

2026



AP[®] United States History

Free-Response Questions

UNITED STATES HISTORY
SECTION I PART B
TIME – 40 MINUTES

Directions:

Section I, Part B has 3 short-answer questions and lasts 40 minutes.

In this part, answer Question 1 and Question 2 and **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

In your responses, be sure to address **all** parts of the questions you answer. Use complete sentences; an outline or bulleted list alone is not acceptable.

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

It is suggested that you spend an equal amount of time, approximately 13 minutes, on each question.

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 part 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.

Source 1

“[After the Civil War,] while some Northerners shared the white South’s desire for a quick, harmonious, **magnanimous** return to the Union, others believed that only fundamental changes in the South could insure future peace and reflect national ideals of liberty and equality.... Unfortunately for the latter—for the Radical Republicans—the nation did not share most of its goals for restructuring of the South.... As a result, what was desirable for the Radicals and those who shared their values and visions was not truly possible. These basic facts explain much of the failure of Reconstruction.

While most Northerners accepted the war-expanded powers of the national government, they (and their representatives and senators) still saw the states as playing the key role in the federal system.... In the late 1800s, the nation turned [away] from Reconstruction.... The rest of the nation...left the South to govern itself.”

Source: Claudine L. Ferrell, historian, *Reconstruction*, 2003

magnanimous: generous

Source 2

“To most Americans in 1865, ‘the Reconstruction of the Union’ was more important [than Reconstruction of the South].... If we see Reconstruction’s purpose as making sure that the main goals of the war would be fulfilled, of a Union held together forever..., then Reconstruction looks like what in that respect it was, a lasting and unappreciated success....

[Reconstruction] meant returning America to a peacetime footing...[by] strengthening and devising new connections, and at all hazards, making a nation made to last.... Freedom became so ingrained that even the old [enslavers] swore that they would not revive slavery, even if they could.... The federal system, where states had large responsibilities, weathered the war and reinvigorated itself in peace.”

Source: Mark Summers, historian, *The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction*, 2014

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

- A. Briefly describe one major difference between Ferrell’s and Summers’s historical interpretations of Reconstruction.
- B. Briefly explain how one event or development from 1861 to 1900 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Ferrell’s argument about Reconstruction.
- C. Briefly explain how one event or development from 1861 to 1900 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Summers’s argument about Reconstruction.

“Englishman, you know that the French king is our father. He promised to be such; and we, in return, promised to be his children. This promise we have kept....

Englishman,... you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods and mountains, were left to us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none....

Englishman, your king has never sent us any [diplomatic] presents, nor entered into any treaty with us, wherefore he and we are still at war; and, until he does these things, we must consider that we have no other father, nor friend, among the white men, than the king of France.”

Source: Minweweh, a leader of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) Native American people, speech delivered to an English trader at Fort Detroit, located in present-day Michigan, 1761

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

- A. Briefly describe one likely purpose of Minweweh in giving the speech.
- B. Briefly explain how one development contributed to the circumstance discussed in the excerpt.
- C. Briefly explain how one development between 1761 and 1840 resulted from the circumstance discussed in the excerpt.

Answer either Question 3 or Question 4.

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

- A.** Briefly describe one idea advocated by the Patriot movement from 1765 to 1783.
 - B.** Briefly describe one development from 1607 to 1765 that contributed to the rise of the Patriot movement.
 - C.** Briefly explain how the ideas of the Patriot movement continued to influence United States society from 1783 to 1830.
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4. Respond to parts A, B, and C.

- A.** Briefly describe one reform advocated by civil rights movements from 1945 to 1970.
- B.** Briefly describe one development from 1890 to 1945 that contributed to the rise of civil rights movements.
- C.** Briefly explain how the ideas of civil rights movements continued to influence United States society from 1970 to 2000.

END OF SECTION I

UNITED STATES HISTORY
SECTION II
TIME – 1 HOUR AND 40 MINUTES

Directions:

Section II has 1 document-based question (DBQ) and 1 long essay question, and lasts 1 hour and 40 minutes.

In this section, answer Question 1 (DBQ) and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3 **or** Question 4. After reviewing Questions 2, 3, and 4, choose the question that you are best prepared to answer. 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:

For Question 1 (DBQ), it is suggested that you spend approximately 15 minutes reading the question and planning your answer, and then 45 minutes writing your essay. The suggested writing time for the long essay question is 40 minutes.

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.**

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1. Evaluate the extent to which women’s participation in public life in the United States changed from 1783 to 1855.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
- Support an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents.
- Use at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt.
- For at least two documents, explain how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
- Demonstrate a complex understanding of a historical development related to the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.

Document 1

Source: Hannah Adams, *Women Invited to War: Or a Friendly Address to the Honourable Women of the United States*, written with the encouragement of religious leaders in Boston, Massachusetts, 1787

“Alas! my dear friends, there is another powerful enemy spread through America, and is daily increasing among us, and threatens our destruction. This enemy has done more harm already, than all the armies of Britain have done or ever will be able to do.... Truly my friends, we are in great danger of being overcome and destroyed by SIN....

Though there may be many [men] who are not yet engaged in battle against their spiritual enemies [of sin], this should no way discourage or hinder the women from going forward in their spiritual warfare....

Some will enquire, saying: ‘Is not the Female the inferior sex, and shall inferiors set out before their superiors...?’... In this spiritual warfare, an inferior may go before a superior without acting contrary to the rules of religion, decency or good manners.... The male is in [political] respects to be considered as the superior sex. But still, in the rights of religion and conscience, and in point of [Christian] salvation, there is neither male or female.... Therefore the superiority of the Male can be no bar to hinder the Female from being either the first engaged, or more zealous and courageous in proceeding in this spiritual warfare.”

Document 2

Source: *The Female Advocate*, anonymously published pamphlet, 1801

“Much and often has the world exclaimed against masculine women.... If by the word ‘Masculine,’ be meant a person of reading and letters, a person of science and information, one who can properly answer a question, without fear and trembling, or one who is capable of doing business, with a suitable command over self; this I believe to be a glory to the one sex, equally with the other. The sole reason why the [term ‘masculine’] is disgraceful, in the estimation of many, is because custom, which is not **infallible**, has gradually introduced the habits of seeing an imaginary propriety, that all science, all public utility, all superiority,... should be **engrossed** exclusively by the male half of mankind.”

infallible: faultless

engrossed: controlled

Document 3

Source: Maria W. Stewart, African American lecturer, *Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality*, pamphlet published in 1831 and later delivered in public speeches in New England

“O ye daughters of Africa, awake! awake! arise!... What have ye done to immortalize your names beyond the grave? What examples have ye set before the rising generation?..

Why cannot we do something to distinguish ourselves, and contribute some of our hard earnings that would reflect honor upon our memories, and cause our children to arise and call us blessed?... Let every female heart become united, and let us raise a fund ourselves; and at the end of the one year and a half, we might be able to lay the corner-stone for the building of a High School, that the higher branches of knowledge might be enjoyed by us; and God would raise us up, and enough to aid us in our **laudable** designs....

How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?... We have never had an opportunity of displaying our talents; therefore the world thinks we know nothing.... Do you ask the disposition I would have you possess? Possess the spirit of independence. The Americans do, and why should not you? Possess the spirit of men, bold and enterprising, fearless and undaunted. Sue for your rights and privileges.”

laudable: praiseworthy

Document 4

Source: Harriet H. Robinson, former factory worker in Massachusetts, recollection of events in the 1830s and 1840s

“We can hardly realize what a change the cotton factory made in the status of the working women. Hitherto woman had always been a money *saving* rather than a money earning, member of the community. Her labor could command but small return.... At this time woman had no property rights.... A woman was not supposed to be capable of spending her own, or of using other people’s money. In Massachusetts, before 1840, a woman could not, legally, be treasurer of her own sewing society, unless some man were responsible for her.... If a woman did not choose to marry, or, when left a widow, to re-marry, she had no choice but...to become a burden on the charity of some relative....

The cotton factory was a great opening to these...dependent women.... They could earn money and spend it as they pleased.... Even the *time* of these women was their own, on Sundays, and in the evening, after the day’s work was done. For the first time in this country the labor of woman, as a class, had a money value. She had become...a recognized factor in the political economy of her time.”

Document 5

Source: Dorothea Dix, petition to the Massachusetts state legislature, 1843

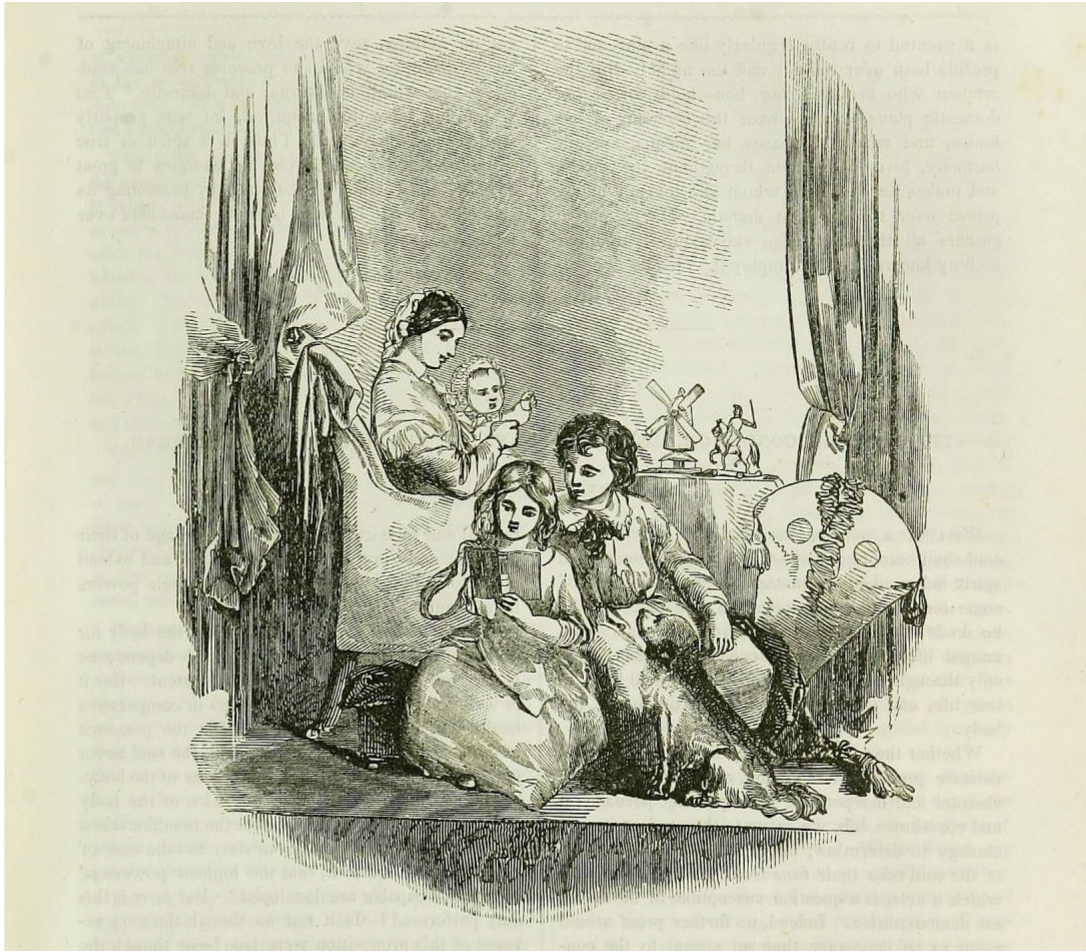
“I respectfully ask to present this [petition], believing that the *cause*...presents no equivocal claim to public consideration and sympathy....

About two years since leisure afforded opportunity, and duty prompted me to visit several prisons and alms-houses.... I found, near Boston, in the Jails and Asylums for the poor, a numerous class brought into unsuitable connection with criminals and the general mass of **Paupers**. I refer to [mentally ill people], dwelling in circumstances...adverse to their own physical and moral improvement.... I applied myself diligently to trace the causes of these evils, and sought to supply remedies.... Every new investigation has given depth to the conviction that it is only by decided, prompt, and vigorous legislation the evils to which I refer...can be remedied. I shall be obliged to speak with great plainness, and to reveal many things revolting to the taste, and from which my woman’s nature shrinks with peculiar sensitiveness. But truth is the highest consideration. *I tell what I have seen*...[so] you may feel more deeply the imperative obligation...to prevent the possibility of a repetition of continuance of such outrages upon humanity.”

Paupers: impoverished people

Document 6

Source: “The Sphere of Woman,” published in the magazine *Godey’s Lady Book*, 1850



Document 7

Source: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, address to the New York state legislature, 1854

“Gentlemen, in republican America, in the 19th century, we, the daughters of the revolutionary heroes of ‘76, demand at your hands the redress of our grievances—a revision of your state constitution—a new code of laws...

Look at the position of woman as woman.... We are persons; native, free-born citizens; property-holders, tax-payers; yet are we denied the exercise of our right to the elective franchise. We support ourselves, and, in part,... the whole machinery of government, and yet we have no voice in your councils. We have every qualification required by the constitution, necessary to the legal voter, but the one of sex....

Can it be that here, where are acknowledged no royal blood,... that you, who have declared that all men were created equal..., would willingly build up an aristocracy...that would raise the sons above the mothers that bore them?”

Answer Question 2 or Question 3 or Question 4.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
 - Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
 - Support an argument in response to the prompt using at least two pieces of specific and relevant evidence.
 - Use historical reasoning (e.g., comparison, causation, continuity or change over time) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.
 - Demonstrate a complex understanding of a historical development related to the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.
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2. Evaluate how geography influenced European colonization in the Americas from 1500 to 1754.

3. Evaluate how westward expansion influenced United States society from 1865 to 1898.

4. Evaluate how politics influenced United States society from 1945 to 2000.

**STOP
END OF EXAM**