

## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2021 AP<sup>®</sup> United States History Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	454,204		
• Number of Readers	2,422		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	45,825	10.1
	4	72,421	15.9
	3	96,270	21.2
	2	98,155	21.6
	1	141,533	31.2
• Global Mean	2.52		

The following comments on the 2021 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> United States History were written by the Chief Reader, Michelle Kuhl, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. 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.

**Question #1****Task:** Short Answer Question**Topic:** Reconstruction Secondary Sources**Max. Points:** 3**Mean Score:** 1.55***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to describe the difference between two excerpts from secondary source texts about the effects of Reconstruction. The first, by Kenneth Stampp, argued that Reconstruction, despite some failures, had an overall positive impact due to the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The second, by Eric Foner, argued that Reconstruction was a total failure, resulting in the pervasive expansion of racism.
- Responses had to provide relevant evidence (between 1863–1900) and explain how it supported each of the arguments found in the excerpts.
- Students had to understand the fundamental differences between the two authors' views, use evidence to demonstrate how conditions improved for formerly enslaved people as a result of Reconstruction to support Stampp's view, and then use evidence to show how conditions worsened to support Foner's view.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and secondary sources.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 5.10 and 5.11.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Students successfully wielded knowledge from the Reconstruction Era to support claims by Stampp and Foner. In the most common pattern, students supported Stampp by citing evidence from the Civil War Amendments to show improving status for formerly enslaved people. To support Foner, students cited the rise of violent extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow legislation to show deteriorating conditions for formerly enslaved people during the period.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most common problem was a lack of ability to demonstrate comprehension of the historical excerpts. Students tended to over-generalize by creating a false dichotomy that overlooked the nuance of Stampp's argument such as, "Stampp saw Reconstruction as a success and Foner saw it as a failure."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses addressed both arguments and described the differences between the two historians.</li> <li>• "Even though both Stampp and Foner saw Reconstruction as a failure, Stampp believed that it was ultimately beneficial in establishing the ... Amendments, which liberated slaves and gave the voting rights."</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common issue was over generalization without specifics such as "after the Civil War slaves got rights."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses included concrete examples.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was meant to guarantee voting rights for all black men . . . leading to the election of black men to state and local office.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common content problem was students using evidence from outside the time period such as the Great Migration and the Civil Rights Movement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses used evidence clearly situated in the time period.</li> <li>• “One specific historical event . . . was the establishment of the Freedmen’s Bureau by the Federal government . . . to preserve freedoms for freed slave such as increasing educational opportunities.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common misconception was overstating the bipartisan efforts of Reconstruction such as “Democrats and Republicans worked well together.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses clearly explained the political realities of the time period.</li> <li>• “Following the end of the Civil War, Confederate states were required to agree to a new Constitution, one that included the Amendment which abolished slavery.”</li> </ul>

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

- Students should practice reading and responding to secondary sources in the classroom, analyzing the documents, and expressing a scholar’s argument in the student’s own words. This could be done as homework or as classroom group work.
- Students should understand complex historical perspectives and be able to differentiate nuance between two arguments.
- Student should practice the chronology of the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction periods. Students could be given 10 different major events from the time period and practice putting them in the proper order.
- Students should be able to describe continuity and change over time throughout the period. For example, students could be asked to evaluate the success of Reconstruction’s aim of integrating formerly enslaved people into the citizenry at different times throughout the period.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos including a Faculty Lecture with Edward Ayers on the Civil War and Reconstruction. Further, the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 5: 1844–1877—Focus on Research and Focus on Teaching are helpful for the content and skills required in this question.

- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:  
[apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)

**Question #2****Task:** Short Answer Question**Topic:** Second World War Primary Source Image**Max. Points:** 3**Mean Score:** 1.74***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- In response to this question, students were expected to demonstrate understanding of and analyze a primary source image depicting the role of women in the labor force during the Second World War.
- Responses needed to describe a historical situation in the United States during the Second World War suggested by the image.
- Responses had to provide relevant evidence (from 1900 to 1941) and explain how it led to the historical situation suggested by the image and also provide relevant evidence (from 1944 to 1970) that resulted from the situation suggested by the image.
- Responses had to show understanding of the role of women in society as well as of women’s efforts to achieve agency during the prewar period. They also had to explain how these efforts created the historical situation suggested in the image and the degree to which women’s status and agency changed in the postwar period.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and primary sources.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 7.8, 7.12, 7.13, and 8.11.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Overall, responses in part (a) were able to describe the historical situation suggested by the image, that women entered the labor force in large numbers during the Second World War in response labor shortages brought on by the deployment of large numbers of men overseas.
- For part (b) the most successful responses correctly identified women’s political activism and social mobility during the prewar period as contributing factors to women’s participation in the labor force during the Second World War.
- For part (c) the most successful responses cited evidence of women’s continued efforts to maintain and/or increase social/economic agency in the postwar period up to 1970 despite increased social pressure to narrow their role in society.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most common problem was a lack of ability to demonstrate chronological knowledge, such as placing the suffrage movement in the post-Second World War period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses correctly identified for part (b) the Nineteenth Amendment as a precursor to joining the labor force.</li> <li>• “The success of the women’s suffrage movement after World War I laid a foundation for a greater role for women in politics and the economy.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most common gap in content knowledge was a lack of detail when supporting with evidence such as “women fought for more rights.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses included concrete examples.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Despite women working during the war many were treated worse and paid less. Women fought for the Equal Pay Act to make the same amount as men while working.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students were not able to use content from the entirety of the time period established by the question. Responses were often confined only to the immediate pre-Second World War years in part (b).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses used content from the early 20th century to support their argument.</li> <li>• “During the flapper movement, women strayed from cultural norms. This made it normal and acceptable for women to occupy more roles in society.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students went outside the time period reaching backward and forward beyond the dates given in the prompt such “Seneca Falls Convention” or “<i>Roe v. Wade</i>.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful responses included content from within the time period.</li> <li>• “Women advocated for greater access to birth control which led to fights over abortion rights that brought about court cases.”</li> </ul>

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

- Students should practice thinking broadly about cause and effect across time periods. For example, students could be given multiple events from different time periods and be asked to explain how they are connected and causally related.
- Students should be able to describe continuity and change over time across multiple periods. For example, students could be asked to evaluate the degree to which the status of women has changed or remained the same over time. Students could be given profiles of two women living in different times, places, and situations and be asked to explain which had greater agency.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos on these topics and skills.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)
- Critical Interpretation of Images and the AP History Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/classroom-resources/critical-interpretation-images-ap-history-classroom>

**Question #3****Task:** Short Answer Question**Topic:** American Indian Relationships  
No Stimulus**Max. Points:** 3**Mean Score:** 1.01***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to describe the continuity and change in the relationship between the United States and American Indians from 1776 and 1815.
- This question also asked students to describe a historical development that occurred between 1815 and 1848 as a result of the changes in the relationship between the United States and American Indians.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 3.12, 4.8, and 5.2

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Students demonstrated adequate knowledge regarding the continuities in the United States relationship with American Indians. Students frequently acknowledged the United States continual desire for the American Indian lands as continuity.
- Students struggled to demonstrate a change in the United States relationship with American Indians between 1776 and 1815. Frequently students presented the removal of American Indians to reservations as a change for the time period.
- Students demonstrated adequate knowledge regarding a historical development that resulted in a change in the relationship between the United States and American Indians. Frequently students noted the United States forced removal of American Indians under the Indian Removal Act and a desire to achieve Manifest Destiny.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common misperception was that there was a continuity in United States dependence on American Indians for survival. This is an extension of a historical situation beyond the time period of earlier colonization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses demonstrated the continual removal of American Indians from lands the United States believed it was entitled to.</li> <li>• “Natives were constantly being pushed out of their lands in order to fulfil American expansion. After gaining the Northwest territory from Britain and Louisiana from France, there was a strong desire to push the natives out of these lands.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students frequently overstated and confused United States attempts to assimilate American Indians as evidence of change for the time period of 1776 to 1815. For example, they brought up the Carlisle school which is outside of the time period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses demonstrated that American Indians, like the Cherokee Nation, adopted American practices in an attempt to retain their lands.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In order to keep their lands, the Cherokee took on many American beliefs. For example, the Cherokee adopted farming and governmental practices that were considered American.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students frequently overgeneralized United States attempts to assimilate American Indians in the time period from 1815 to 1848 and sometimes confused these with assimilation in later time periods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses demonstrated the United States preference to forcibly remove American Indians from their lands rather than attempt to assimilate peoples.</li> <li>• “After their defeat in the War of 1812, relations with Natives were soured and this was shown through the Indian Removal Act where native tribes were kicked off their land forced to move westward. This arose from the changes because the people and Congress viewed the Natives in a more negative light and was less willing to work with tribes.”</li> </ul>

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

- Students frequently struggled with the timeline of American Indian and United States relations. To help foster a better understanding of this complex relationship, teachers could incorporate a cause-and-effect chart into classroom instruction to help reinforce the changing nature of the relationship.
- Teachers could incorporate a map of American Indian movements as a result of European encounters and colonial movement westward, which would assist students in understanding the continuities and changes in the relationship.
- Teachers could draw on local history of Native Americans in the late 18th and early 19th century and ask students to show how these examples fit into regional and national trends.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos including a Faculty Lecture with Maria Montoya on Period 4.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)

**Question #4****Task:** Short Answer Question**Topic:** Industrial Work No Stimulus**Max. Points:** 3**Mean Score:** 1.30***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to describe industrial work in the United States from 1865 to 1898.
- The question focused on students presenting a continuity and change in industrial work, and then students were to present a historical development that occurred between 1865 and 1920 as a result of a change that occurred.
- This question primarily addressed Topic 6.7.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Students had adequate knowledge of the basic working conditions of industrial workers in the United States. Frequently, students were able to demonstrate the continual fight by industrial labor for better working conditions and wages.
- Students had adequate knowledge of the importance of labor unions and their fight to improve industrial working conditions.
- Students had adequate knowledge of how changes in industrial work resulted in a need for change, which led to Progressive Era reforms.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common error was describing industrialization of the time period, rather than describing industrial work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses described the nature of industrial work.</li> <li>• “Industrial work in the period from 1865 to 1898 was very low paying and unsafe for the people who worked.”</li> <li>• “In industrial work from 1865 to 1898 factory workers were largely unskilled laborers, and immigrants, women, and children.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some responses inaccurately argued that women and children joined the workforce for the first time between 1865 and 1898 and used this as evidence of a change in industrial work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses characterized the role of women and children in industrial work as a continuity for the time period.</li> <li>• “Kids, men, and women, continually were exposed to dangerous working conditions, unlivable wages in factories.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some responses made overly general statements about immigrant labor as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses demonstrated that immigrants from Southern and Eastern</li> </ul>

<p>a change in the industrial workforce without specifying details to illustrate the change.</p>	<p>Europe entered the industrial workforce during the time period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “New Immigrants from Eastern Europe came to the United States to find jobs in industrial factories, where they made low wages.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some responses struggled to connect the work of the Progressives to changes in the industrial workforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses demonstrated the direct effects of Progressive reformers’ efforts to correct injustices in industrial work.</li> <li>• “Because of the increased child labor in factories, Florence Kelley advocated for child labor laws. Eventually, child labor laws were passed which limited the kind of jobs and number of hours a child could work.”</li> <li>• “Upton Sinclair’s <i>The Jungle</i> demonstrated the dangerous working of the factories. As a result of its publication, working conditions in the meatpacking industry improved and fewer workers were killed.”</li> </ul>

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

- Students frequently struggled to connect the work of the Progressives back to changes in industrial work. To help students understand this better, teachers could further highlight the changes in industrial working conditions through a cause-and-effect chart.
- Students frequently struggled to describe industrial work rather than the effects of industrialization. While they are interrelated, teachers could assist students in understanding the difference between the two concepts through the use of a T-chart.
- Teachers could assign exercises with virtual tours of museums about immigration and industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos and the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 6: 1865–1898—Focus on Research; both resources are helpful for the content and skills required in this question.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)

**Question #1****Task:** Document-Based Question    **Topic:** Post-War Economic Growth**Max. Points:** 7**Mean Score:** 3.31***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question required students to evaluate the extent to which economic growth impacted United States society between 1940 and 1970. The content tests Period 8 of the course framework, focusing both on government efforts to encourage economic growth, as well as the social effects of an expanding economy and technological innovations.
- The intention of the question was to determine if students could defensibly evaluate the extent to which economic expansion transformed the lives of Americans but also limited opportunities for others. The most frequent historical development to contrast with this economic affluence was continued discrimination against minority groups. The question allowed for flexibility in approach. Responses could address the role the federal government played in economic development, the impact of new technologies on Americans' lives, the Civil Rights movement, the growth of suburbanization and affluence, and the resulting effects of these developments. Responses could also take a chronological approach by discussing the end of the Second World War and its impact on the economy; the suburbanization of White, middle class Americans; the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement; and the White flight from American cities throughout the 1960s.
- The documents encouraged students to discuss issues of governmental support of a postwar economy, the increase of consumerism, the growth of the middle class in the suburbs, the maintenance of typical gender roles, technological innovation and the disparity between White and non-White populations.
- This question primarily focused on continuity and change, contextualization, analyzing primary sources, and argument development.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, and 8.10.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Overall, most students demonstrated a solid grasp of the impact of the Second World War and how war production and new technology generated affluence for American society. It was evident that teachers had prepared students well in this area. A majority of students demonstrated an understanding of the transformative nature of the Second World War on the American economy. Sometimes the students missed opportunities to analyze, only describing the content of the documents. Additionally, many students did not address the entire time frame of the prompt. The responses often lacked a continuation into the 1960s.
- The historical reasoning process of continuity and change was required in this question. Often the chronology in the responses was lacking, sometimes responses attempted contextualization or identifying the historical situation of documents with significant errors, incorrectly employing evidence from within and outside of the time period.
- Some students struggled with addressing the prompt by focusing on the economic dynamics rather than analyzing the implications on societal issues and movements which was the focus of the question. Many stronger responses examined the relationship between the economic growth and social consequences with both the growing White, middle class and various minority communities.
- Even though students were generally able to accurately interpret the documents, responses were most likely to reflect a limited understanding in relation to the prompt. A frequent misunderstanding in responses was Document 5 concerning William Whyte's critique of postwar corporate life and conformity. Use of this document was superficial with students honing in on key words such as "suburbs." Stronger responses reflected an understanding that the document was critical of the rise of white collar jobs and conforming to societal norms. In addition, a common student misconception was that new technological innovation opened up the workforce for women with Document 3.

- Responses did a good job of establishing a thesis at the beginning or end of the essays. Many responses established categories for argumentation. Stronger responses tended to qualify their thesis through recognition of continued discrimination against racial minorities, the limitations of growth of the postwar economy, and how government programs extended discriminatory practices.
- Responses often attempted contextualization through brief mentions of the Roaring 20s and/or the Great Depression, but some did not relate the broader historical context to the topic of the prompt. The most common contextualization involved discussion of the Great Depression, focusing on the poor condition of the economy. Stronger responses often incorporated efforts of the government to generate programs to end the economic crisis and the impact of the Second World War in transforming the economy.
- Most responses could adequately describe the content of documents. Stronger responses connected documents to an argument.
- Responses often included evidence beyond the documents, including explanations of Levittown, the baby boom, redlining, and the Civil Rights movement. Stronger responses had multiple inclusions of evidence and linked such evidence to an argument in reference to the prompt. Stronger responses also sometimes used evidence not immediately derived from the documents, but still related to an argument relevant to the prompt.
- Many students struggled with earning the point for sourcing. Many of the responses attempted sourcing but were not able to fully connect the sourcing to an argument or thesis. The most common source successfully presented was the purpose of the GI Bill of Rights (Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944): to provide financial assistance to returning veterans to stimulate the economy. The car advertisement document had both successes and challenges. Students tended to accurately, but superficially, identify that the purpose was to sell cars. This example of purpose fails to accurately connect to a larger argument, and thus does not qualify for sourcing. Simply identifying one of the sourcing elements—point of view, audience, purpose or historical situation—also does not allow them to meet the threshold for sourcing. Overall, teachers are encouraged to emphasize linking the sourcing element to an argument in a more explicit manner.
- The complexity point was earned by relatively few students. Responses that earned the point for complexity often showed a more nuanced, sophisticated understanding of the prompt. Most responses earned the complexity point by:
  - Qualifying the argument, effectively using evidence to demonstrate how economic growth benefited certain groups of society while simultaneously stifling other groups in society.
  - Using multiple pieces of evidence to corroborate support for an argument. For example, corroborating an argument about how some groups were left out of postwar affluence with evidence about African Americans, poor women, and artists in the counterculture.
  - Making deep connections to other political and social movements that took place during the time period; for example, demonstrating an understanding that a growing economy allowed the federal government to expand social services such as the Great Society and this growth in the power of the federal government also supported the Civil Rights Movement.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many responses lacked general chronology of the time period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses understood the chronological parameters of the question.</li> <li>• “The United States finally joined the war; which led to mass mobilization, production, and federal spending that immediately brought America out of the Great Depression. As the United States emerged from World War II as a successful world power, its economy was also</li> </ul>

	<p>booming, allowing Americans to partake in the economic opportunities. From 1940 to 1970, although many Americans were able to experience new economic opportunities such as mass consumerism and migration that led to mass cultural experiences, minorities such as African Americans continued to be discriminated against and still lacked the opportunities to experience this.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most responses demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding of Document 5 and the point of view conveyed by the author.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses gained credit for sourcing by more specifically discussing the author’s point of view. The following example contributed to a point for document sourcing because it explains that the author was criticizing the conformity that accompanied the middle-class lifestyle of the 1950s.</li> <li>• “Corporate life also became an important aspect of the US economy, as Document 5 describes workers who ‘belong’ to The Organization, or corporate institutions. Whyte wrote this passage with a critical tone as he believed that people became too preoccupied with money, yet that increase in earnings facilitated economic growth and freedom for many.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• References to the Civil Rights Movement were overly general.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses went beyond merely mentioning the Civil Rights Movement and made connections comparing growing national wealth overall and continued economic and social disparity in minority communities.</li> <li>• “Even though many Americans experienced economic opportunities such as mass consumerism and migration that contributed to conformity among the middle classes, minority groups continued to be discriminated against in American society and prevented from experiencing as many economic opportunities. However, the suppression of minorities’ civil rights would give way to the Civil Rights Era, in which African Americans, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and other minority groups would rise up for an end to the Jim Crow laws, segregation, and discrimination.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses argued that postwar economic prosperity extended to all facets of American society, without recognizing the limitations of that prosperity for minority groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful responses went beyond the growth and affluence of White, middle class America after the Second World War. More nuanced responses juxtaposed the growing expansion of the middle class with the continued social and economic plight of minority groups.</li> <li>“Even after the Double V campaign that encouraged African Americans to fight in World War II to end racism and fascism, it would still be a while before the troops would be desegregated. Also, televisions only showed off white middle class culture on television shows such as The Andy Griffith Show, so minorities were never able to see themselves displayed in American culture.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While there were frequent attempts at identification of document sourcing, often there was not an explanation of how and why it connected to an argument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More successful responses analyzed the documents with descriptive language. For example, rather than car advertisements being created for the American public, stronger responses detailed who they appealed to and how that reflected growing consumerism.</li> <li>“In Document 4, it is an advertisement for purchasing cheaper cars that are great in quality. This advertisement’s intended audience are white, middle-class Americans who probably live in the Suburbs. By advertising that the people purchasing the car will fit in with the other thousands of Americans who purchased the cars, people will want to fit in and belong by also purchasing two cars.”</li> </ul>

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

- Ensure students understand the expectation of contextualization. One possibility is to emphasize that contextualization must be detailed enough to both demonstrate an understanding of the time frame of the prompt and a connection to the topic being discussed. Brief, single-sentence attempts at contextualization are usually inadequate. Have students brainstorm specific events that occurred before or right around 1940, have the students identify and discuss items that are relevant to the prompt, and then have the students write opening paragraphs.
- Ensure students recognize complex thinking through multiple variables or through qualifying an argument considering diverse or alternative views or evidence. One possibility is for teachers to design an assignment that addresses a social or economic issue where students are designated with a specific individual or group’s point of

view to research in relation to the issue. Each student would generate an argument about how the issue impacts the selected community in both positive and negative capacities to present to the class.

- Ensure students understand historical sourcing. One possibility is to have students work in groups and have each member address the historical situation, intended audience, purpose, or point of view for a specific document. Share responses out loud, and students can attempt another example for sourcing.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice DBQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos, including a Faculty Lecture with Marcia Chatelain on the Civil Rights Movement. Further, the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 8: 1945–1980—Focus on Research, Focus on Teaching, and Focus on Assessment are helpful for the content and skills required in this question.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)

**Question #2****Task:** Long Essay  
Question**Topic:** Trans-Atlantic Voyages**Max. Points:** 6**Mean Score:** 3.19***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the period prior to 1607 through the lens of causation as they explored the effects of transoceanic voyages.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge including the diversity of Native societies; the changes wrought through contact with Europeans; the effects of the Columbian Exchange; the development of Spanish colonial society introducing new economic, religious, and labor systems; and subsequent conflicts between Europeans and Native Americans.
- This question primarily addressed Topic 1.7.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Responses succeeded in meeting many of the content demands of the question while demonstrating required historical thinking skills in framing responses arguing about the effects of trans-Atlantic voyages in the period from 1491 to 1607.
- Responses showed high degrees of general knowledge, but many lacked specificity.
- Responses almost all presented accurate content knowledge on the topic of the prompt, commonly referencing developments such as the Columbian Exchange and the *encomienda* system, but fewer responses expanded upon these topics by relating additional specifics, and some of those that did introduced errors. For example, many responses noted that a Columbian Exchange resulted from trans-Atlantic voyages, but a smaller number detailed the factors leading to the development and what was exchanged. Moreover, only some responses adding depth and specificity did so accurately, while others introduced errors in the details.
- Responses showed a high degree of success in framing an appropriate historical thesis in response to the prompt.
- The skill of contextualization was displayed by many responses.
- The analysis of many responses established a clear line of reasoning in both the thesis and the body of the response.
- Responses most commonly demonstrated historical reasoning (causation) to frame an argument that addressed the impact trans-Atlantic voyages had on the Americas from 1491 to 1607.
- Analytic shortcomings of responses were in overgeneralization, and in the demonstration of complex understanding.
- Of the small percentage of responses showing complex understanding, corroboration was much more commonly seen than qualification, and modification was found in very few responses. Evaluation was observed in few responses.
- A few responses qualified through an analysis of the extent of different effects of trans-Atlantic voyages.
- A few responses argued for the greater relative importance of some effects, and the lesser importance of others, presenting a qualified argument.
- Other approaches to add complexity, which were rarely seen, differentiated effects by time (change and continuity), place (comparison), or group (comparison).
- Responses that attempted to explain relevant and insightful connections within and across periods typically fell short of connecting these examples to the era of the prompt. Mentions of British treatment of native peoples after 1607, United States interactions with native peoples during westward expansion, or the history of slavery after 1609 were seldom accompanied by explanatory analysis.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronological misconceptions were common (e.g., inclusion of post-1607 English, Dutch, French colonization). Some responses focused outside the period of the prompt, inappropriately using history from after 1607.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses primarily focused on the topics of trans-Atlantic voyages by the Spanish and Portuguese, pre-Columbian Native American societies, and the interactions of those groups from contact through 1607 including Africans as relevant to Spanish or Portuguese colonial developments.</li> <li>“The European countries, Portugal, Spain, and England developed a desire to explore the rest of the world. They were motivated by economic gains such as shorter routes to Asia and the search for gold. Explorers were also motivated by the Christian Religion and the need to convert as many people to Christianity. As a result of Exploration, and voyages across the Atlantic Ocean, Europeans came in contact with the Americas.”</li> <li>“The wealth brought back by Spanish conquistadors attracted the envy of other European nations, who would soon send their own colonizing forces to the New World to claim their stakes. Spain’s neighbor, Portugal, whose success in the Indies had caused Spain’s transatlantic voyages also sent people to colonize the Americas colonizing modern day Brazil. The New World became so hotly contested that the Treaty of Tordesillas had to be negotiated to determine the borders of Spanish and Portuguese influence.”</li> <li>“The transatlantic voyages also changed the Americas by bringing slaves from Africa into the Americas. Because many Natives died from European diseases or escaped from the Spanish, the Spanish needed a new source of labor and looked to Africa for these laborers. The presence of African slaves in the Americas was the beginning of a long history of African people being enslaved in the Americas.”</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A knowledge gap in many responses was seen on the topic of pre-Columbian North American societies and their agricultural development. Responses presented errors by portraying native societies as merely nomadic, and credited Europeans for introducing sedentary agriculture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses encompassed the diversity of Native American societies which included civilizations (e.g., Maya), empires (e.g., Aztec and Inca), chiefdoms of sedentary farmers (e.g., Arawak/Taino and Pueblo), and smaller groups that gathered and hunted. Understanding the ways trans-Atlantic voyages affected the Americas is shown best by responses noting the advanced agriculture sustaining settled and urban societies (e.g., Tenochtitlan) and pre-existing cultural and political systems.</li> <li>• “More advanced and settled societies like the Cahokia moundbuilders had established a complex trading system with other tribes while other natives lived more of a nomadic lifestyles.”</li> <li>• “Before Europeans discovered America there had already been Native Tribes living on the continent for millennia. Societies like the Incas for example had impressive dwellings, road systems, and irrigation canals created before Europeans arrived with things like domesticated animals, guns, gun powder, and new crops.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misplacement of Afro-Eurasian goods by identifying their origins in the Americas, and/or locating American products as from Europe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses showed understanding of important agricultural developments originating in the Americas which included maize, potatoes, tomatoes, and tobacco; and correctly noted the European introduction of sugar, coffee, wheat, rice, cattle, and/or horses.</li> <li>• “The Columbian Exchange would bring new things to the Americas. Crops such as wheat and rice allowed for a varied diet, helping populations grow and became American staples.”</li> <li>• “Europeans saw the value of new land, and started farming new cash crops, like tobacco, for economic benefit. They also brought over sugar which grew easily in the Americas.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misunderstood the areas of the Americas that Europeans contacted, explored, or settled between 1491 and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showed understanding of the American regions of European contact, exploration, and settlement between 1491 and 1607.</li> </ul>

<p>1607 (e.g., establishing missions in California, or trading horses to Great Plains Native American nations).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This system of slavery from the Middle Passage affected the Americas by bringing in slaves that worked on plantations, such as those in Brazil, Central, and South America where Europeans grew sugarcane.”</li> <li>• “The tribes native to the west, like the Cherokee, were largely unaffected by these early trips because they were made mostly to the east coast, central and South America.”</li> <li>• “Europeans never gained full influence of the Americas in this time period, as much of North America specifically remained in the control of indigenous tribes during this time period, due to Europeans focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean during this time period.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overgeneralized assertions (e.g., “Native Americans were nomadic hunters and gatherers”) reduce the likelihood of the response being correct and historically defensible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most successful student examples were specific to a people in a place at a particular time (e.g., “the Aztec Empire in the 1400s collected tribute from city-states they had conquered in central America”).</li> </ul>

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

- Encourage students to present a new version of their thesis in their conclusion. A significant portion of students who missed the thesis point in their introduction succeeded with the task in their conclusion.
- Some evidence reflects more depth of historical understanding. Some responses related effects of “disease” while better responses introduced more specific history facts by mentioning which diseases (e.g., smallpox, measles, cold, flu, etc.).
- Students should present their arguments explicitly and offer explanation. At the entry level of argumentation, a student might argue, “The trans-Atlantic voyages brought diseases to the Americas.” Persuade students to explain deeper, for example, “The trans-Atlantic voyages brought diseases to the Americans which decreased Native-American population.” And better responses explain even further: “The trans-Atlantic voyages brought diseases to the Americans which decreased Native-American population, allowing conquistadors to easily conquer Native Empires.”
- Challenge students to differentiate their thinking and arguments.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students

are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos, including a Faculty Lecture with Evelyne Laurent-Perrault on the Atlantic World. Further, the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 1: 1491–1607—Focus on Research is helpful for the content and skills required in this question.

- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)

**Question #3****Task:** Long Essay  
Question**Topic:** Reform Movements in the 19th  
Century**Max. Points:** 6**Mean Score:** 1.80***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- The question prompt asked students to evaluate the relative importance of causes of reform activity in the United States in the period from 1800 to 1848. Generally, responses used the Second Great Awakening, establishing contextualization and then identified specific social issues, such as abolition, women’s rights, and temperance, to build their arguments. The responses were expected to evaluate the causal relationship between societal factors and the reform movements spurred by them, in the context of perfectionism driven by the combination of Enlightenment rationalism and religious zeal.
- The responses were expected to demonstrate an ability to weigh the relative importance of reform causes and connect this analysis to the development of reform from 1800 to 1848.
- The historical reasoning process of causation was given in the prompt.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 4.10 and 4.11. Specifically, students could connect the impact of the market revolution on society and culture (covered in Topic 4.6) and the development of an American culture focused on the ideal of perfectibility (covered in Topic 4.9) to how these developments contributed to the Age of Reform. The responses could also have placed the causal relationship in the context of the ideals of the founding of the United States, including Enlightenment concepts, propelled by the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Most students seemed to understand and have some basic knowledge of reforms. Many students confused the reforms of the Gilded Age/Progressive Era with the antebellum reforms or weaved them together. The most common reforms students discussed correctly in the time period were the abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage/rights, and temperance. Many students did bring in prison and mental health reform using Dorothea Dix and educational reform using Horace Mann successfully.
- For the thesis/claim point responses, many students struggled to differentiate between cause and effect and focused on the effects of antebellum reforms rather than the causes instigating these reforms. The prompt language of evaluating relative importance of causes was largely ignored by students, and if it was attempted, it many times distracted or convoluted their arguments.
- For the contextualization point, responses exhibited some element of understanding reform, but they struggled with chronology and were not able to appropriately contextualize the time period or events. The Gilded Age and Progressive reforms were most conflated with the antebellum reforms. Students often struggled to separate the two eras. Additionally, many students attributed political activity to reform, such as attributing political compromise as reform measures. Very few students effectively made a reform case for political actions. Few responses mentioned the Market Revolution or explained how it caused social and cultural reform. This is concerning considering it is one of the Key Concepts for this question. More responses used the Second Great Awakening as a cause for reforms but failed to connect it to the ideal of perfectibility and the reasoning behind the reforms.
- Students were strongest in the discussions of enslavement and women’s rights. The main problem was that students struggled with explaining why the reforms occurred at this time or what caused them. Most briefly discussed the reforms and how those reforms would later be successful in the future.
- Causation was the historical reasoning skill most responses applied, although Comparison was also attempted. Some responses made effective comparisons between the women’s rights movement and the abolitionist movement.

- Many students brought in causes with varying levels of success. This was most evident with the essays that focused on political reform with changes in Constitutional interpretation by political parties and the Marshall Court and the effects this had on the economy and states' rights during this time period and for the future.
- Chronology continued to be an area of concern for many students and evidence from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era were used in conjunction with evidence from the antebellum era. There were many responses that were written out of time frame, specifically focused on late 19th century (Gilded Age/Progressive Era) reforms.
- Many students were able to demonstrate cause/effect relationships, but their struggle with periodization severely undermined their ability to earn points based on the prompt. Students struggled with distinguishing between cause of reform and effect of reform. Many attempted to explain the reform itself as the cause and effects as the legislation or events that often occurred in the future. For example, many attributed temperance as the cause for reform of alcohol consumption and the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment as the effect. Many acknowledged that the cause of temperance failed in the antebellum time period, since the amendment did not happen until much later. Approximately less than half of the responses argued the real root causes of reform, such as the changing nature of America in terms of the Market Revolution transforming the economy or the religious zeal of the Second Great Awakening sparking notions of equality, perfectibility, and morality.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students commonly confused antebellum reforms with Gilded Age/Progressive Era reforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses clearly identified era-appropriate reforms such as abolition, temperance, women's suffrage, etc.</li> <li>• "Reform in the period 1800–1848 were caused by debates over slavery, women's desire for suffrage, and religious revivalism."</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students confused the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution when arguing equality or trying to contextualize. They tried to argue that the Constitution promised or granted all men equality, not understanding that equality is not included in the Constitution until the Fourteenth Amendment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses understood that the Declaration of Independence states "all men are created equal" but really only meant "white men" and that the original Constitution before the Fourteenth Amendment has no mention of equality and actually counted enslaved people as three-fifths of a person for representation.</li> <li>• "The recently signed Declaration of Independence stated 'that all men are created equal,' yet under the Constitution the word slavery was never mentioned. Instead slaves were considered a states' right and counted as <math>\frac{3}{5}</math> of a person for representation under the Constitution. This lack of equality was a political flaw that caused the necessity of reform from the founding of our country."</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students commonly structured their arguments based on the effects of reform activities, rather than evaluate the causes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses identified multiple causes of the reform activities in the antebellum era, including the Market Revolution, the Second Great Awakening, and emerging sectional tensions between North and South.</li> <li>“While some reform activities in the United States were caused by debates over slavery, the strongest cause for reform was the 2nd Great Awakening”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses struggled to contextualize the essay and were not able to connect events before or after this time period to the causes of reform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses were able to establish trends such as the Second Great Awakening, the development of regional economies, or the restrictions of republican motherhood as contextual evidence for the causes of reform.</li> <li>“Prior to 1800, women were expected to instill democratic values to their children while not being able to vote themselves. This system was known as Republican Motherhood. Women began to question this lack of political power as America moved into the 19th century”</li> <li>“Eli Whitney’s invention of the Cotton Gin allowed the “Cotton Kingdom” to develop in the South. This led to increased dependency on the institution of Slavery. The North, however, industrialized without the need for Slavery. This led to sectionalism and a debate over slavery in America.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few responses argued that the Market Revolution caused social or economic reform. In addition, many responses that tried confused the Market Revolution with Gilded Age Industrial Revolution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses connected the Market Revolution and the accompanying industrialization to the spread of information and to changing demographics which fostered reform.</li> <li>“But eventually, the US found a way to overcome these challenges and starting sometime in the 1790s, experienced the Market Revolution or the First Industrial Revolution. The transformation in transportation and communication and the rapid industrialization of the north attracted many immigrants.”</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many students confused the First and Second Great Awakenings, trying to use Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield as evidence. Students also combined the ideas from both reform eras or simply referenced “The Great Awakening” without designating which era they were referencing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher-level responses used the Second Great Awakening to show causality or as historical contextualization.</li> <li>“The Second Great Awakening gave the public a deeper belief in moral values, which guided the public towards certain legislations. Not only did the public who followed preachings be immersed in the prospect of morality, but also it gave them a sense of individualism.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students failed to connect the Second Great Awakening to perfectibility and that being the cause for the other reforms in society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses were able to connect the Second Great Awakening to the push to purify or correct societal ills, thus leading to reform.</li> <li>“By the beginning of the 19th Century America was undergoing the 2nd Great Awakening. This movement, which was headed by Charles Finney, resulted in a variety of reforms. The ideals of the 2nd Great Awakening relied heavily on the ideal of evangelicalism. Charles Finney preached the idea that people had power over what their afterlives would look like. Finney encouraged people to fix the counties problems, which would make the country a more ideal place and better their afterlives individually.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many students believed that <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> was written in this time period and tried to argue it caused abolition to spread during this time period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses used William Lloyd Garrison’s <i>The Liberator</i>, Frederick Douglass’s autobiography, or <i>North Star</i> as evidence instead.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students were unable to distinguish between political change and political reform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective responses argued that expansion of voting rights and the reduction of property qualifications was a reform during the Jacksonian Era.</li> </ul> <p>“An expansion of democracy to all white men during the 1820s gave way to an increased emphasis on individual rights. This helped encourage movements such as abolitionism. ... Additionally with the expansion of voting rights, women began to fight for their rights and suffrage with Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and the Declaration of Sentiments which was</p>

	inspired by the equality mentioned in the Declaration of Independence.”
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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 the student performance on the exam?**

- Students must be familiar with the dates of the time periods and what happens socially, politically, and economically during those times. Have students practice specific dates and what comes before and after them to improve their sense of periodization. For example, reinforce the Compromise of 1850 and that *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is published afterward as an effect.
- Students must practice identifying and describing key people, events, and ideas in movements and within each time period.
- Have students practice breaking questions into parts before answering them. For this essay students needed to break the question into two parts: What caused reform activities between 1800–1848? What was the relevant importance of each cause?
- Have students watch the AP Daily videos where the professors discuss and practice the skills and verbiage of the question stems (e.g., relative importance).
- Have students practice writing different question stems (for example, compare, to what extent, analyze, evaluate) as warmups without grade consequences. Have students rewrite question stems in their own words to check for understanding of what the question is asking for.
- Have students assess major movements for multiple casualties as well as effects.
- In review students need to do a comparison of the different major reform movements over the course of United States history, looking at leaders, causes, events of importance, and effects. Assign various key people, events, movements, and ideas to students either individually or in groups. Have students think-pair-share or present their assigned topic to the class. Have students take notes on their classmates’ assigned topics.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos, including a Faculty Lecture with Maria E. Montoya on Period 4. Further, the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 4: 1800–1848—Focus on Research is helpful for the content and skills required in this question.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/)

**Question #4****Task:** Long Essay  
Question**Topic:** International Conflicts  
1898–1930**Max. Points:** 6**Mean Score:** 2.34***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- The responses to this question were expected to demonstrate understanding of the development of the United States in the context of its role in the world.
- Ways to demonstrate understanding of the topic of the question include accurate descriptions of the Spanish-American War, the First World War, and United States interventions in Latin America.
- Responses to this question can address topics beyond military issues, such as changes in United States international economic and political influence.
- The responses were expected to demonstrate the following skills/processes: contextualization, change over time, continuity, and comparison. Some responses could also build an argument based on causation.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, and 7.11.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

- Most of the responses addressed the course content related to the Spanish-American War and imperialism. Those responses usually discussed its implications for Cuba, Hawaii, and the Philippines thoroughly.
- The accuracy range of the First World War content was more varied in the responses. Most identified the term correctly and described the Treaty of Versailles, the postwar debts, and the sinking of the Lusitania. A significant percentage confused the Second World War or the Cold War with the First World War and provided course content from the 1940s to the 1970s, outside the requested time period of the prompt.
- Most of the responses also integrated the skill of contextualization well by using George Washington’s Farewell Address, the Monroe Doctrine, and/or Manifest Destiny.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to answer the entire prompt with evidence based on the Second World War or the Cold War.</li> <li>• “The United States was forced to abandon isolationism in the time period of 1898 to 1930 because of the Second World War, The Holocaust, and the Cold War.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses answered the prompt with only evidence drawn from course content in the requested time frame or developed a change over time/comparison argument that explained connections to the Second World War or the Cold War.</li> <li>• “President Theodore Roosevelt helped oversee the negotiations, which saw the Japanese gain influence. Although this would be the first of many peace negotiations, it had little impact on America’s role when compared to the effects brought on by the Spanish-American War &amp; World War I.”</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses focused on internal conflicts or domestic affairs instead of international conflicts.</li> <li>• “The two internal conflicts in the time period from 1898 to 1930 that affected the role of the United States in the world is the use of credit and the Prohibition law not being enforced or followed.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses answered the prompt with evidence drawn from course content about conflicts in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and/or Europe in the requested time period. The responses may have included United States internal affairs to develop the complexity of the argument.</li> <li>• “It is true that the US did not join the League of Nations and proceeded to cut themselves off from European affairs following the war. This was likely true to Washington’s warning not to meddle in foreign affairs and make alliances and resulted in the US not allying itself with the European nations it had fought alongside, coupled with the fact that the League of Nations was powerless and failed to prevent conflict. Some argue that lack of US involvement diminished the country’s international standing. However, although the US didn’t actually take part, it still helped win the war and led peace talks.”</li> </ul>
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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 the student performance on the exam?**

- Teach students how to structure an essay with clear organization. Practice starting essays with a standard contextualization attempt that begins, “In order to understand how the role of the United States was effected by international conflicts, one must understand the context that led to this change.”
- Follow the context with as many sentences as needed to establish a defensible claim. Use the prompt as a guide. For example, “International conflicts between 1898 had no effect/had a moderate effect/had a great effect on the United States role in the world BECAUSE ...”
- Try to start every paragraph with a topic sentence that answers the question in some way to continue the argument. This will help earn both evidence points. A good thesis statement establishes a claim and then the evidence can be used in support to earn two points in this category.
- Analysis and Reasoning can be earned by following the prompt and explaining how and why things happen. Responses can focus on using sentence structures that set up for this based on the process the question focuses on. Therefore, it is important for teachers to help students understand the vocabulary in the prompt that shows an essay needs to focus on causation, comparison, or continuity and change.
- Practice chronology with exercises that compare similarities and differences between the First World War and the Second World War.

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

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students

are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items an increased challenge as teachers progress through the course. AP Classroom also includes AP Daily Videos and the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 7: 1890–1945—Focus on Research, Focus on Teaching, and Focus on Assessment which are helpful for the content and skills required in this question.

- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)