

2025



AP[®] Seminar

Free-Response Questions

Set 2

SEMINAR

Directions:

The AP Seminar Exam has 2 parts: Part A, which contains 3 prompts, and Part B. You can move back and forth between Part A and Part B at any time, but you should manage your time carefully, spending approximately 30 minutes on Part A and approximately 90 minutes on Part B.

Use complete sentences; an outline or bulleted list is not acceptable.

You may use scratch paper for notes and planning, but credit will only be given for responses entered in this application. Text you enter as an annotation will **not** be included as part of your answer. You can go back and forth between questions in this section until time expires. The clock will turn red when 5 minutes remain—**the proctor will not give you any time updates or warnings.**

Note: This exam was originally administered digitally. It is presented here in a format optimized for teacher and student use in the classroom.

PART A
TIME – 30 MINUTES

Read the following passage and then respond to prompts A1, A2, and A3.

- A1. Identify the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis.
- A2. Explain the author’s line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them.
- A3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument.

Excerpted from Milman, Oliver. “America’s Big Shift to Green Energy Has a Woolly Mammoth Problem.” *The Guardian*, 22 May 2023.

America’s renewable energy drive needs more than a million miles of new transmission lines but emerging resistance includes opponents worried about building them in one of the country’s richest areas of ice-age fossils.

The Greenlink West project would build a 470-mile-long transmission line bringing clean electricity north of Las Vegas to Reno in Nevada, but it cuts through an area containing everything from woolly mammoth tusks to giant sloths to ancient camels.

The pushback has highlighted a major...challenge...—how to quickly build vast new networks of electricity transmission across America without falling afoul of local communities and green groups.

If the US is to eliminate planet-heating emissions by 2050 it will need to increase the capacity of its current 700,000¹ circuit-mile network of poles and wires by threefold, researchers have estimated,² in order to electrify key components of everyday life and shift intermittent wind and solar energy to areas where the sun isn’t shining or wind isn’t blowing.

The nascent³ stages of this gargantuan effort, the scale of which hasn’t been seen since the US built out its highway system in the 1950s, are already facing opposition from various conservation groups, locals and fossil fuel interests from New England to the Arizona desert.

“Transmission is contentious because it’s long, it’s linear, so it affects a lot of people,” said Jessica Wilkinson, North America renewable energy team lead at the Nature Conservancy. “We are seeing local concerns being raised and they are growing as these projects increase in size. It’s all new to people.”

Suddenly, as lawmakers jostle over ways to speed up new projects, local opposition seems likely to grow. “It’s only been energy nerds like me into this, most people haven’t really thought about it,” said Tim Latimer, chief executive of Fervo Energy, a developer of geothermal projects.

“But this is the next big barrier to renewables. There really is no transition without transmission.”

Those committed to preventing the defilement⁴ of valued landscapes are now placed in a conundrum⁵ where an unprecedented amount of infrastructure development is needed to protect those landscapes, as well as people, from global heating.

Sherri Grotheer, president of the Protectors of Tule Springs Fossil Beds, said that she is “very concerned” about [the] climate crisis but that she wanted federal authorities to come up with an alternative route for Greenlink than slicing through the Nevada monument, which could disturb fossils that are hundreds of thousands of years old.

“Sometimes kneejerk reactions can cause unintended consequences and we know there are innumerable fossils left here, there is evidence of fossils everywhere just under the surface,” she said of Tule Springs, a 23,000-acre monument situated north of Las Vegas protected for its fossils under the auspices of the National Park Service since 2014.

“It’s one of the most significant fossil sites in the continental US and maybe beyond,” said Grotheer. “It’s just very cool. I just want them to look at alternative routes. There is also the concern of putting projects like this in national parks, because then you think ‘where does this end?’”

For developers of renewable energy projects, however, the lack of transmission capacity is a major headache. Even as clean energy projects have gathered pace, turbocharged by last year’s \$370[billion] in climate spending via the Inflation Reduction Act, they face frustrating waits to be connected to a fragmented, congested electricity grid.

The typical wait is now nearly four years,⁶ with much longer delays than this experienced by some companies. While the tap of new funding for renewables is now gushing, it risks being wasted due to the lack of a metaphorical hosepipe.

The US Department of Energy has said there is a “pressing need” for new infrastructure, with California alone needing to add more than \$9[billion]-worth of new transmission to avoid rolling power blackouts as wildfires and other climate-driven disruptions mount.

“We need to solve this problem if we are going to deal with climate change,” said Latimer. Fervo has been able to establish geothermal projects in Utah and Nevada—tapping into the steam from underground heat to spin turbines—but Latimer said other opportunities have been hampered by the lack of grid opportunities.

“I can’t tell you how many places we’ve seen and thought, ‘Wow, the geology is excellent for geothermal, but we just can’t get the transmission,’” he said.

“It’s difficult to get private finance for something where you can’t get revenues for nine more years, so you just give up. The system is gummed up but that is just the tip of the iceberg because many people don’t even try to get a spot in the line.”

Wilkinson said that smart planning can avoid disturbing valued landscapes and help reduce this tension. A recent report she co-authored⁷ found that while an area the size of Texas is needed for new renewable projects and their power lines in the US, this can be shrunk by more than half if sited in an efficient way, avoiding sensitive habitats and prized cropland.

“We have the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss and there is an assumption we will need to trade off a lot on the nature side to fix climate change, but that’s not the case,” she said. “Time is of the essence, we need to transition to renewables quickly, but there is a way to do it smartly that can balance conservation and development.”

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- 1: Marcy, Cara. "EIA Study Examines the Role of High-Voltage Power Lines in Integrating Renewables." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, 28 June 2018
- 2: Larson, Eric, et al. "Net-Zero America: Potential Pathways, Infrastructure, and Impacts, Final Report Summary." *Princeton University*, 29 October 2021
- 3: just coming into existence
- 4: act of making something foul, dirty, or unclean
- 5: confusing and difficult problem or question
- 6: Rand, Joseph, et al. "Queued Up: Characteristics of Power Plants Seeking Transmission Interconnection." *Energy Markets and Policy*, Berkeley Lab, 2023
- 7: The Nature Conservancy. "Power of Place: Clean Energy Solutions that Protect People and Nature." *The Nature Conservancy*, 9 May 2023

END OF PART A

PART B
TIME – 90 MINUTES

Read the four sources carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspective each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified.

You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to supporting evidence. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge. In your response, refer to the provided sources as Source A, Source B, Source C, or Source D, or by the author’s name.

Write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified.

Source A

Unfortunately, we do not have permission to reproduce the excerpt from the speech “All Labor Has Dignity” by Martin Luther King, Jr., on this website.

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Source B

Excerpted from Nguyen, Terry. “Gen Z Does Not Dream of Labor.” *Vox*, 22 Apr. 2022.

Over the past two years, young millennials and members of Gen Z have created an abundance of memes and pithy commentary about their generational disillusionment toward work....

Many have taken to declaring how they don’t have dream jobs since they “don’t dream of labor.” This buzzy phrase, popularized on social media in the pandemic, rejects work as a basis for identity, framing it instead as an act to pursue out of financial necessity....

Today’s young people are not the first to experience economic hardship, but they are the first to broadcast their struggles in ways that, just a decade ago, might alienate potential employers or be deemed too radical....

Business Insider recently cited data claiming that emboldened Gen Z workers were more “likely to change jobs more often than any other generation,” and a recent Bloomberg poll found that millennials, followed by zoomers,¹ are the most likely to leave their current position for a higher salary....

While it’s certainly easy to group workers by age [when tracking trends in attitudes and behavior], more emphasis should be placed on when people enter the workforce, the coinciding state of the economy, and the various safety net programs in place, said Sarah Damaske, an associate professor of sociology and labor and employment relations at Penn State University.

“It’s not necessarily that different generations hold different attitudes about work,” Damaske argued. “For millennials and for some members of Gen Z, they’ve witnessed two recessions, back-to-back. This is a very different labor market experience than what their parents and grandparents encountered.”

Many zoomers entered the workforce during the pandemic-affected economy, amid years of stagnant wages and, more recently, rising inflation. “My dad got a job straight out of high school, saved up, and bought a house in his 20s,” said Anne Dakota, a 21-year-old receptionist from Asheville, North Carolina, who earns minimum wage. “I don’t even think that’s possible for me, at least with the current money I make.”

Naturally, this has major consequences for social attitudes about work....

“I think people are realizing that we just want better for ourselves,” said Jade Carson, 22, a content creator who shares career advice for Gen Z. “I want to be in a role where I can grow.... I don’t want to be stressed, depressed, or always waiting to clock out.”...

While younger workers have developed a reputation for “job hopping,” Damaske believes employers are also to blame. “We really have seen an erosion in the employer-employee contract over the last 40 years,” she said.... “Young workers don’t get to work for a company until they retire. Those kinds of practices don’t happen anymore.”

Employers have grown increasingly comfortable laying off employees as a cost-cutting measure, while simultaneously relying more on temporary workers and contractors. Many culled their ranks during the pandemic, so remaining employees often have to take on more job responsibilities and hours.... This varies by company, but junior workers are often the easiest to let go. (Research has also found that ethnic minorities and older employees are at higher risk of layoffs, compared to younger, white workers.)

Regardless, many young employees, especially those who've entered the workforce during the past two recessions, have internalized this job insecurity and might be more eager to jump ship if a better offer arises. According to a 2019 Harris poll, workers under 35 expressed more "layoff anxiety" than their older counterparts. Many, as a result, don't develop a work identity that is tied to their employer or their current field of work. In fact, more Americans than ever are looking to start their own businesses, and low-paying workers are trying to pivot to higher-paying industries....

Carson doesn't think that most zoomers are actually anti-work, at least from a political perspective. In fact, she said, she thinks it's the opposite: She has noticed more young people publicly committing to quit an undesirable job so that they can devote more time to learning new skills, in the hopes of entering a field like tech, which boasts high salaries and good benefits. Many have also left behind corporate roles to work as full-time content creators or freelancers....

Young people understand that they have to labor for their livelihoods, but many, like...Dakota, believe the existing system has set them up to fail....

There is a dissonance, however, between these aggrieved attitudes and the political action necessary to implement change....

Employers might still hold a lot of power, but swaths of employees are organizing through unions to better the terms and conditions of their employment....

Workers between the ages of 16 and 24 have the lowest union membership rate, according to a 2022 Bureau of Labor Statistics report. It's likely that fewer young people are being hired into unionized roles, given how union membership has significantly declined since the 1980s....

Dakota felt like she was initially misinformed about why people didn't want to work.... "It's not about people not working," she said. "It's about not settling for a job that diminishes their quality of life."

"Gen Z Does Not Dream of Labor" by Terry Nguyen. From Vox.com. Used with Permission of Vox Media, LLC.

1: members of Generation Z (born in the late 1990s or the early 21st century)

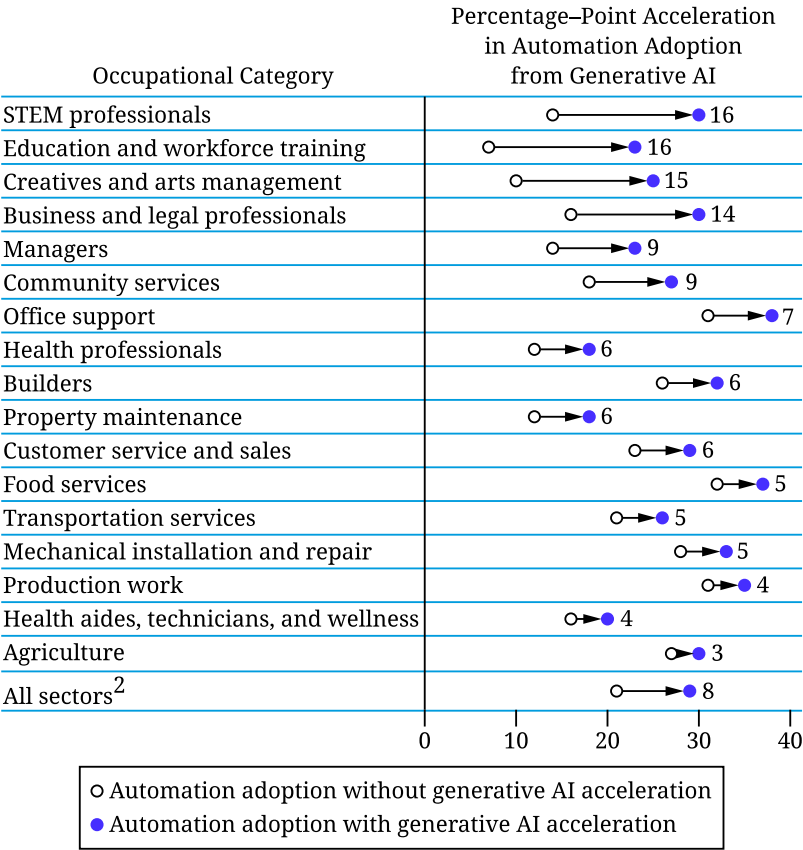
Source C

Excerpted from Ellingrud, Kweilin, et al. “Generative AI and the Future of Work in America.” *McKinsey Global Institute*, 26 July 2023.

The US labor market is going through a rapid evolution in the way people work and the work people do.... The nature of work has changed as many workers have stuck with remote or hybrid models and employers have sped up their adoption of automation technologies. More recently, the accelerated development of generative AI, with its advanced natural language capabilities, has extended the possibilities for automation to a much wider set of occupations....

With generative AI added to the picture, 30 percent of hours worked today could be automated by 2030. [Automation adoption is the process of using technology to automate tasks that would normally be done by humans.]

Midpoint automation adoption¹ by 2030 as a share of time spent on work activities, US, %



1: Midpoint automation adoption is the average of early and late automation adoption [i.e., when experts predict automation will happen] as referenced in *The Economic Potential of Generative AI: The Next Productivity Frontier*, McKinsey & Company, June 2023.

2: Totals are weighted by 2022 employment in each occupation.

Source: O*NET; US Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey Global Institute analysis

Healthcare, STEM, and builder roles could grow, while demand for office support and customer service roles could decline.

**Estimated future US job growth by occupational category
Midpoint automation scenario,¹ with generative AI acceleration**

Occupational Category	Net Change in Labor Demand, 2022-2030 (%)	Employment in 2022 (millions)
Health professionals	30	6.5
Health aides, technicians, and wellness	30	11.6
STEM professionals	23	7.9
Builders	12	7.0
Managers	11	9.7
Creatives and arts management	11	2.2
Property maintenance	10	4.6
Transportation services	9	5.6
Mechanical installation and repair	7	6.6
Business and legal professionals	7	16.0
Community services	7	6.8
Education and workforce training	3	9.9
Agriculture	2	2.1
Production work	-1	13.3
Food services	-2	13.7
Customer service and sales	-13	14.7
Office support	-18	20.1

■ Resilient and growing occupations²

■ Stalled but rising occupations³

■ Hit and declining occupations⁴

1: Midpoint automation adoption is the average of early and late automation scenarios [i.e., when experts predict automation will happen] as referenced in *The Economic Potential of Generative AI: The Next Productivity Frontier*, McKinsey & Company, June 2023.

2: Resilient during the pandemic, 2019–22, and expected to grow between 2022 and 2030

3: Stalled during the pandemic, 2019–22, and expected to rise between 2022 and 2030

4: Hit during the pandemic, 2019–22, and continuing to decline between 2022 and 2030

Source: O*NET; US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau; McKinsey Global Institute analysis

Exhibit/Excerpted from “Generative AI and the future of work in America” July 2023 | Report, McKinsey Global Institute, www.mckinsey.com. Copyright © 2024 McKinsey & Company. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

Source D

Excerpted from Dreiser, Theodore. “Chapter II. What Poverty Threatened: Of Granite and Brass.” *Sister Carrie*, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1900, pp.17–18.

In the central portion was the vast wholesale and shopping district, to which the uninformed seeker for work usually drifted. It was a characteristic of Chicago then, and one not generally shared by other cities.... The casual wanderer could see as he passed a polished array of office fixtures, much frosted glass, clerks hard at work, and genteel businessmen in “nobby”¹ suits and clean linen lounging about or sitting in groups. Polished brass or nickel signs at the square stone entrances announced the firm and the nature of the business in rather neat and reserved terms. The entire metropolitan centre possessed a high and mighty air calculated to overawe and abash the common applicant, and to make the gulf between poverty and success seem both wide and deep.

Into this important commercial region the timid Carrie went. She walked east along Van Buren Street through a region of lessening importance, until it deteriorated into a mass of shanties and coal-yards, and finally verged upon the river. She walked bravely forward, led by an honest desire to find employment and delayed at every step by the interest of the unfolding scene, and a sense of helplessness amid so much evidence of power and force which she did not understand. These vast buildings, what were they? These strange energies and huge interests, for what purposes were they there?...

It was so with the vast railroad yards, with the crowded array of vessels she saw at the river, and the huge factories over the way, lining the water’s edge. Through the open windows she could see the figures of men and women in working aprons, moving busily about. The great streets were wall-lined mysteries to her; the vast offices, strange mazes which concerned far-off individuals of importance. She could only think of people connected with them as counting money, dressing magnificently, and riding in carriages. What they dealt in, how they laboured, to what end it all came, she had only the vaguest conception. It was all wonderful, all vast, all far removed, and she sank in spirit inwardly and fluttered feebly at the heart as she thought of entering any one of these mighty concerns and asking for something to do—something that she could do—anything.

1: chic or smart

STOP
END OF EXAM