

## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2019 AP<sup>®</sup> United States History Free-Response Questions

|                             |            |         |      |
|-----------------------------|------------|---------|------|
| • Number of Students Scored | 496,573    |         |      |
| • Number of Readers         | 2383       |         |      |
| • Score Distribution        | Exam Score | N       | %At  |
|                             | 5          | 58,638  | 11.8 |
|                             | 4          | 91,491  | 18.4 |
|                             | 3          | 116,350 | 23.4 |
|                             | 2          | 109,249 | 22.0 |
|                             | 1          | 120,845 | 24.3 |
| • Global Mean               | 2.71       |         |      |

The following comments on the 2019 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> United States History were written by the Chief Reader, Michelle Kuhl, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh in collaboration with reading leadership. 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**Max. Points:** 3**Topic:** American Revolution Analyzing  
Secondary Sources**Mean Score:** 1.61***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to describe a difference between two excerpts from secondary source texts about the effect the American Revolution had on women. The first, by Elaine Forman Crane, argued that the American Revolution had little effect on women's status in America. The second, by Rosemarie Zagarri, stated that the American Revolution resulted in new opportunities for women in politics and allowed them to become more visible in the public sphere. This was due to their participation in the war effort, which led to a greater feeling of connection to the new government.
- Responses had to give evidence 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 the status of women did not change to support Crane's view, and then use evidence to show how women's participation in the war led to an increase in status and a greater visibility in the public sphere for women.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and secondary sources.
- This question addressed Key Concepts 3.1 and 3.2.

***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 successfully wielded knowledge from the pre- to post-Revolutionary period to support the claims by Crane and Zagarri. In the most common pattern, students supported Crane with evidence about women's exclusion from participation in politics and the political process. Similarly, students supported Zagarri with evidence about activities of women in the war effort, such as the Daughters of Liberty.

**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>  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most common problem was the lack of ability to demonstrate comprehension of the historical excerpts. Students quoted key passages from the excerpts, but did not put the ideas in their own words.</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses addressed both arguments and described the differences between the two historians.</li> <li>“Crane asserted that after the Revolution, women did not receive recognition and their social status did not change, while Zagarri believed that women gained more opportunity, prestige, and a voice in politics and society.”</li> </ul>               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A common misconception was of the role of Republican Motherhood.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses could marshal Republican Motherhood as an example for either historian.</li> <li>Republican Motherhood’s emphasis on women’s connection to their children was used to support Crane. Republican motherhood’s emphasis on women’s knowledge and transfer of proper republican values that would benefit society was used to support Zagarri.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A common issue was over-generalization without specifics such as “women helped in the war effort.”</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses included concrete examples.</li> <li>“The Ladies of Philadelphia conducted fundraisers for the Continental Army in order to provide for their expenses which would support Zagarri’s claim.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A common content problem was to mix in multiple eras of women’s history. For example, responses brought in separate spheres, the Cult of True Womanhood, settlement houses, and Rosie the Riveter, all of which were out of the time period.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses understood the influential role that women played specific to the American Revolution.</li> <li>“The Daughters of Liberty supported the war effort by leading boycotts of British goods and creating homespun garments during the war.”</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 reading competing secondary sources in the classroom, analyze the documents, and write a scholar’s argument in their own words. This could be done as homework or classroom group work.
- Students should understand historical perspectives and be able to differentiate between the two arguments.
- Students should practice chronology of women’s history. Students could get index cards with 10 different major events and practice putting them in the proper order.

**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, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skills, reasoning process, theme, and resource type.  
Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)
- Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 3: 1754–1800, Focus on Research “Why the Revolution Started”:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/professional-development?course=ap-united-states-history>

**Question #2****Task:** Short Answer Question**Max. Points:** 3**Topic:** Westward Expansion Causation**Mean Score:** 1.85***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- The responses to this question were expected to demonstrate understanding and analysis of a primary source image depicting Manifest Destiny and westward expansion. Students first needed to describe one historical perspective expressed in the image. Then they needed to explain how one specific event or development in the period from 1800 to 1850 contributed to the process depicted in the image. Finally, they needed to explain one specific historical effect in the period from 1844 to 1890 that resulted from the process depicted in the image.
- Students needed to be able to understand historical perspective, as well as cause and effect. Because part (b) required students to explain an event or development from 1800 to 1850, and part (c) required them to explain a specific historical effect from 1844 to 1890, the chronological overlap between the two parts also made it necessary for responses to demonstrate knowledge of dates of key historical events.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and causation.
- This question addressed Key Concept 5.1.

***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, students seemed to have a pretty solid understanding of Manifest Destiny and westward expansion and were able to address at least some part of the question.
- Most students understood the key ideas for the image and were able to connect it to a historical perspective but did not always go far enough in describing that historical perspective.
- Students were most successful with clearly understanding cause and effect and its relation to westward expansion but did sometimes struggle with being aware of the correct time period.
- When the Mexican–American War was used as the event that contributed to westward expansion, the majority of students were able to clearly connect the issues and reasoning for its influence of further westward expansion.
- Students were able to use and understand the variety of sectional conflicts and issues that resulted from the idea of Manifest Destiny and westward expansion.

***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>  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common student misconception was including the Indian Removal Act or Trail of Tears as an answer for either part (b) or (c). The Indian Removal Act was erroneously connected to the idea of voluntary westward expansion and Manifest Destiny.</li> <li>• Students were often too generalized in their description of American Indian conflict and loss of land without any specifics.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses that demonstrate understanding established a clear connection between westward expansion and the removal of western Native Americans to reservations and a policy of assimilation and conflict.</li> <li>• “Once people began moving westward they once again came into conflict with Native Americans. Consequently the Dawes Act was signed to promote Americanization of Native Americans by effectively depriving them of their tribes, land and the army frequently was utilized such as at Wounded Knee Massacre.”</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manifest Destiny would be mentioned but not adequately explained or connected to the image</li> <li>• Some responses provided a description of the image but no historical perspective was connected.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong responses provided a clear understanding of Manifest Destiny and specifically connected it to the image.</li> <li>• “A historical perspective expressed in this image is the promotion of westward expansion through Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny is the American belief that it is their God given right to expand throughout N. American. Image supports this as citizens are migration westward to California.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students often wrote about the Gold Rush, but provided no economic connection or future opportunity, and instead the Gold Rush was a cause or effect simply because they found gold.</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the Gold Rush was used correctly, students made a clear connection between the economic development and its influence in westward expansion.</li> <li>• “One thing that caused Westward expansion was the California Gold Rush. Those who settled in California went with the intention of finding gold and getting rich and it provided a hope for a better economic opportunity.”</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?**

- To learn the meaning of Manifest Destiny, students could compare the overview in a textbook with a few primary sources that speak to the issue.
- To work on learning chronology of key events related to Manifest Destiny, students could play “7 Degrees of Separation” between 1820 and 1890.
- For practice on understanding images, students could compare the image in this question with a later image about the west from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They could chart similarities and differences, and they could discuss how the context of each time period informs the image.

**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, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
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- Critical Interpretation of Images and the AP History Classroom: [apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/apunited-states-history](https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/apunited-states-history)

**Question #3****Task:** Short Answer Question**Max. Points:** 3**Topic:** Economics in the Middle and Chesapeake Colonies Comparison**Mean Score:** 1.34***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to describe one difference between the economy of the middle colonies and the economy of the Chesapeake colonies from 1607 to 1754. Next, the responses were expected to describe a similarity between the middle and Chesapeake colonies' economies from 1607 to 1754. Finally, the responses were expected to explain one specific example of a difference between the economy of the middle colonies and the economy of the Chesapeake colonies from 1607 to 1754.
- This question focused on comparison and causation.
- This question mainly addressed Key Concept 2.3.

***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 economic differences between the middle colonies and the Chesapeake. Many, however, demonstrated confusion about the geography of the colonies.
- Students had an adequate knowledge about the very basic similarities between the regions, although they often described these differences at a broad level.
- Students had an adequate knowledge about the very basic reasons for economic differences, often pointing to geographical issues.

***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>  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most common error was to confuse the geography of the colonies. Some responses described the middle colonies with details from New England and the Chesapeake with information from colonies farther to the south.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The better responses correctly identified a specific difference in the economics of the middle colonies and the Chesapeake colonies.</li> <li>• “The Chesapeake mainly grew cash crops with the likes of tobacco which supported their economy. The middle colonies flourished on other products, specifically what we call cereal crops. They were in essence the breadbasket of the early colonial America.”</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses tended to go outside the time period from 1607 to 1754. Most of the taxation by the British, industrialization of the textile industry, and the rise of cotton in the Chesapeake colonies, were common responses that were largely outside the time period.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The better responses correctly identified period specific economic differences such as tobacco for the Chesapeake colonies and grains (wheat, corn, and oats) for the middle colonies.</li> <li>“One difference between the economies of the Chesapeake and the middle colonies is the product produced on farms. The Chesapeake liked to make tobacco while the middle colonies focused on producing corn.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses focused on social and political trends rather than the economy. The issues of indentured servants/slaves, families/single men, and origins of the colonies tended to be answered with a social observation and lacked a connection to the economy.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The better responses incorporated slavery and indentured servants as a means of labor for crops and ports in the middle and Chesapeake colonies.</li> <li>“The marshy Chesapeake centered around tobacco, which is very labor intensive to produce and therefore required slave labor to maintain. Cereal crops from Middle Colonies do not require the same amount of back-breaking work, and the widespread diversity of the area made slavery unfavorable, so the people did not have a great need for a slave based economy.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses asserted that the middle colonies had bad soil, so they could not have agriculture.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The better responses recognized that the Chesapeake had fertile soil along with a warm, humid climate which made it more conducive for tobacco. The middle colonies, while not as fertile, warm, or humid, were still situated in a very good place to grow crops and raise livestock.</li> <li>“The Chesapeake colonies had fertile soil and a warmer climate which allowed for plantation style farming of cash crops. The middle colonies had less fertile soil which allowed for smaller family farms.”</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?**

- One of the major problems with responses to this question was the geographical reasoning of the students. For example, students frequently put Pennsylvania and Maryland in the New England colonies. To help students understand this better, the teachers could assign map awareness exercises and assessments for each of the time periods in American history.
- Another problem with responses to this question was knowing what activities happened in each region of the colonies. To help the students, the teachers could have the students create T-charts and Venn diagrams to help them understand the unique features of each colonial region and what the colonial regions had in common.



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

- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
- Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare 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 skills, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)
- Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 2: 1607-1754, Focus on Research “Colonial Diversity”: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/professional-development?course=ap-united-states-history>

**Question #4****Task:** Short Answer Question**Max. Points:** 3**Topic:** New Deal and Great Society Comparison**Mean Score:** 1.38***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to describe one similarity between New Deal and Great Society programs. Next, it asked students to describe one difference between New Deal and Great Society programs. Finally, it asked students to explain one reason for a difference between New Deal and Great Society programs.
- This question expected students to demonstrate an understanding of the role of the federal government in American social, political, and economic life, in particular, how government intervention can bring about change.
- This question focused on comparison and causation.
- This question addressed Key Concepts 7.10 and 8.9.

***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 responses were able to successfully compare the New Deal and the Great Society, identifying them as government welfare programs that addressed economic issues (particularly poverty and unemployment).
- Similarly, many responses successfully identified the Great Society as a continuation of New Deal programs, which marked a departure from laissez-faire economics, extended welfare programs, expanded federal power, and expanded executive power.
- When asked to describe a difference between New Deal and Great Society programs, most students demonstrated a general understanding that the focus of the New Deal on economic problems (especially banking reform and unemployment) changed and broadened over time so that the Great Society addressed economic and social problems (like access to health care and racial inequality).
- Many were able to link the causes of the New Deal to the Great Depression and the causes of the Great Society to 1960s social unrest, particularly 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>   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some responses were overly general in their description of New Deal and Great Society programs, describing them vaguely as economic programs to help struggling Americans.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses demonstrated an understanding of New Deal and Great Society programs as federal policies and identified the particular groups assisted by these programs.</li> <li>• “A similarity between the New Deal and the Great Society programs would be they were put in place to help those in need in America. An example would be social security from the New Deal and Medicare from the Great Society. Both were financial plans for the elderly that would give them money so they would be able to retire.”</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses missed the strong ideological and political links between the two sets of programs.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses indicated an understanding that the Great Society represented a continuation of government intervention in American economic and social life established by the New Deal.</li> <li>“Both the New Deal and Great Society programs promoted social security. FDR’s New Deal started the social security program in America, which took a small amount of money from peoples income and set it aside for the future. The Great Society further improved this program and helped make it more prominent in the U.S.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses demonstrated a general understanding that both sets of programs dealt with social and economic welfare but did not provide specific examples.</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses provided specific examples of New Deal and/or Great Society programs.</li> <li>“The New Deal mainly focused on improving Americas economy after the Great Depression and reduce the rapid unemployment. On the other hand, the Great Society focused more on social reasons, such as Medicare and Medicaid, which would help improve the lives of people in America.”</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses mischaracterized the New Deal as having a much more broad social impact than the Great Society, which they incorrectly characterized as benefiting minority communities only.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses demonstrated knowledge that New Deal programs were limited in their impact—particularly upon racial minorities—while the Great Society benefitted American society more generally.</li> <li>“The Great Society, unlike the New Deal, advocated a furthering of Civil Rights. For instance, the Great Society included the retiring of the national origins system under the Quota Act, allowing for minorities to be empowered as well, as they were increasingly accepted by the country, while the New Deal largely ignored race issues like lynching and disenfranchisement, another issue attacked by the Great Society.”</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some responses relied only on the different decades of the New Deal and the Great Society to explain the differences in their programs.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stronger responses drew clear distinctions based on the different social, economic, and political contexts of the 1930s and the 1960s.</li><li>• “The differences between the two reform programs are largely because of what was happening at that time. The Great Depression affected millions of Americans, so FDR’s primary goal was to provide economic relief to families. On the other hand, protests for racial, gender, educational equality and antiwar protests, not to mention healthcare protests, led to Johnson making social reforms to address Americans’ needs.”</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?**

- Students struggled with chronology. They often conflated WWI and WWII as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. They also often misidentified the presidents responsible for these respective programs, usually mistaking Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt and mistaking Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy. Another common mistake was to conflate Progressive Era reforms with New Deal programs. Students could practice chronology by getting index cards with 10 different major events and practice putting them in the proper order.
- Instruct students to avoid making value judgments as a difference. Simply describing one program as a success and another as a failure, unless clearly expanded upon with specific examples, is too vague to demonstrate content knowledge.
- Encourage students to pay close attention to the wording of the prompt. Although the prompt asks for “ONE difference” and “ONE reason for a difference” it goes on to say, “between New Deal and Great Society programs,” so the students were expected to specifically address both.

**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, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
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- Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 7: 1890–1945, Focus on Research “Evolution of Industrial Capitalism”: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/professional-development?course=ap-united-states-history>

**Question #1****Task:** Document Based Question **Topic:** Progressivism, 1890–1920**Max. Points:** 7**Mean Score:** 2.54***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question required students to evaluate the impact of the Progressive movement on United States politics from 1890 to 1920. The content expectations of the question originated principally from Period 7 of the course framework, focusing on Progressive efforts to regulate the economy, reform society, and reduce corruption in United States politics, fostering democracy. Students also were expected to address the problems that emerged or intensified during industrialization, urbanization, and immigration, and/or the reform efforts of the earlier Populist movement.
- The intention of the question was to determine if students could defensibly evaluate the extent to which the Progressives improved conditions in the United States and consider the areas in which the movement fell short in improving conditions, most frequently by addressing the limits of Progressivism in improving conditions for African Americans and improving race relations. The question allowed for flexibility in approach. Responses could possibly address local, state, and federal efforts; they could take a thematic approach; or they could take a chronological approach, as by discussing issues before the election of Theodore Roosevelt as the first Progressive president and then developments while Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson were each in office.
- The documents nudged students to discuss issues of local and national political corruption and accountability, law enforcement and treatment of adult versus juvenile offenders, racial issues (particularly segregation), and Prohibition. A few documents also invited the students to consider all of the Progressive amendments (the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>).
- This question primarily focused on continuity and change, causation, contextualization, analyzing primary sources, and argument development.
- This question mainly addressed Key Concept 7.1.

***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 were able to examine the efforts of the Progressive movement, but the degree to which responses offered analysis versus narration varied widely. It was evident that teachers had prepared students well in this area for it was a mainstream question that was approachable to a large majority of students. Sometimes the students missed opportunities to analyze, only simply describing the content of the documents. Additionally, some students did not answer the question asked or partially answered the question, sometimes wandering from the prompt. Some students blurred reform movements, sometimes erroneously featuring developments in the antebellum reform movements or the New Deal.
- Causation and/or continuity and change often appeared in student responses. Sometimes the chronology in the responses was off, sometimes by blurring the Gilded Age and Reconstruction or wandering into the Roaring Twenties. For the most part, however, student responses showed a grasp of the chronology. Students did have some trouble with organizing their points into thematic paragraphs, if that was the approach that they took, occasionally misusing thematic words for developments that reflected other themes (e.g., political versus economic). Many responses blended the relationship among political, social, cultural, and economic reforms, though the level of understanding shown varied. Many of the strongest responses did an admirable job weighing the evidence in comparing the impact of the Progressives in different areas (e.g., local, state, and national reforms).
- Student responses were most likely to reflect a limited understanding of Document 6 concerning the commissioner's report. The use of the document was often superficial with students concluding that the police force in Detroit was transformed to be more accountable to the people. Strong responses reflected an understanding that the document focused on reorganization of the police guided by principles of scientific management. It was uncommon to see students analyze the significance of the commissioner's former position at

Ford. When using Document 5, students sometimes thought that the Progressives effectively advanced the rights of African Americans, concluding that Wilson heeded the call of the NAACP and desegregated federal workplaces.

- Many students did an admirable job of establishing a thesis either at the beginning or conclusion of their responses. Students often attempted contextualization, but some did not relate the broader historical context to the topic of the prompt. The most common contextualization involved discussion of the Gilded Age, focusing on 1877–1890, featuring at least one of the following: political corruption, industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and race relations. Stronger responses often discussed the efforts of the Populist (People’s) Party.
- Many students also received the evidence point for using the content of at least three documents. If students understood the question, then they frequently attained this point. Students had more trouble earning the second point for evidence from the documents as they did not support an argument using at least six documents. Teachers should make sure that they expect their students to elaborate more on the evidence and link it back to the argument.
- Earning the point for sourcing was challenging. The most common—and most frequently effective—sourcing presented the historical situation for a document. For example, students might set up the quote from Theodore Roosevelt with references to his status as a “trust buster” or the use of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in the early 1900s. Responses that attempted to assess the audience often fell short of explaining its relevance to the argument, referring to the audience for Hiram Johnson, for example, as “the voters” or the audience for the poster as “the American people.” Overall, teachers should emphasize linking the sourcing element to the argument in an explicit manner.
- The complexity point was earned by relatively few students even though it could be achieved by responses that did not earn all of the other points. Responses that earned the point for complexity often showed a deeper, more sophisticated understanding of the prompt. Most responses earned the complexity point by:
  - Corroborating and qualifying an argument, effectively using evidence to demonstrate an understanding of the successes and limits of Progressivism. Many of these responses linked such limits to later advances (e.g., advances of the Civil Rights movement).
  - Qualifying an argument with a nuanced discussion of local versus state versus federal efforts and achievements.

**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>Some responses provided evidence (either from the documents or outside evidence) but did not successfully demonstrate how and why that evidence supported the argument.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses demonstrated how the evidence supported the argument.</li> <li>“In keeping with this idea of the rights of children, the Progressive movement also aligned with the temperance movement for the protection of families. The temperance movement aimed at abolishing alcohol, and was commonly supported by mothers, who saw the detrimental effects of alcohol leading to the abuse of mothers and children within the family. The political cartoon encouraged voters to ‘Vote Dry’ in favor of politicians who opposed the consumption of alcohol (Doc. 7).”</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many times the audience sourcing point made a generic statement involving “California senators” or “the voters.”</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses could gain credit for sourcing by more concretely discussing the significance of the audience. The following example contributed to a point for document sourcing because it explains the relevance of the audience of the NAACP’s letter that President Wilson “claimed to be a Progressive.”</li> <li>“Document 6 says that segregation continued in government and insulted progressive efforts on behalf of African Americans. It is significant that the NAACP is addressing President Wilson because Wilson claimed to be a Progressive but they are pointing out that he was harming efforts for improved civil rights for African Americans.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The complexity point was awarded for a deeper, more insightful understanding of the prompt, not simply for a clearly structured and well-written essay.</li> <li>Some response sought to qualify an argument by opening a paragraph with the word “however.” Using the word “however” was in itself insufficient to demonstrate the limits of the Progressive movement.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More successful responses went beyond merely using the word “however” to qualify arguments by using evidence to juxtapose different factors that demonstrate the limits of an argument.</li> <li>“Between 1890 and 1920, there was notable change in the fact that local political reforms and nationwide social reforms both exposed the corruptness of the political atmosphere, using propaganda and local campaigns to tackle a nationwide epidemic of political</li> </ul>  |



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|  | <p>corruption. However, there is a greater change in the fact that no local and social reforms could combat the spoils system and big business' effect on politics. ... In Doc. 2, Roosevelt explains that big corporations need to be controlled and supervised. Roosevelt's intended audience was big business to warn them of the fact that they cannot keep control of politics forever, and the American people to encourage them to have hope that reform will be made. Roosevelt further developed these ideas when running for the Progressive Bull Moose party in 1912 against Wilson. Roosevelt's speech shows that the power of big business over politics was so grand that it needed control, showing a continuation in their omnipotence in politics despite criticism from progressives."</p> |
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**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

Ensure students understand the expectation of context.

- One possibility is to create a handout of a stage with Teddy Roosevelt at the center. Ask students to either draw or write the background. If Roosevelt and trust busting are part of the central action, what is going on around him?

Ensure students recognize complex thinking through competing voices.

- One possibility is to pose the question in this DBQ and ask students to come up with a Twitter war over the impact of the Progressives. Students could pick two from a variety of people or groups (Roosevelt, Jane Adams, the NAACP, the AFL, etc.) and write a series of back and forth tweets. Limiting them to 280 characters per tweet forces students to condense their thoughts—a good writing exercise in itself.

Ensure students understand historical sourcing.

- Since this is one of the toughest skills, it might be helpful to hone with group work. Give the same document to multiple groups and ask them to try to source it. Then in the full class, have students share what they have come up with. This could spark many “aha” moments.

**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, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice DBQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skills, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/)
- Critical Interpretation of Images and the AP History Classroom: [apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/apunited-states-history/classroom-resources/critical-interpretation-images-ap-history](https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/apunited-states-history/classroom-resources/critical-interpretation-images-ap-history)
- Writing from Challenging Primary Sources Module: [https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/ap/modules/essay/writing/story\\_html5.html](https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/ap/modules/essay/writing/story_html5.html)

**Question #2****Task:** Long Essay  
Question**Max. Points:** 6**Topic:** Ideas of self-government before  
the American Revolution**Mean Score:** 2.68***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses to this question were expected to evaluate the extent to which ideas of self-government influenced colonial reactions to British imperial policies from 1754 to 1776.
- To successfully address this question, responses needed to demonstrate an understanding of the development of self-identity in colonial America. Often responses included information related to the colonies prior to the French and Indian War, salutary neglect, and/or Enlightenment beliefs.
- Responses also were expected to demonstrate an understanding of the British actions that sparked a colonial reaction and to detail how colonial reactions, such as rebellions, revolts, boycotts, organizations, and petitions, were rooted in ideas of self-government.
- In part, responses were expected to demonstrate an ability to evaluate the many variables related to the onset of the American Revolution.
- Responses were expected to demonstrate use of contextualization and argument development. Further, responses were expected to utilize causation, comparison, or continuity and change to frame or structure an argument that addressed the prompt.
- This question mainly addressed Key Concept 3.1.

***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?***

- Many responses demonstrated an understanding of the significance of the relationship between the colonies and British authority between the years of the French and Indian War and 1776. Responses also demonstrated a good working knowledge of information related to the pre-Revolutionary era of American History. However, the chronology of events and the causal relationship between events was often confused.
- Most responses attempted a thesis statement. Stronger responses made a historically defensible claim that established a line of reasoning, while weaker responses often just restated the prompt.
- Responses frequently provided historically relevant evidence in order to contextualize the response, notably about Enlightenment thinkers (especially Locke) and the use of salutary neglect.
- Since this question could be approached with causation or continuity and change, many students were able to earn a point for using historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument.
- Responses earning 2 points for analysis and reasoning did so in a variety of ways. Common attempts included:
  - Corroborating an argument using both political and economic causes to the colonial response to British imperial authority.
  - Qualifying and/or modifying an argument using nuances in regard to Loyalists and other groups who wanted to continue their relationship with Great Britain.
  - Qualifying and/or modifying an argument by extending the distrust of a monarchy to the creation of the Articles of Confederation, which did not allow for a strong central power.

***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>  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students misinterpreted the question as an opportunity to explain what caused the American Revolution.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses focused their response on the ideas of self-government.</li> <li>• “During the era of the Enlightenment, colonists clung to these ideas of Republicanism and self-government and used them to</li> </ul> |

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|  | justify opposition to Britain’s economic control and political control of the colonies.”  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students utilized incorrect chronology for major events, such as listing the Boston Tea Party before the Boston Massacre.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses focused on establishing the correct chronology of events as proof of Change Over Time and/or Causation.</li> <li>“The British retaliated with strong forces such as the Boston Massacre, killing some colonists. The colonists opposed the monopoly established by the Tea Act and carried out the Boston Tea Party, overthrowing crates of tea into the harbor.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students confused economic concepts, such as Laissez-faire, salutary neglect, and Mercantilism.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding for the true meaning of salutary neglect and an understanding of the Mercantilist system.</li> <li>“The American colonies enjoyed a period of relative self-governance under salutary neglect. Despite the passage of the Navigation Acts, strong economic output coupled with the fulfilment of British Mercantilist policies saw to a period of relaxed British control over colonial America.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students equated self-government to independence or to revolution.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses focused on the impact of ideas of self-government and not on the causes of the Revolution.</li> <li>“While limited to a fraction of the colonial populace, the self-governance enjoyed by the colonies during the previous century helped to craft a united response and structured body in response to heightened British authority from 1754 to 1776.”</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students overgeneralized and demonstrated the misconception that all colonists were revolutionaries and did not account for differences in region, class, race, or gender.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the diversity that existed in the colonies and how that diversity shaped colonial reactions to British imperial policies.</li> <li>“One important aspect to note about the extent to which these sentiments permeated the colonies is that loyalists outnumbered those who wanted to truly separate from Great Britain for the vast majority of the American Revolution.”</li> </ul>                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students had the misconception that the colonists never participated in any form of self-government until the time period of the prompt.</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses recognized the presence of various forms of self-government developing throughout the colonial era.</li> <li>“Self-government had been in progress for an extensive period in the colonies. Two early traces of self-government were the Mayflower Compact in Massachusetts and the House of Burgesses in Virginia.”</li> </ul>   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students equated emotions to actions and did not fulfill the intent of the prompt.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stronger responses clearly articulated specific actions as a response to British imperial authority, not just colonial emotions.</li><li>• “The Stamp Act was a tax on many every-day items for the colonists. The imposing of the Stamp Act caused colonists to resent Britain, and the Stamp Act Congress was formed to battle this issue.”</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?**

- Break down the various parts of an essay and explicitly teach those components to students.
- Ensure students understand what the prompt is asking them to address.
  - As a warm-up, provide students with a sample question. Have students circle operative words, like evaluate, and underline topics which need to be addressed in the response. Then have students rewrite the prompt in their own words to ensure they understand what the question is asking.
- Utilize the College Board rubrics for all writing assignments in class so students are clear on what components must be present in a high-scoring essay.
  - Prior to submitting an essay, have students use the rubric to self-evaluate their work (highlight thesis, underline context, circle specific evidence, bracket historical reasoning).
- Teach students how to effectively use evidence to support an argument.
  - Provide students with a sample response which only contains a generalized description of evidence. Have students revise the response to be more specific, succinct, and relevant to the prompt.
  - Provide students with two pieces of evidence and a general topic and have them write a body paragraph showing the relationship between the evidence and the topic.
- Teach contextualization and differentiate between evidence and context.
  - Use the statement “context is relevant to your discussion but not essential to proving your argument” to explain that if the context is removed, the proof of the argument remains. Then have students create a visual metaphor for the difference (like Jenga™).
  - Conclude a unit by having students brainstorm how the events/themes they have just covered will be important in the next time period. Use this to write a contextualization statement for the next unit. Revisit and revise the contextualization statement at the end of the following unit. Repeat this process for each unit.
- Emphasize chronology of major events.
  - Give students a set of 10 events, and have them put those items in proper chronological order.
  - Have students make a timeline of major events related to a particular topic/theme.
- Work on using language that facilitates proof of historical reasoning.
  - Continuity and change—requires students to write a “however” portion in their response (“Changes. . . However, one continuity was . . .”).
  - Compare/contrast— requires students to include one similarity or difference in their response (Similarities. . . However, one difference was . . .).
  - Cause/effect— requires students to include a “Therefore” statement at the end of body paragraphs.
- Work on creating a complex argument in the thesis statement and then following through in the response to demonstrate complexity. This would include discussion of key vocabulary words like “corroborate, qualify, or modify.”

**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, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History thinking skills, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: [apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)
- Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 3: 1754–1800, Focus on Research “Why the Revolution Started”:

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/professional-development?course=ap-united-states-history>

- Teaching Resource: Why Tea? The Global Story of the American Revolution:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/classroom-resources/why-tea-global-story-american-revolution?course=ap-united-states-history>

**Question #3****Task:** Long Essay  
Question**Topic:** Debates over slavery prior to  
the Civil War**Max. Points:** 6**Mean Score:** 2.61***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- This question asked students to evaluate the extent to which debates over slavery in the period from 1830 to 1860 led the United States into the Civil War. In general, students began with the Missouri Compromise (establishing contextualization) and then continued with other events such as the Nullification Crisis, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas–Nebraska Act. Few students extended their contextualization scope into the Civil War and Reconstruction periods.
- In part, responses were expected to demonstrate an ability to evaluate the many variables related to the onset of the Civil War.
- Responses were expected to demonstrate use of contextualization and argument development. Further, responses were expected to utilize causation, comparison, or continuity and change to frame or structure an argument that addressed the prompt.
- This question mainly addressed Key Concept 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?***

- Many students demonstrated understanding of the importance of the debates about slavery, both in the ideological issues about slavery versus freedom and the more tangible fights over the nature of westward expansion.
- For the thesis point, rather than requiring responses to address the extent of impact, credit was awarded for a historically defensible claim that established a line of reasoning in response to the prompt. The better responses addressed extent, both in the thesis and in the argument.
- For the contextualization point, responses that discussed the parameters and impact of developments such as the Missouri Compromise received credit for establishing context.
- Students responded to this question with an abundance of evidence. Key examples included the Nullification Crisis, Nat Turner’s rebellion, Harriet Tubman, the Compromise of 1850, Stephen Douglas, Frederick Douglass, the Underground Railroad, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the Free Soil Party, the Gag Rule, William Lloyd Garrison, the Wilmot Proviso, the Kansas–Nebraska Act, the Fugitive Slave Act, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Abraham Lincoln, the Mexican–American War, the Republican Party, John Brown, Bleeding Kansas, the Brooks/Sumner Caning, Manifest Destiny, South Carolina’s secession, and popular sovereignty. Due to the abundance of evidence, responses often earned the first point for evidence. However, only those that used the evidence to support an argument earned the second evidence point.
- Since the question could be approached using causation or continuity and change, many students were able to earn a point using historical reasoning to frame an argument about how increasing opposition to slavery led to tensions between the North and the South that were ultimately resolved by war.
- Sophisticated students were able to earn a complexity point through different pathways. Some corroborated debates in multiple time periods and regions. Some qualified the question by acknowledging the importance of slavery but adding in the tensions of states’ rights. A few students modified the question by discounting slavery debates almost entirely and giving credence more to economic divisions between the North and South, especially with greater trade and transportation routes.



**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>   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses failed to establish a chronological sequence of events.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective responses addressed historical events in chronological order, understanding that the Missouri Compromise came before the time frame and discussing the Nullification Crisis, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas–Nebraska Act (for example) in proper sequence.</li> <li>“In general, the hostilities were worsened through events like the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas–Nebraska Act, and Bleeding Kansas until a breaking point with the election of President Lincoln that led to southern secession and war.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses made only general references to the North (good, moral, humanitarian, abolitionists) and the South (bad, pro-slavery, economically driven).</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The best responses identified differences and/or conflicts within each region, developing nuance as they described growing tensions and debates.</li> <li>“While slave disputes were a major cause that led the U.S. into the Civil War to some extent, it was also the fact that the North and West were becoming increasingly connected during the expansion westward, which set conditions for industrialization which the South saw as a threat to their economy.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses traced a traditional “Road to Disunion” that identified causes of the Civil War rather than addressing the debates over slavery identified in the prompt.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The better responses focused on debates, disagreements, tensions, etc. during the time period.</li> <li>“However, upon the acquisition of land from Mexico by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the issue of slavery was brought back to the forefront, as this land did not fall under the territory described by the Missouri Compromise. ... The Kansas–Nebraska Act essentially voided the Missouri Compromise by allowing Kansas and Nebraska to decide their slave/free status around popular sovereignty ... eventually breaking out in violence in ‘Bleeding Kansas.’”</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many responses considered the effects of various compromises, but neglected to discuss events that created the need for those compromises.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The better responses discussed various compromises within proper historical context. Thus, cause and effect were established in conjunction with the use of evidence.</li> <li>• “It was slavery that truly led the United States into Civil War &amp; the failing of several compromises; many problems that divided the North &amp; South were revolved around slavery such as the Fugitive Slave Act &amp; Dred Scott Decision, &amp; with the election of republican Abraham Lincoln, the issues culminated into the secession of the South.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many responses discussed the Lincoln–Douglas debates as part of the presidential campaign and election of 1860.</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective responses addressed Abraham Lincoln’s involvement in chronological order, focusing on the senatorial debates of 1858, Lincoln’s stance as a Unionist, and the ultimate adoption of abolitionism.</li> <li>• “The debate would eventually drive the union’s motive for the war, as Lincoln’s Gettysburg address would shift the focus of the war from unification to emancipating African Americans from the moral evils of slavery.”</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?**

- Ensure that students know the chronological sequence of events to facilitate the use of causation as well as continuity and change over time.
  - Exercises with notecards with key events. Have students practice putting them in chronological order.
  - Ask students to identify the “point of no return” in the conflict and defend their choice. For example, some might pick John Brown’s raid, while some might have the Kansas–Nebraska Act, etc. At what point is the Civil War inevitable?
- Teach students to use evidence with understanding; “name dropping” is insufficient to build an effective argument.
  - This is a great issue to address with drafts. Mark a “name drop” in a rough draft, and ask the student to flesh out the significance of the evidence and tie it to the argument in a subsequent draft.
- Team with English teachers to reinforce historical events with relevant works of literature and to develop writing skills.
  - Slave narratives, Frederick Douglass’s “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” speech and speeches from John C. Calhoun would be rich for rhetorical analysis.
- Don’t teach Synthesis from the old rubric. Embrace current standards that require students to construct a complex argument that addresses the question; use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify the argument; and demonstrate a complex understanding of historical developments.

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

- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
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[apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)
- Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 5: 1844–1877, Focus on Research “The Coming of the Civil War”:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/professional-development?course=ap-united-states-history>

**Question #4****Task:** Long Essay  
Question**Max. Points:** 6**Topic:** Ideas about democracy in the  
Civil Rights Movement, 1940–1970**Mean Score:** 2.31***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to demonstrate an understanding of the extent to which ideas about democracy contributed to the African American Civil Rights movement during the period from 1940 to 1970. Stronger student responses provided a historically accurate definition of democratic ideas and included an evaluation of the relationship between these ideas and the Civil Rights movement with an emphasis on the role of groups, leaders, and events.
- In part, responses were expected to demonstrate an ability to evaluate the many variables related to the interaction of ideas about democracy with the Civil Rights movement.
- Responses were expected to demonstrate use of contextualization and argument development. Further, student responses were expected to utilize causation, comparison, or continuity and change to frame or structure an argument that addressed the prompt.
- This question mainly addressed Key Concepts 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

***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 a strong grasp of the chronology and events in the Civil Rights movement, but struggled to connect the events to democratic ideals.
- Thesis/claims frequently failed to address the prompt due to undefined or misunderstood “ideas about democracy.”
- Student responses often exhibited contextualization emphasizing World War II and the Cold War spurring increasing perception of hypocrisy in the application of democratic ideals to minorities.
- Better responses utilized a wide range of evidence and provided a deep understanding of relevant details for that evidence. Responses commonly included the initially limited effect of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the initial hesitance of the Kennedy administration to tackle civil rights issues, and linking the mounting frustrations of the movement with changes in organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).
- While student responses often provided numerous specific examples to support an argument, many responses did not develop and incorporate a definition of “democratic ideas.” Many student responses did not show a command of chronology, weaving in people and events from outside the 1940–1970 time period (i.e., Dred Scott, Abraham Lincoln, Reconstruction amendments, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Booker T. Washington) as if they were happening within the scope of the prompt.
- Many student responses employed causation, continuity and change, and/or comparison to frame or structure an argument that addressed the prompt. Causation was used more frequently and effectively, while comparison was the least common used, and often undeveloped.
- Strong student responses could corroborate an argument that democratic ideas prompted criticism of racist practices by giving multiple regions and issues, such as voting rights, housing segregation, the hypocrisy of Cold War celebrations of democratic freedoms, and mob violence. Some qualified by acknowledging that democratic ideals were a strong factor, but economic concerns were also significant. Some went further by modifying the question to say democratic ideals were not a significant factor, but most activists were motivated by economic injustice.

**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>  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses displayed confusion about “ideas of democracy” as an influence on the African American Civil Rights movement.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective responses chronicled the extent to which ideas of democracy influenced the Civil Rights movement and articulated various forms of democratic thought.</li> <li>“The ideas about democracy such as the notion that everyone should be treated equally and the rights to assemble and petition greatly contributed to the African American Civil Rights movement from 1940–1970.”</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses displayed chronological misconceptions: i.e., slavery, Reconstruction Amendments, <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois, anti-lynching, and Great Migration, which were used without recognition that they fall outside the time period of the prompt. Responses attempted to employ these as evidence and as contextualization within the time period.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective responses used the Reconstruction amendments and the rise of Jim Crow to contextualize the influence of democratic ideas on the Civil Rights movement.</li> <li>“The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolished slavery, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment made everyone born in the U.S. a citizen and granted all citizens equal protection under the law, and the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave all male citizens the right to vote. However, things like the <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> ruling, which ruled ‘separate but equal’ constitutional, Jim Crow laws, and literacy tests and poll taxes limited democratic rights of African Americans for almost 100 years after the Civil War.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses became a catalog of civil rights leaders and iconic events, making no attempt to discuss the effect these had on democratic ideas influencing the Civil Rights movement.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The best responses blended general narrative with specific evidence to construct a thoughtful, analytical argument.</li> <li>“In the court case <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, lawyer Thurgood Marshall argued on behalf of students who exercised their democratic rights to challenge the law. These students and Marshall achieved integration in schools and gained access to their democratic right to education, overturning the previous ‘separate but equal’ ruling of <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>.”</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?**

- Help students think about how to explain connections to advance an argument rather than simply listing and describing key terms.
  - Give students a thesis and pieces of evidence. Ask them to provide an explanation of how the evidence supports the thesis.
- Instruct students how to read and understand the entirety of the prompt.
  - As a warm-up, provide students with a sample question. Have students circle operative words, like evaluate, and underline topics which need to be addressed in the response. Then have students rewrite the prompt in their own words to ensure they understand what the question is asking.
- The formulaic thesis construction “economic–social–political” is not well-suited to this exam.
  - Provide students with a list of the AP themes and ask them to choose two or three that are most appropriate for the question being asked.

**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, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher’s progress through the course.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP history thinking skills, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit:  
[apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/](https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/)
- Teaching and Assessing Module—Period 8: 1945–1980, Focus on Research “A Rapidly Changing World”:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-history/professional-development?course=ap-united-states-history>