

2026



AP[®] African American Studies

Free-Response Questions

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
SECTION I PART B
TIME – 10 MINUTES

Directions:

Section I, Part B has 1 question and lasts 10 minutes. The question is a written response about your course project.

This part of the exam requires answers written in complete sentences. An outline or bulleted list is not acceptable.

You may use scratch paper for planning, but credit will only be given for responses entered in this application. 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.

The AP African American Studies course requires the completion of an independent project on a topic of your choice. Please respond to the following prompt about your course project.

1. Identify the source you found to be most useful in your research. Explain how it deepened your understanding of your topic.

END OF SECTION I

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
SECTION II
TIME – 85 MINUTES

Directions:

Section II has 3 short-answer questions and 1 document-based question (DBQ) and lasts 85 minutes.

This section of the exam requires answers in essay form. Use complete sentences; an outline or bulleted list alone is not acceptable.

You may pace yourself as you answer the questions in this section, or you may use these optional timing recommendations:

It is suggested that you spend 40 minutes on the 3 short-answer questions and 45 minutes on the DBQ.

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.**

“This paper is presented...because it needs to be made known that many women in the movement are not ‘happy and contented’ with their status. It needs to be made known that much talent and experience are being wasted by this movement when women are not given jobs **commensurate** with their abilities. It needs to be known that just as Negroes were the crucial factor in the economy of the cotton South, so too in SNCC are women the crucial factor that keeps the movement running on a day-to-day basis. Yet they are not given equal say-so when it comes to day-to-day decision making. What can be done? Probably nothing right away. Most men in this movement are probably too threatened by the possibility of serious discussion on this subject. Perhaps this is because they have recently broken away from a **matriarchal** framework under which they may have grown up. Then too, many women are as unaware and insensitive to this subject as men, just as there are many Negroes who don’t understand they are not free or who want to be part of white America. They don’t understand that they have to give up their souls and stay in their place to be accepted. So too, many women, in order to be accepted by men, on men’s terms, give themselves up to that **caricature** of what a woman is—unthinking, **pliable**, an ornament to please the man.”

Source: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Position Paper, “Women in the Movement,” 1964

commensurate: corresponding in size

matriarchal: female-led

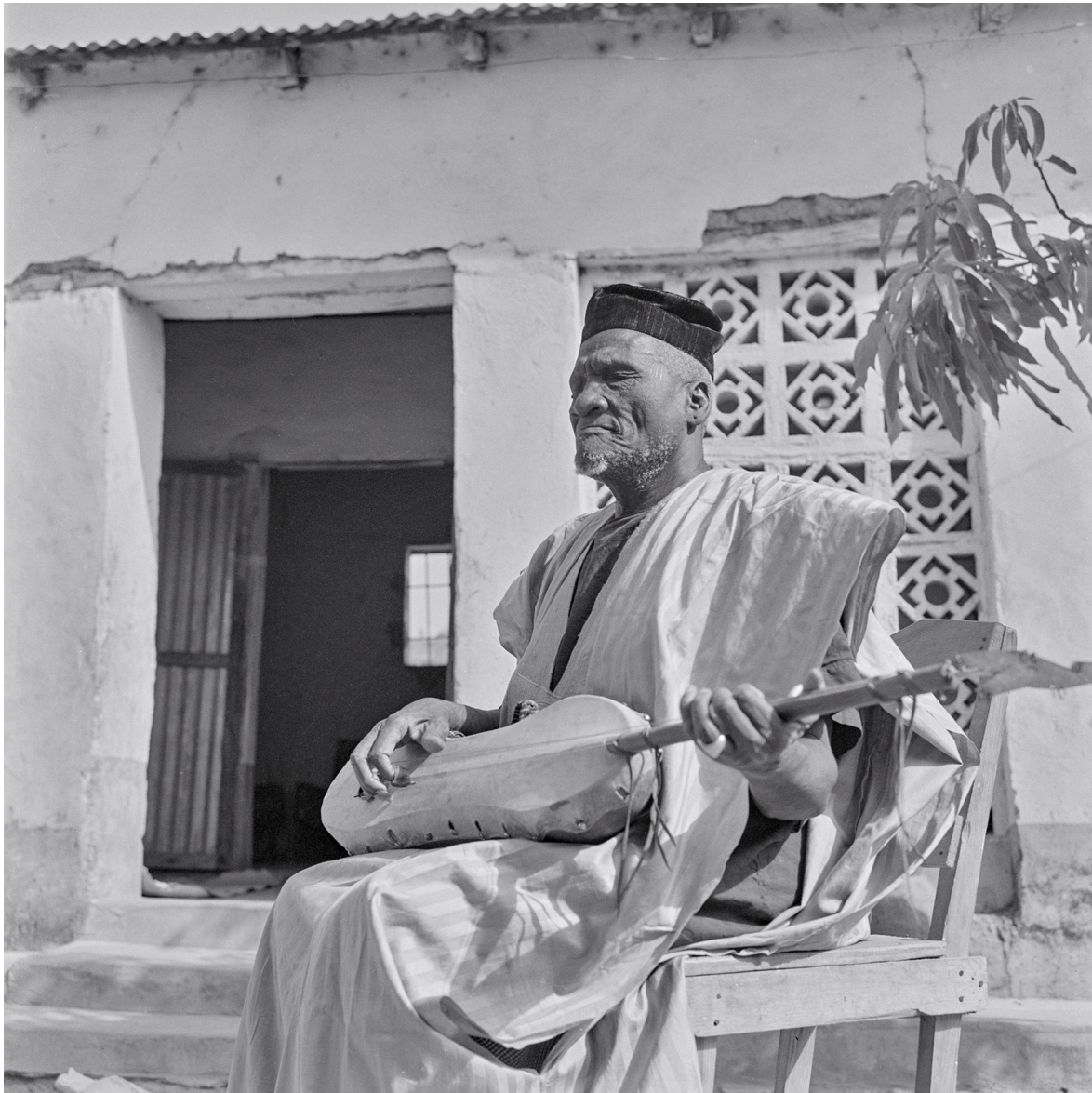
caricature: an exaggeration by means of distortion of parts or characteristics

pliable: yielding to others

1. Respond to parts A, B, C, and D.

- A. Describe one claim made by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the source.
- B. Describe a historical context of the source.
- C. Using a specific example, explain how Black women, individually or collectively, helped to promote the advancement of African Americans between 1900 and 1950.
- D. Using a specific example, explain how Black women activists in the 1900s drew upon the work of Black women activists from the 1800s.

Griot Basimana with Guitar, Mali, Photographed by Marli Shamir, Mali, 1970



Griot Basimana with guitar, Mali Photograph by Marli Shamir, 1970 EEPA 2013-009-1339, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art Smithsonian Institution

2. Respond to parts A, B, and C.

- A. Describe an important role played by early West African griots.
- B. Describe one example of a griot tradition that was continued by people of the African diaspora during the period of enslavement.
- C. Using a specific example, explain how **twentieth-century** cultural or artistic traditions demonstrate connections to West African griot traditions.

twentieth-century: the 1900s

3. Respond to parts A, B, and C.

- A.** Describe one way Black or African American people were affected by restrictive laws in the United States before 1900.
- B.** Using a specific example, describe an effect that a law or court ruling after 1950 had on African Americans.
- C.** Using a specific example, explain how African Americans advocated for social equality after 1950.

4. Explain the extent to which the objectives of the New Negro movement were achieved.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical or disciplinary context relevant to the topic of the prompt.
- Support an argument in response to the prompt using at least three of the sources.
- Use at least one additional piece of specific evidence (beyond that found in the sources) relevant to your argument.
- For at least two sources, explain how or why the perspective, purpose, context, and/or audience for each source is relevant to your argument.
- Reference or cite the sources you use in your argument. You can reference or cite the source letter, title, or author.

Source 1

Source: Alain Locke, African American scholar, “Enter the New Negro,” 1925

“With this renewed self-respect and self-dependence, the life of the Negro community is bound to enter a new dynamic phase, the **buoyancy** from within compensating for whatever pressure there may be of conditions from without. The migrant masses, shifting from countryside to city, hurdle several generations of experience at a leap, but more important, the same thing happens spiritually in the life-attitudes and self-expression of the Young Negro, in his poetry, his art, his education and his new outlook, with the additional advantage, of course, of the poise and greater certainty of knowing what it is all about....

This is what, even more than any ‘most creditable record of fifty years of freedom,’ requires that the Negro of today be seen through other than the dusty spectacles of past controversy. The day of ‘aunties,’ ‘uncles’ and ‘mammies’ is equally gone. Uncle Tom and Sambo have passed on, and even the ‘Colonel’ and ‘George’ play **barnstorm** roles from which they escape with relief when the public spotlight is off. The popular melodrama has about played itself out, and it is time to scrap the fictions, **garret the bogeys** and settle down to a realistic facing of facts.”

buoyancy: resilience

barnstorm: brief

garret the bogeys: confront lies

Source 2

Source: Marcus Garvey, founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, “The Principles of the Universal Negro Improvement Association,” speech, 1922

“We represent a new line of thought among Negroes. Whether you call it advanced thought or reactionary thought, I do not care. If it is reactionary for people to seek independence in government, then we are reactionary. If it is advanced thought for people to seek liberty and freedom, then we represent the advanced school of thought among the Negroes of this country....

We of the Universal Negro Improvement Association are determined to unite the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world to give expression to their own feeling; we are determined to unite the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world for the purpose of building a civilization of their own. And in that effort we desire to bring together the 15,000,000 of the United States, the 180,000,000 in Asia, the West Indies and Central and South America, and the 200,000,000 in Africa. We are looking toward political freedom on the continent of Africa, the land of our fathers.

The difference between the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the other movements of this country, and probably the world, is that the Universal Negro Improvement Association seeks independence of government, while the other organizations seek to make the Negro a secondary part of existing governments.”

Source 3

Source: Carter G. Woodson, educator and scholar, “Negro History Week,” 1926

“In such a millennium the achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human progress and a maker of modern civilization. He has supplied the demand for labor of a large area of our own country, he has been a **conservative** force in its recent economic development, he has given the nation a poetic stimulus, he has developed the most popular music of the modern era, and he has preserved in its purity the brotherhood taught by Jesus of Nazareth. In his native country, moreover, he produced in the ancient world a civilization **contemporaneous** with that of the nations of the early Mediterranean, he influenced the cultures then cast in the **crucible** of time, and he taught the modern world the use of iron by which science and initiative have remade the universe. Must we let this generation continue **ignorant** of these eloquent facts?”

conservative: cautious

contemporaneous: happening at the same time

crucible: ordeal

ignorant: unaware

Source 4

Source: Chart showing the increase in Black populations in United States cities 1910–1930, published by the Bureau of the Census, United States Government, 1935

Class	Year	Population		Percent of Total Population	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Total population	1930	68,954,823	53,820,223	56.2	43.8
	1920	54,304,603	51,406,017	51.4	48.6
	1910	42,166,120	48,806,146	45.8	54.2
African American	1930	5,193,913	6,697,230	43.7	56.3
	1920	3,559,473	6,903,658	34.0	66.0
	1910	2,684,797	7,142,966	27.3	72.7
White	1930	62,836,605	46,027,602	57.7	42.3
	1920	50,620,084	44,200,831	53.4	46.6
	1910	39,379,294	42,352,663	48.2	51.8

Note: The African American and White populations do not add up to the Total Population, which includes all races.

Source 5

Source: Photograph of the cast of *Cabin in the Sky*, 1943



Film Publicity Archive/United Archives via Getty Images

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END OF EXAM**