misery, and ignorance” were possibly influenced by the ideology of socialism and its emphasis on improving the lot of industrial workers and the lower classes in society. Many responses went further than just explaining the effects of an ideology and also discussed philosophers, thinkers, and/or activists associated with certain ideologies such as John Locke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympe de Gouges, John Stewart Mill, or Carl Marx.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common mistakes and misconceptions seen in the responses often stemmed from gaps in the students’ chronological or periodization knowledge. Some responses referred to out-of-period events or developments, including the expansion of women’s rights after the First World War, the Holocaust, the Black Death, etc. Other responses (particularly to part B), attempted to present the passage as illustrating the context of timeless patriarchal experiences of women “stuck in the home” and deprived of any rights.

One common mistake seen in responses to part C in particular involved responses identifying an ideology that might have influenced the author’s ideas in the passage but failing to explain how the passage reflects or illustrates the ideology.

Many responses struggled to identify the context of industrialization, difficult working conditions in the factories, or overcrowded and impoverished living conditions of industrial workers as an answer to the task in part B. Such responses often mistook the phrase “those who languish forgotten and neglected in poverty, misery, and ignorance” in the passage to refer to all women, poor women, or women outside of Europe.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One historical context during the 19th century that explains the increased poverty and misery referred to in the 4th paragraph is when women weren’t allowed to work, only stay at home. Since women were forced to not be able to work like men nor have proper education, they were living in misery as stated in the passage. This is them being forgotten and treated unfairly.” <p>(The response to part B did not earn the point because the increased poverty and misery mentioned in the fourth paragraph of the passage is a reference to the economic poverty and misery of industrial workers—including male and female workers—not a reference to the symbolic poverty of women who were not allowed to work because of patriarchal gender norms.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One historical context during the nineteenth century that explains the increased poverty and misery referenced in the fourth paragraph is the Industrial Revolution. For example, as the industrialization took place in Europe many people begin to specialize in certain parts of large working spaces called factories. These factories had low sanitation and incredibly long working hours as well as low wages. Additionally, in order to find jobs many people migrated to cities which were crowded with squalid conditions in housing spaces like tenements. These conditions show how increased poverty and misery referenced was by the author.” <p>(The response to part B accurately describes the historical context of the Industrial Revolution’s effect on working and living conditions for industrial workers.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The author could have been influenced by other governments that allow citizens to have more voice and action on their freedoms like a more democratic style government that has more free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One ideology or set of ideas that likely influenced the author’s claims in the passage is ideas like natural rights and feminism. These set of ideas likely influenced the author's claims

policy. For instance the U.S. had a style government like that, the U.S. although also behind in womans freedoms has the right to free speech, and press.”

(The response to part C does not accurately identify an ideology or a set of ideas—“other governments that allow citizens to have more voice and action on their freedoms” is not a description of an ideology—nor does it explain how the ideas of the author in the passage might have been influenced by the presence of a free press in the United States.)

because the author advocates for spreading ideas of liberty and humanity through the press as well as demanding the right to be able to have freedom, which were many key points in feminism and natural rights. The author is also referencing how women should have the same right as men to explore their potential and the right to act independently, which were main points in the idea of natural rights, where people are given to by God, rights to pursue happiness, freedom, and liberty.”

(The response to part C identifies not one but two sets of ideas that influenced the author’s arguments in the passage and explains how each set of ideas is reflected in the author’s arguments in the passage.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Students’ responses to the stimulus-based SAQs on the AP World History: Modern exam can be enhanced with more classroom practice reading and analyzing primary and secondary sources. Teachers should provide students with opportunities to engage in a “deep reading” of historical sources, emphasizing understanding not only of the manifest content or argument of the source but also of the more subtle references to the document’s historical context or aspects of the document sourcing including purpose, authorial point-of-view, or intended audience.

There is no substitute to reading the three parts of the SAQ prompt thoroughly and understanding them correctly. In the case of this question, part C clearly asked students to explain the influence of “one ideology or set of ideas”—not an individual, institution, or a country—on the author’s claims in the passage. Many responses that failed to earn the point for part C would likely have been successful if they had focused on the analytical categories specified in the prompt.

Many students would benefit from a deeper exploration of how social class mediates individual experiences and expectations throughout history. Although most students were able to discuss the influence of gender and gender norms on Otto-Peter’s ideas in the passage, very few responses addressed the way in which her ideas reflect her own middle-class background (reflected in her emphasis on the “narrower world of our families,” where women should continue to focus on “example, instruction, and child-rearing.”

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on social changes in Europe during the nineteenth century.
 - Unit 5 (Revolutions), Topics 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.8, and 5.9. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.

- AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
- AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
- The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
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Short Answer Question 3

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Muslim Empires Expansion and Policies 1300 to 1600

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.86
SAQ Part B	1	0.51
SAQ Part C	1	0.57
Overall Mean Score:	1.90	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions related to Muslim empires in the period circa 1300 to 1600. For part A, students were asked to identify one technological or military factor that contributed to the territorial expansion of such empires. For part B, students were asked to explain how rulers of such empires used economic policies to generate revenue for their states. For part C, students were asked to explain why some rulers of Muslim land-based empires in this period tolerant policies toward religious or ethnic minorities. Although the question mentioned the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires, student responses were allowed to address any Muslim empire(s) or ruler(s) during the period specified in the prompt. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.6, and 4.7 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Most responses successfully earned the point for part A, typically by identifying technologies such as gunpowder and cannons, or new recruitment methods such as the recruitment of enslaved soldiers in the Ottoman Janissary corps or the Mamluk warrior class in Egypt.

Although part B was more challenging to students than the other two parts of the question, over half of all responses successfully identified a Muslim ruler and/or an economic policy. Successful responses explained the role of tax farming, the collection of the *jiziyah* tax levied on non-Muslim “People of the Book,” tribute from vassal states, and commercial taxes on merchants or trade goods, etc., in generating revenue for the expansion or administration of Muslim empires during this period.

Part C was also quite accessible for students, with over half of all responses successfully earning the point. Responses explained the relative religious tolerance of Muslim empires in a variety of ways, including explanations that ranged from the fairly generic (but still usually successful) “to reduce rebellions,” “to promote peaceful trade,” and “to prevent religious conflicts” to the highly specific (for example, Ottoman rulers instituting the millet system because it would allow the empire’s minorities to administer and tax themselves, thereby reducing the government’s administrative expenses, or Mughal rulers such as Akbar promoting toleration of because of the demographic and religious makeup of their empire).

In general, most student responses provided evidence from the Ottoman or the Mughal empire. Relatively few responses addressed developments in the Safavid empire, and only a tiny number of responses referred to Muslim states—for example the Delhi Sultanates, the Mali Empire, Mamluk Egypt, states in northwest Africa or al-Andalus, Swahili city states, etc.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Although the question scored quite well, there were several types of recurring mistakes and misconceptions present in student responses. Some responses demonstrated lack of knowledge of specific content. This was particularly evident in responses to parts B and C. For part B, many responses lacked specificity and only referred to “trade” or “taxes” as economic policies. A fair number of responses that mentioned tax farming showed a lack of understanding of what the term means—some responses seemed to equate the term with taxes imposed on farming or agricultural products. For part C, students frequently struggled to explain any coherent rationale for Muslim states’ ethnic and religious toleration, offering instead nebulous statements that toleration was meant to “help people” or to “increase their wealth.”

Some responses failed to earn points because of seeming misreadings of the prompt. While rare, this pattern was sometimes seen with responses to part A that discussed the territorial expansion of specific Muslim empires (often in considerable detail) but failed to attribute such expansion to any technological or military factor.

For parts B and C, the requirement that responses should explain their answers often prevented responses from earning these points. Many responses simply identified economic or religious policies, without meeting the required standard of explaining.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Muslim rulers used things like paper money and coins to help generate revenue for the states and empires.” <p>(The response to part B is factually incorrect—paper money was generally not used in Muslim empires during the period specified in the prompt—and its assertion that paper money and coins helped rulers “generate revenue for the states and empires,” simply repeats the language of the prompt instead of providing an explanation.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One way Muslim rulers used economic policies for revenue was the tax system they used in each of their empires. In the Ottoman empire, the usage of tax farming was significant, where private individuals, also known as tax farmers, bid to collect taxes for the states. It helped generate revenue for the Ottoman empire, which was massive in size. Similarly, In the Mughal empire, local landowners known as Zamindars collected taxes from peasants, generating revenue and acting as intermediaries between the state and rural communities.” <p>(The response to part B offers explanations of the benefits of tax farming policies in the Ottoman and Mughal Empires.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One reason some Muslim rulers adopted tolerant policies toward religious or ethnic minorities during the period circa 1300 to 1600 was to create/allow more opportunities for trade.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One reason was to maintain a somewhat centralized rule in an ethnic and religiously diverse empire. Most notably, the Mughal empire under Akbar removed the previous Jizya religious tax on non-Muslims in the empire. Through this, Akbar was able to foster harmony among the

<p>(The response to part C fails to provide a plausible explanation for the reasons Muslim rulers practiced ethnic or religious toleration.)</p>	<p>different ethnic groups in his massive empire, which helped his goal of lowering social unrest.”</p> <p>(The response to part C uses a specific example of toleration—the Mughal Emperor Akbar’s abolition of the <i>jiziyah</i> tax on non-Muslims—and explains how this tolerant policy was designed to promote harmony and lower social unrest in the diverse empire.)</p>
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Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Teachers should continue to instruct students to pay attention to the task verbs used in the various SAQ tasks. *Explain* tasks generally require a higher degree of analysis than *describe* or *identify* tasks and student responses may fail to earn the points for explain tasks even when they present factually accurate evidence.

Teachers should have targeted formative tasks to help students with the choice element of the SAQs (and the LEQs). Have mock-up choice prompts and ask students to annotate and brainstorm to decide which of the two competing prompts they can answer with more relevant evidence and deeper analysis/explanation before they begin writing.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on Muslim empires during the period circa 1300 to 1600.
 - Unit 3 (Land-Based Empires), Topics 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument

development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.

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Short Answer Question 4

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Revolutionary Movements, 1750 to 1900

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.73
SAQ Part B	1	0.54
SAQ Part C	1	0.42
Overall Mean Score:	1.69	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions related to revolutions and/or revolutionary movements in the period circa 1750 to 1900. For part A, students were asked to identify one factor that contributed to the outbreak of revolutions during this period. For part B, students were asked to explain how revolutionary movements made use of ideologies in their attempt to change societies. For part C, students were asked to explain how revolutionary movements were challenged in their attempts to change societies during this period. Students were free to choose the revolution(s), revolutionary movement(s), or ideology/ideologies on which they wished to focus their responses. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 5.1, 5.2, and 5.8 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Most responses earned the point for part A. Students were usually able to identify at least one factor that led to the outbreak of revolutions during the period of the prompt, including Enlightenment ideals, nationalism, economic inequality, lack of liberty or civil rights, and/or inspiration from the successes of other revolutions such as the American or French Revolutions.

For part B, many responses successfully explained how revolutionary movements used Enlightenment ideas and/or nationalism to change society. Responses addressed a variety of examples, including the way the Haitian Revolution was inspired by the universal ideals of equality of the Enlightenment (and of the French Revolution) and the lack of application of these ideals in Haiti's slave society, the way that Latin American revolutions were inspired by both the example of the American Revolution and by the emerging nationalism of Latin American creole elites, or the way that national liberation or national unification movements in the nineteenth century were inspired by nationalism.

While part C was more challenging for students than the other two parts of the question, a fair number of responses were able to identify and explain anti-revolutionary or counter-revolutionary challenges, usually by explaining how established elite groups such as plantation owners in Haiti or the Ottoman government sought to stop and undo the progress of revolutionary movements by military actions, reprisals and/or partial concessions to the revolutionaries demands. Other successful responses to part C discussed the role of internal revolutionary dynamics as a factor challenging the movements, often using the example of Napoleon's transformation of the French Revolution or the fracturing of the Bolivarian state of Gran Colombia into smaller national states.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Most of the responses that failed to earn one or more of the points in this question did so because they lacked specificity. This was particularly evident in the responses to parts B and C. For part B, a number of responses echoed the language of the prompt, stating that revolutionary movements “used ideologies.” It was generally not possible for responses to part B to provide an effective explanation without focusing on at least one specific ideology. For part C, some responses offered only nebulous claims that revolutionary movements “were challenged by many,” “faced many challenges,” or were “challenged by governments” without going into specifics.

For parts B and C, the requirement that responses should explain their answers often prevented responses from earning these points. Many responses simply identified ideologies (for B) or challenges (for C), without meeting the required standard of explaining how these factors affected revolutions or revolutionary movements.

Chronological misconceptions were seen fairly regularly in student responses. This typically entailed offering twentieth-century examples, such as Gandhi’s use of nonviolence, decolonization movements’ use of nationalism and/or socialism (for part B), and/or colonial empires’ attempts to halt the progress of decolonization (for part C).

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Revolutionary movements used ideologies to set a concrete standard for what they were fighting for and to get the people on board with their movement, thus making it easier to change society.” <p>(The response to part B is overgeneralized, failing to name a specific ideology or a revolutionary movement.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In the period circa 1750 to 1900, British settlers part of the British colonies in America used Enlightenment philosophy in their attempt to change societies. During this time, the Enlightenment ideas voiced by those such as John Locke or Rousseau advocated for freedom from the control of Britain and more freedom or rights for the people such as the social contract. These ideas appealed to the British settlers and had influenced their ways of thinking and led to them fighting against the rule of Britain over them. Especially after the British government had continued to impose unfair taxes on the British colonies, British settlers were more inclined to separate from Britain more than ever..” <p>(The response to part B successfully explains how Enlightenment ideology influenced the outbreak of the American Revolution.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One way in which revolutionary movements were challenged as they attempted to change societies during the period circa 1750 to 1900 was 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In France, people, called counterrevolutionaries, had begun to rebel against revolutionaries. They did not want France to get rid of their monarchy, instead wanting to keep the king and queen in

by figuring out how to set up the government and having it run smoothly so they didn't crumble.”

(The response to part C refers to a historically accurate challenge that many revolutionary movements faced—how to set up a government—but the lack of references to any specific examples of this dynamic prevents the response from rising to the level of an explanation.)

power. In the American colonies, a similar thing happened. There were loyalists, who were colonists who wanted to stay loyal to the British crown and not break from it. Both of these groups posed challenges to the revolutionary efforts of the revolutionaries, but they ultimately did not stop the revolutionaries from obtaining their respective main goals.”

(The response to part C accurately explains how counterrevolutionaries and loyalists challenged the revolutionary movements in the cases of the French and American revolutions.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Teachers should continue to instruct students to pay attention to the task verbs used in the various SAQ tasks. *Explain* tasks generally require a higher degree of analysis than *describe* or *identify* tasks and student responses may fail to earn the points for *explain* tasks even when they present factually accurate evidence.

Teachers should have targeted formative tasks to help students with the choice element of the SAQs (and the LEQs). Have mock-up choice prompts and ask students to annotate and brainstorm to decide which of the two competing prompts they can answer with more relevant evidence and deeper analysis/explanation before they begin writing.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP[®] Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on revolutionary movements, ideologies, and challenges to revolutionary movements during the period circa 1750 to 1900.
 - Unit 5 (Revolutions), Topics 5.1, 5.2, and 5.8. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”

- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Document-Based Question 1

Task: Document-Based Question

Topic: Transportation / Communication Technologies and African Societies, 1850 to 1960

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
Thesis	1	0.80
Contextualization	1	0.54
Evidence from the Documents	2	1.61
Evidence Beyond the Documents	1	0.19
Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing	1	0.29
Analysis and Reasoning: Complex Understanding	1	0.17
Overall Mean Score:	3.61	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Responses to this question were expected to use the seven documents provided with the question as well as students' outside historical knowledge to evaluate the extent to which new transportation and/or communication technologies affected African societies during the period 1850 to 1960. The question provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their mastery of multiple Historical Thinking Skills 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED). While the question focused primarily on the reasoning process of causation, it also provided students with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the reasoning process of continuity and change over time. The question covered content from multiple Topics in Unit 6, primarily those dealing with industrialization, industrial technologies, economic imperialism, and the spread of industrialization. The question also covered some content from Unit 8, in particular those dealing with decolonization (Topics 8.1 and 8.5), as well as some topics in Unit 8, such as 8.1 and 8.5.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses demonstrated a good understanding of the major historical developments related to industrialization and imperialism. Students were able to identify that many parts of Europe successfully industrialized during the middle- to late-nineteenth century and then explain that this led to increased need for acquisition of industrial resources and markets, which, in turn resulted in the spread of European imperial expansion in Africa. Students were also able to explain how transportation and communications technologies, including railroads and telegraphs, facilitated imperialism which then impacted African societies.

Responses were also generally successful in using the documents and demonstrated a good understanding of how each of the seven documents reflected the process of European resource acquisition and control in Africa. Most responses were able to use some or all the documents to analyze the effects of communication and transportation technologies on African societies. Effects commonly addressed in the responses included economic hardships, economic opportunities (including trade), resistance to imperialism, spread of diseases and social problems, bringing in elements of Western society and culture to Africa, and migration/group mobility both within Africa and to Africa from other regions.

Most responses also demonstrated the ability to frame an argument with a thesis statement that demonstrated an understanding of how European technology impacted African societies in at least one way. Most thesis statements focused on the effect of transportation and communication technologies in transforming the economies of the parts of various parts of Africa that were subject to European colonization and imperialism,

as well as the effect of those technologies in transforming the lives of Africans through the spread of diseases or new cultural practices.

The most effective responses showed the ability to use the information provided in the document and integrate it with outside knowledge either from parts of Africa not covered by the documents or from other colonial or post-colonial contexts outside of Africa. Even though many responses did not attempt to address all seven documents, those that did so usually were the most successful as they had the widest array of evidence and authorial perspectives from which to construct their arguments. The responses that earned the point for complexity usually did so either by effectively using all seven documents to construct a sophisticated argument or by successfully analyzing aspects of the sourcing of four or more of the documents.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Responses were less successful in teasing out specific effects on African societies from the content of individual documents. Many responses stated that certain documents showed either harmful or beneficial economic effects on African societies. This approach could be successful if followed up by adequate explanation or elaboration; however, some responses simply classified the documents into “positive” and “negative” categories, which was insufficient to earn the points for evidence.

Responses often struggled to analyze elements of the sourcing of the documents. Many attempts at sourcing simply repeated information provided in the document source line. Other attempts at sourcing failed to explain how the sourcing information identified was relevant to an argument about the effects of transportation or communication technologies on African societies.

Earning the point for evidence beyond the documents was also a challenge for many students. In fairness to the students, the document selection did not leave obvious opportunities for bringing in outside knowledge, as many of the most frequently studied colonial resources (rubber, palm oil, cotton, cocoa, gold, diamonds) are mentioned in the documents. Nonetheless, the number of responses that provided relevant evidence outside the documents, such as various aspects of industrialization or industrial technologies, events or developments relative to the spread of European imperialism in Africa, or specific transportation projects in Africa, was notably low.

Responses often struggled with the chronological frame of the prompt (1850 to 1960) and the fact that it spans two chronological periods from the CED, without covering the entirety of either one of these periods. The chronology of Document 7 in particular—a memoir published in 2014 but referring to the author’s childhood in the 1950s and 1960s, while referring to the construction of railroads built in Nigeria by the British in the 1930s—proved confusing to many students. Another chronological error was the fact that some responses tried unsuccessfully to analyze the documents with reference to the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade.

The image in Document 2 generated a fair amount of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Many responses interpreted the image as evidence that African miners were being economically exploited (which was generally not interpreted as an error even though the image is intended to show new economic opportunities rather than exploitation), but a subset of responses misidentified the miners as being enslaved and erroneously attempted to connect the image to the broader theme of slavery and the slave trade.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “New transportation and/ or communication technologies affected African societies during the period circa 1850 - 1960 by sharing information of resources and products. In document four, it is shared that ‘huge new cotton mills’ in Egypt are progressive and up to date. As well as the fact that local shops were replaced by ‘storefronts with large windows Displaying products of European industry’ and ‘huge hotels and commercial buildings have replaced the former delightful residences of the elite.’ which in turn made the ‘city attractive to many.’” <p>(The attempted document analysis does not identify a specific, valid effect on African societies beyond the vague claim that these technologies helped share “information of resources and products” and the use of the document is mostly limited to quoting from the text.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In general, transportation and communication technologies benefitted African socitiei, despite mainly being developed to benefit the European colonizers. In addition to the benefits, transportation and communication also has the potential to ruin lives of Africans by also facilitating the spread of deadly diseases or by causing them to fall into poverty with taxes needed to fund the construction of the railways.” <p>(This response provides a nuanced thesis that balances specific positive and negative effects, setting up the analytical categories that would be developed in the response.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In Document 4, it shows how African societies are promoted by the passenger servies of a British shipping company, complimenting the changes that have been made within Cairo. Transportation has always played an important role in the history of African societies, dating back to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, bringing those enslaved into the Americas.” <p>(The attempted analysis of the document by drawing an analogy to the role of transportation in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade is ineffective.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Prior examples of African conflict against Eurpeans, such as Queen Nzinga’s revolts, did not specifically focus on targeting communication infrastrucutre. However, as detailed in communcations between British military officials, Ashanti warriors had targeted and attacked telegraph lines leading to the British sending additional troops to counter the attacks and restore communication (<u>Document 3</u>). The <u>purpose</u> of this document was to coordinate British response and military activity in the conflict against the Ashanti, and it thus serves to reason that the depictions of Ashanti attacks are accurate and detailed, as accurate reports would have been desired when planning military activities. Thus, new communication systems such as the telegraph changed the methods by which African states conducted warfare.” <p>(This response successfully analyzes both the historical situation and the purpose of the document to support an argument about the</p>

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Too many students are still quoting directly from the documents with no value-added text transformation or evidence of accurate comprehension. In many ways, the change to an all-digital exam format has made this practice more prevalent as it is easier for students to quickly type or copy-and-paste a quote from the documents. Students need to practice putting document information into their own words and become more skilled at paraphrasing, rather than quoting. Effective paraphrasing of primary sources from different eras into student language demonstrates to the scorer that the student understands the content of the source and often sets the stage for the higher-level skills of using the documents to support an argument and/or creating a synthetic narrative that places the documents in conversation with each other. In the classroom, teachers can challenge students to demonstrate how much of their response is building upon the content of the document, rather than simply quoting, by tasking them with redacting out all document words in their initial essay drafts. Such a visual could help students understand how using extensive direct quotations harms their ability to craft an argument that demonstrates their command of the content and mastery of the historical thinking skills.

The free-response questions on the AP World History: Modern exam often adopt a periodization that best suits the prompt and/or the documents, rather than using one of the four chronological periods from the CED. Considering this, teachers should emphasize the connections across course-period boundaries, for example the continuation of European imperialism from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century and avoid giving students the impression that big global developments can be siloed into certain periods. In this case, the association of imperialism in Africa with the 1800s led many students to try to limit their responses to the period 1750 to 1900, resulting in strained attempts at trying to link the topic of the prompt to the slave trade and, on the other end of the chronological spectrum, difficulty in incorporating the mid-twentieth-century content of Document 7 into student responses.

Interactions between geographical regions should continue to be a focus of instruction and formative assessment throughout the school year. Studying phenomena like industrialization or colonization in only one region can be an obstacle to success on free-response questions that often ask students to adopt for a cross-regional or global analytical lens.

Teachers should refrain from endorsing or encouraging strategies that seek to “game” the rubric or to earn the maximum number of points with a minimum amount of effort. We saw plenty of DBQ responses that only used four documents, or only attempted sourcing analysis of two of the documents. In addition to not being conducive to student learning and historical thinking skill development, such strategies often fail to produce the desired result because they leave no margin for error or misinterpretation of the documents. Responses that used all seven documents and attempted sourcing of four or more documents had a much better chance of earning the rubric points, including the point for demonstrating complex understanding.

Making students comfortable with the use of primary sources should continue to be a primary focus of instruction. Teachers should provide students with opportunities to read, understand, and use primary sources in their written assignments throughout the year. Teachers should continue to emphasize that using documents in the context of writing a DBQ response entails more than just understanding and describing the content of the sources. Document-based tasks should focus on how a source can be used to support an argument (for example, by associating documents with the argument about the prompt that they are best

suited to support) or organize documents into various “takes” or “perspectives” about the topic of the prompt. Students continue to struggle with sourcing the documents, and so designing effective teaching strategies around sourcing continues to be a high priority. Tasks that help students make effective use of document attribution lines (for example, anticipating what a document might say or argue based solely on the attribution line) can be highly effective in that regard.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for a DBQ focused on the extent to which new transportation and communication technologies affected African societies during the period 1850 to 1960.
 - Content from the following units and topics focused on this prompt with regard to historical background, contextualization, and evidence beyond the documents: Unit 5 (Revolutions), Topics 5.3 & 5.5; Unit 6 (Consequences of Industrialization), Topic 6.4; Unit 7 (Global Conflict), Topic 7.9; Unit 8 (Cold War and Decolonization), Topics 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, and 8.6; Unit 9 (Globalization), Topic 9.9. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the DBQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 7 and 8 for 2024, Practice Sessions 4 and 8 for 2023, Review Session 8 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include DBQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer a DBQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These skills-based modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Long Essay Question 2

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Buddhism, Hinduism, and/or Confucianism Effects on Asian Societies, 1200 to 1450

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
Thesis	1	0.67
Contextualization	1	0.46
Evidence	2	1.40
Analysis and Reasoning	2	0.85
Overall Mean Score:	3.23	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to measure students' ability to explain how the belief systems of Hinduism, Confucianism, and/or Buddhism affected societies and political systems in Asia circa the period 1200–1450. Students were allowed to choose whether to focus their responses on the effects of one or more than one of these three belief systems. Students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context relevant to the prompt, use at least two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt, use that evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame or structure their argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. The question was primarily focused on content from Units 1 and 2 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED), including Topics 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5. The main course themes covered by the question were Governance and Cultural Developments and Interactions.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

In general, student responses were successful in addressing the historical developments and processes referred to in the prompt. A sizeable majority of the responses earned the thesis point, mostly with claims that belief systems reinforced existing political systems by promoting ideas of fixed social hierarchies. Although many responses, including some very strong ones, chose to focus on the effects of one of the three belief systems provided in the prompt, the top-level responses typically addressed more than one belief system.

Students generally had no difficulty providing evidence for their arguments on this question, and most responses earned at least one point for evidence. Key pieces of historical evidence seen in the responses included Confucian ideas or practices like filial piety, the Mandate of Heaven, the five key hierarchical relationships in Confucianism, and the imperial examination system; Hindu ideas and practices like the four basic groups in society, the caste system, practices designed to maintain the power of the Brahmin and warrior groups; and Buddhist ideas and practices like the monastic tradition in Buddhism, and the Buddhist rejection of caste distinctions. Promotion or endorsement of patriarchal gender norms was often mentioned as a common thread in all three religious traditions.

Many responses earned the point for historical reasoning by successfully explaining various ways in which the beliefs and/or practices of these belief systems were used to create and maintain hierarchies of power in societies, reinforce male-dominated gender roles, foster respect for precedent and tradition, or legitimize the rule of emperors or ruling dynasties.

Although only a small portion of the responses earned the point for demonstrating complex understanding, those that did so often provided insightful or nuanced comparison between the effects of various belief

systems on politics during the early period of the course. Some of these attempts offered comparisons between two or more of the belief systems mentioned in the prompt (with responses offering parallels between the effects of Confucianism and Hinduism being the most prevalent), while other responses offered comparisons with other belief systems such as Christianity or Islam.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

A fair number of responses did not attempt to earn the point for contextualization. Many students started their responses directly with their thesis attempts and moved on to the body of the essay, without any attempts at contextualizing their response.

Although the prompt asked for effects on societies and/or political systems, a minority of responses focused only on political impacts (resulting from a misread of the “and/or” conjunction as an “and”). These responses typically offered less evidence and earned lower scores than responses that showed an accurate understanding of the prompt.

There were many responses that successfully earned the thesis point but struggled to earn the points for evidence, suggesting that lack of specific historical knowledge related to the prompt may have been a factor limiting scores on this question. This was particularly true of responses that focused on the effects of Hinduism, as many students appeared unable to provide any evidence of Hinduism’s social effects beyond the caste system. Very few responses used the illustrative examples pertaining to beliefs and practices in South and Southeast Asia (for example, the Bhakti movement or the role of Hinduism in early South Asian Sufi practices) or provided details about the new Hindu/Buddhist states that developed during this period.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “With this newfound religion [Buddhism], many Chinese changed their mindsets. Yet the same did not happen for Hinduism in India. Hinduism created many problems for Indians. It caused divides with other religions there, yet held strong in some areas.” <p>(This response is an example of a common overgeneralized thesis attempt.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Confucianism’s social hierarchies also assisted in its ability to maintain its power, not to mention that ancient Chinese belief in the mandate of heaven ... was the belief that the gods had chosen the rules, and if things started going badly during their rule, then it was a sign from the gods that a leadership change was needed.” <p>(This response explains how Confucianism could be used either to maintain existing power structures or, in times of political crisis, legitimize leadership change.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “During the period 1200-1450, religions became a major part of state building for empires like the Song Dynasty or the Vijayanagara empire. Religion influenced social, economic, and political ideas during the time period and shaped Asian societies.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In the period 1200-1450, the Asian continent experienced a time of increasing interconnectedness. This is due to the bolstering of trade from the development of continental trade routes such as the Silk Road, and the commercialization of economies under Song China, namely the use of paper money and

(Even though it mentions two Asian states during the period of the prompt, this attempt to earn the contextualization point is unsuccessful because it fails to describe any specific use of religion by the Song Dynasty or the Vijayanagara Empire.)

credit/banking systems, which encouraged merchants to make much further voyages to sell their luxury goods, which paved the way for cultural and religious diffusions all across Asia where certain customs and traditions picked up and heavily influenced Asian societies during this period.”

(This answer successfully situates the topic of the prompt in a broader context of greater interconnectedness and economic and cultural diffusion in Asia during the period from circa 1200 to 1450.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Use the CED as a guide and roadmap for the course, helping students understand historical developments and processes; students struggled with contextualization and understanding what was taking place beyond the location and period of the question.

Have students spend time brainstorming all that they know about the region, the period, and the themes of the question before attempting to put their thoughts into an essay.

Where the CED contains less specific information in the Key Concepts (KCs) and more specific information in the illustrative examples, make sure to provide instruction in at least one illustrative example or another historical example of the broader process illustrated by the KCs. For this question, where many of the relevant KCs are quite broad (especially those in Unit 1), it was clear that many students struggled to come up with enough specific and relevant evidence even when they knew the broader processes and developments.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an LEQ on the extent to which belief systems such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism, shaped societies and/or political systems in Asia during the period circa 1200 to 1450.
 - Unit 1 (The Global Tapestry), Topics 1.1 and 1.3; Unit 2 (Networks of Exchange), Topics 2.2, 2.3, and 2.5. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the LEQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 5 and 6 in 2024, Practice Sessions 3 and 7 for 2023, Review Session 7 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include LEQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an LEQ.

- The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Long Essay Question 3

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Economic Rivalries and European Imperial Expansion, 1450 to 1750

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
Thesis	1	0.61
Contextualization	1	0.52
Evidence	2	1.11
Analysis and Reasoning	2	0.60
Overall Mean Score:	2.84	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to measure students' ability to explain the role of economic rivalries as a factor in the expansion of European empires during the period from 1450 to 1750. The question allowed students to choose which specific European empires and economic rivalries their responses would focus on. Students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context relevant to the prompt, use at least two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt, use that evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame or structure their argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. Students could also argue that there were other motives that factored into European expansion and that these other factors were more significant than economic rivalries. The question was primarily focused on content from Unit 4 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED), including Topics 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6. The main course themes covered by the question were Governance and Economic Systems.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses were generally successful in addressing the historical developments and processes referred to in the prompt. Most responses showed that students have solid knowledge of the topic of the establishment of maritime empires including both trading-post empires and the maritime empires established during the period from 1450 to 1750. Successful responses provided specific examples of economic rivalries, such as the Dutch-Portuguese rivalry in the seventeenth century and the English-French and English-Spanish rivalries in the eighteenth century and explained why such rivalries caused expansion of European empires into the Americas and/or along the coasts of Africa, India, or Southeast Asia.

While comparison between the ways different European countries built their overseas empires was not a required part of the question, many of the top-level responses took a comparative approach and discussed similarities and/or differences between individual countries' empire-building projects. Such comparisons often compared Dutch and Portuguese colonization—with its focus on controlling shipping routes, strategic “choke points,” and small coastal trading posts—with Spanish and later English and French colonization, which emphasized political control of large territories and various degrees of settler imperialism. Another comparative angle taken by some of the responses was to compare state-sponsored imperialism (exemplified by the Spanish and the Portuguese) to “company” imperialism (exemplified by the Dutch VOC and the English EIC). Most of the responses that used comparison argued that the desire for economic profit was the underlying commonality behind all European imperial expansion during this period.

Most responses accepted the premise built into the prompt and argued that economic rivalries were the primary motivation for the expansion of European empires. Specific economic rivalries that were often seen in the responses—and credited toward the evidence points—included the rivalry over the control of access to the

spice-producing regions in South and Southeast Asia, the rivalry over access to the supply of enslaved people along the slave ports of West Africa, the rivalry over control of territories in the Americas, including the rivalry over sources of precious metals and mining centers and the rivalry over suitable territories where cash crops could be grown. A smaller number of responses argued against the premise of the prompt and claimed that religious rivalries were the primary factor behind European imperial expansion. This approach could also be successful when supported by specific evidence (for example, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations in Europe, the formation of missionary-focused religious orders such as the Jesuits, the Treaty of Tordesillas, the search for a safe haven by religiously marginalized groups such as the English Puritans, etc.).

About half of the responses were successful in earning the point for contextualization, often by explaining the development of navigational technologies and state sponsored exploration led to the colonization of the Americas or the development of trading post empires. Other successful approaches to earning the contextualization point included situating European imperial rivalries in the context of mercantilist economic theories and/or practices. (Discussions of mercantilism could count either toward the context point or toward the evidence points, depending on the way the concept was used in each response.)

Although only a small portion of the responses earned the point for demonstrating complex understanding, those that did so typically provided an abundance of specific and relevant evidence (four or more pieces) in support of an argument about the prompt. Another successful approach to earning the evidence point was seen in responses that argued that even though the expansion of European empires was a major change in Asian and African trade, pre-1450 trading patterns also continued, for example Muslim-merchant dominated trade routes in the Indian Ocean or intra-African slave trade network.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

A fair number of responses failed to earn the point for thesis because they only stated that economic rivalries were the main factor in European imperialism but did not provide a line of reasoning, i.e., an indication of how or why such rivalries drove imperial expansion.

A number of responses demonstrated gaps in the students’ knowledge of chronology or periodization. In particular, many responses offered as evidence late-nineteenth-century developments associated with “New Imperialism” rather than the 1540 to 1750 period specified in the prompt.

Some responses struggled to distinguish between economic rivalries and political, dynastic, or national rivalries.

Although not very common, some responses were purely narrative, offering information about colonization but little or no analysis.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Other states also needed raw materials for their industrial economies. King Leopold II needed rubber from the Congo in order to produce goods in Belgium.” <p>(This response gives an example of a commonly seen chronological/periodization misconception:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Some may say that the primary reason that European powers expanded their empires during this period was not the economic rivalries between them, and instead the goal to convert many indigenous groups to Christianity. While this was an important motivation, it was not the main one. This is because, while many

<p>evidence related to the “New Imperialism” of the late nineteenth century rather than the period specified in the prompt.)</p>	<p>missionaries were sent out to convert the natives in the Americas, this was mainly so that it would be easier to subjugate the population and then exploit them for economic benefit. Another reason is that Portuguese attempts at conversion in the Indian Ocean were quite small, and much smaller than their successful attempt to dominate the Indian Ocean Trade.”</p> <p>(This answer provides a nuanced evaluation of the relative importance of economic versus religious motivations for imperial expansion, with justification of the argument that one was more important than the other.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “During this time period, the Columbian Exchange was occurring. The Columbian Exchange was the trafficking of diseases, foods, and animals from the Old World (Europe) to the New World (the Americas). This exchange led to the syncretism of many ideas and was beneficial for both areas.” <p>(The attempted contextualization is unsuccessful because the discussion of the Columbian exchange and its effects on syncretism is not relevant to European economic rivalries or the establishment of European empires.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The main motivation behind the expansion of European states is access to raw resources. This can be seen by the widespread use of mercantilism, an economic system where colonies would provide raw materials to their imperial states, where the parent states would then use the resources provided to manufacture goods that are then sold and sent back to the colonies. While political and religious rivalries did play a part in the expansion of European- with European states wanting territory to appear powerful and there being many initiatives in the Americas to spread Christianity to the native populations- they weren’t nearly as prominent as the economic reasons.” <p>(This response demonstrates successful use of historical reasoning by explaining mercantilism and how it influenced European colonialism as well as evaluating the importance of economic and non-economic factors behind imperial expansion.)</p>

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Use the CED to prepare students for answering LEQ prompts. The Learning Objectives in the CED can be used to structure content and provide “big-picture” organizing questions for each unit. In the case of this question, Learning Objectives in Unit 4 specifically mention the role of economic causes in maritime exploration and expansion (Unit 4: Learning Objective C) and the role of economic strategies and conflicts between states (Unit 4: Learning Objective H).

Teachers should continue to emphasize the importance of mastering accurate chronology and periodization. Especially for long-term historical processes like imperialism, it is essential for students to be able to

distinguish between early and late events, motivations, and effects related to the overall process. In the case of imperialism, teachers should use formative assessments that highlight both the continuities between “early” and “late imperialism” and require students to be able to place major historical developments related to imperialism in the correct chronological sequence.

While the prompt of this question was global in its geographic coverage, the higher-level student responses tended to demonstrate better knowledge of specific regions and locations of imperial expansion or conflicts. Teachers should continue to prioritize geographic literacy as part of the AP World History: Modern course. Use blank maps and map quizzes to help students connect their content knowledge to specific places as well as to explore the role of geography as a factor in fostering or limiting trans-regional contacts.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an LEQ on the extent to which economic rivalries were a primary motivation for the expansion of European empires during the period circa 1450 to 1750.
 - Unit 4 (Transoceanic Encounters), Topics 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, and 4.5. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the LEQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 5 and 6 in 2024, Practice Sessions 3 and 7 for 2023, Review Session 7 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include LEQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an LEQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Long Essay Question 4

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Medical / Scientific Discoveries Benefitting Individuals or Societies, Twentieth Century

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
Thesis	1	0.79
Contextualization	1	0.38
Evidence	2	1.17
Analysis and Reasoning	2	0.53
Overall Mean Score:	2.87	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to measure students' ability to evaluate the role of medical and/or scientific discoveries in bettering the lives and individuals and/or bringing benefits to societies in general during the twentieth century. The question allowed students to choose which medical and/or scientific discoveries or advances to focus on. Students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context relevant to the prompt, use at least two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt, use that evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame or structure their argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. Students could also argue that medical and/or scientific advances did not benefit individuals or societies or that they had ambivalent (positive and negative) effects. The question was primarily focused on content from Unit 9 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED), including Topics 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, 9.6, and 9.7. The main course themes covered by the question were Technology and Innovation, Social Interactions and Organization, and Economic Systems.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

A large majority of responses successfully crafted a thesis statement and earned the point. Responses that focused on the effects of medical discoveries were particularly strong as most students were able to formulate claims addressing the benefits of vaccines and/or antibiotics in lowering death rates, extending life expectancies, eradicating diseases, and/or allowing women to have greater control of their reproductive choices. Responses that focused on non-medical scientific advances tended to be more uneven, but most were still able to earn the thesis point by crafting claims about societal benefits, for example the harnessing of new forms of energy (nuclear, solar, wind, etc.), the use of advances in chemistry and biology to create pesticides and genetically modified crops providing better yields, or discoveries in electronics and communication technologies leading to the rise of mass media and the internet.

Although the share of responses that were able to situate their argument in a broader historical context was not particularly high, successful contextualization attempts often linked the medical and scientific discoveries in the twentieth century to earlier developments in the natural sciences, referencing events from the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, or the nineteenth century. Alternatively, some responses earned the Contextualization point by discussing health or environmental challenges during the Industrial Revolution (poor sanitation in urban centers, cholera epidemics, etc.) as the motivations for medical or scientific research. A third group of responses successfully contextualized their arguments by referring to the connection between military conflicts (such as the First World War) and disease as a driver of twentieth-century medical research into vaccines and antibiotics.

Although only a small portion of the responses earned the point for demonstrating complex understanding, those that did so often demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the often-contradictory effects of twentieth-century medical or scientific developments on individual lives and/or as a benefit to societies. Such responses often balanced their discussion of the positive effects of medical or scientific innovations with countervailing examples, such as the rise of new diseases associated with longer lifespans and/or sedentary lifestyles, or the rise of monocultures or food supply chains that offered an abundance of food but often at the expense of quality or nutritional value. Nuanced responses often addressed the environmental downsides of the Green Revolution and/or cited the release of greenhouse gases or nuclear accidents such as Chernobyl.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Somewhat surprisingly for such a seemingly accessible question, many students struggled to provide enough specific, in-period evidence to support their arguments. Such responses were often either too general (for example, discussing the effects of “medicine” or “science” without elaboration or specifics) or offered as evidence present-day, rather than twentieth-century developments. The latter type of responses typically discussed COVID-19 and the vaccines that were developed against it, social media, iPhones, etc. While the scoring of the question was designed to give students a wide berth for discussing late-twentieth century medical or scientific advances (for example, choosing the Internet as an example of a scientific discovery could earn points), many responses seemed to focus on technologies or advances from the students’ own daily lives, rather than historical examples from the period specified in the prompt.

Some responses that did provide relevant evidence (and thereby earned the first evidence point) failed to explain the connection between the medical and/or scientific discoveries they had chosen to discuss and the benefit (or lack of benefit) to individuals and societies. Such responses often asserted that a given discovery was positive or a benefit to some individuals or groups, but they failed to develop the argument further to support that assertion. For example, many responses stated that new forms of energy generation in the twentieth century benefited society, but they did not explain how or why that benefit occurred (for example, through decreased costs of energy, lesser dependence on fossil fuels, reduced environmental pollution, and so forth. Likewise, many responses asserted that advances in birth control benefitted women in the twentieth century, but only a subset of these responses went on to explain the benefit to women (in terms of greater earning potential, improved ability to pursue an education or a professional career, reduced risk of pregnancy and birth-related mortality, etc.). Such responses typically failed to earn the second point for evidence, the point for historical argumentation, or both points.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Medical advancement had change on life expectiancies, improved access to certain resources, and even affected social and economic structures, which in turn would impact people’s individual lives. Discoveries such as this inevitably were beneficial for schooling and the younger generation that was going through with their education. Advancemnts in medical and scientific studies also meant more job oppurtuinutes for those who pursured that field it also helps with knowing the human body and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Green Revolution, in which GMOs, pesticides, fertilizers, and other agricultural chemicals were introduced, was intrumental in helping to curb hunger in many LDCs. Farmers were able to grow more food on the same amount of land, which led to surpluses which they could store for the future or sell in markets to gain profits. However, despite its many benefits, the Green Revolution was not entirely beneficial: the costs of the new chemicals often was too high for farmers, who had to sell their

<p>allowing those who would not be capable of doing so before be able to aid themselves in simple things that are off with their body. Scientific advancements would lead to leaps in the development of technology and would also provide many who pursued and studied the field with job opportunities that were not there before such as more jobs as teachers, doctors, scientist and even assistants of all those jobs would be in more demand.”</p> <p>(This largely substance-free argument does not address any specific medical or technological discovery or advance or make any plausible connections between medicine and/or technology and individual or social benefits.)</p>	<p>land to large corporations. The Green Revolution also caused pollution due to runoff from chemically-treated fields and many people became skeptical of the safety of consuming genetically modified organisms. However, the Green Revolution’s effects were still more positive than negative, since they ultimately helped to reduce starvation and hunger, which was a much bigger problem worldwide before the Revolution than it is today.”</p> <p>(This response offers a nuanced analysis of the positive and negative effects of the green revolution, with evidence to substantiate both sides of the argument.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The extent to which medical and scientific discoveries changed peoples lives during this period is, immense, for example, the invention of birth control led to the roaring 20’s, and the invention of morphine allowed for soldiers to be put back on the battlefield. New scientific discoveries were being made such as, the space race, it led to the discoveries of the effects of space on animals, and humans. Another scientific discovery was the atomic bomb, which was used in WWII, to defeat the Japanese. <p>(This response identifies examples of scientific and medical advances and some of their effects, but fails to explain how or to what extent the effects represent benefits to individuals or societies.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Through the discovery of genetic engineering, the modification of plants, which was the basis for the Green Revolution benefitted individuals. The Green Revolution led to more productive crops, which meant that there would be more food to feed the population. As a result of the increase of food, populations and life expectancy increased.” <p>(This answer explains how the specific scientific discovery of genetic engineering led to more crops which caused longer life expectancy.)</p>

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Teachers should continue to emphasize the importance of mastering accurate chronology and periodization. For questions that address more recent historical developments, especially questions related to scientific or technological advances, globalization, economic integration and other processes that continue into the present day, it is important to teach students to distinguish pre-2001 events and developments that could be legitimate targets of assessment on the AP World History: Modern exam, and post 2001 events and developments that are unlikely to be tested. Teachers should emphasize the importance of chronology and have students practice classifying information by time period so they can support their argument with relevant facts to the period in the prompt.

Teachers should provide multiple opportunities for their students (for example through through-course formative assessments) to practice the skill of historical argumentation, supporting an argument with multiple

pieces of evidence; encouraging students to avoid monocausal explanations or one-sided effects, explore counter-arguments and competing explanations, and acquire other skills that can be useful in crafting effective answers to the LEQ.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an LEQ on the extent to which medical and scientific discoveries benefited individuals and/or societies during the twentieth century.
 - Unit 7 (Global Conflict), Topics 7.3 and 7.7; Unit 9 (Globalization), Topics 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5. All these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the LEQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 5 and 6 in 2024, Practice Sessions 3 and 7 for 2023, Review Session 7 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
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