2025

AP® United States History

Free-Response Questions

Set 1

© 2025 College Board. College Board, Advanced Placement, AP, AP Central, and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of College Board. Visit College Board on the web: collegeboard.org.

AP Central is the official online home for the AP Program: apcentral.collegeboard.org.

UNITED STATES HISTORY
SECTION I PART B
TIME – 40 MINUTES

Directions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org**

Source 1

"The...rise of American democracy was an extraordinary part of the most profound transformation in modern history....

The American Revolution had proved more egalitarian[1] in its outcome than many of its leaders had hoped or expected it would be in 1776.... Portions of the [people] once largely excluded from the exercise of power were now among the people's governors. Efforts to rein in the egalitarian impulse had faltered.... [But] democracy's achievements were fragile...and its future far from guaranteed....

[After 1800,] by beating back [the Federalists], the Jeffersonian ascendency opened up the political system.... The filters on democracy created by the Framers [of the Constitution] were proving porous, while the suppression of democracy sought by the Federalists in the 1790s was thoroughly discredited."

Source: Sean Wilentz, historian, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*, 2005

Source 2

"[After the American Revolution] elite men from [many] states...create[d] a new national government designed to be a stronger barrier against democracy.... Ordinary folk continued to resist.... But they remained unable to mobilize in ways that would bring the changes they wanted....

It would be an enduring victory for the elite. Although the Federalists both fell politically and personally, the system they created to check democracy has lasted.... Although the Democratic-Republicans rode to power...across the nation by promising to restore the popular vision of the Revolution,...most Democratic-Republican leaders...were content to leave the bulk of the Federalist system in place.... To these men, 'reform'...did not mean pulling down the barriers to democracy that they had helped to create."

Source: Terry Bouton, historian, *Taming Democracy: "The People," the Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution*, 2007

1: equal

---

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

A. Briefly describe one major difference between Wilentz's and Bouton's historical interpretations of early United States politics.

B. Briefly explain how one event or development from 1789 to 1820 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Wilentz's argument about early United States politics.

C. Briefly explain how one event or development from 1789 to 1820 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Bouton's argument about early United States politics.

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org**

"[There is a] real and wide difference, in political opinion, between the honorable gentleman [from South Carolina] and myself. On my part, I look upon [internal improvements] as connected with the common good.... [He believes] Ohio and Carolina are different Governments and different countries.... We [in New England] look upon the States, not as separated, but as united. We love to dwell on that Union, and on the mutual happiness which it has so much promoted, and common renown which it has so greatly contributed to acquire. In our contemplation, Carolina and Ohio are parts of the same country; States, united under the same General Government.... We do not impose geographical limits to our patriotic feeling.... I do not desire to enlarge the powers of the Government.... But when it is believed that a power does exist, then it is, in my judgment, to be exercised for the general benefit of the whole."

Source: Daniel Webster, senator from Massachusetts, future member of the Whig Party, speech in the United States Senate, responding to Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, a member of the Democratic Party, 1830

---

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

A. Briefly describe one purpose of political leaders in promoting ideas such as Webster's.

B. Briefly explain one development from 1820 to 1848 that contributed to the political ideas debated in the speech.

C. Briefly explain how one political debate between 1848 and 1865 was similar to the debate in the speech.

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org**

Answer either Question 3 or Question 4.

---

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

A. Briefly describe one political development in British North America from 1607 to 1753.

B. Briefly describe one effect of the Seven Years' War from 1754 to 1765.

C. Briefly explain how one group responded to debates about the rights of British colonists from 1765 to 1783.

---

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

A. Briefly describe one political development during Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877.

B. Briefly describe one effect of the end of Reconstruction from 1877 to 1900.

C. Briefly explain how one group responded to debates about the federal government from 1900 to 1945.

END OF SECTION I

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org**

UNITED STATES HISTORY

SECTION II

TIME – 1 HOUR AND 40 MINUTES

Directions:

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

In this section, answer Question 1 (DBQ) and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3 **or** Question 4. After reviewing Questions 2, 3, and 4, choose the question that you are best prepared to answer. This section of the exam requires answers in essay form. Use complete sentences; an outline or bulleted list alone is not acceptable.

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

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

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

© 2025 College Board.

1. Evaluate the extent to which the role of the federal government in the United States economy changed from 1932 to 1980.

In your response you should do the following:

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

Document 1

Source: Letter from women members of the Workers Council of Colored People to Harry Hopkins, head administrator of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), 1937

"We the Workers Council of Colored People in Raleigh, [North Carolina,] do wish to state some facts to you about how colored women (mostly heads of families) have been treated by W.P.A. heads here. Also wish you to make investigation about it at once for its pure injustice to us, the way it has been done....

We also wish you to investigate why [it is] that so many teachers unemployed and eligible to teach have not been employed by the Adult Education here, [so] that these teachers can have classes as they once had and help the illiterate colored people. One time it was many grown and old people going to the classes learning and proud of the opportunities.... Mr. Hopkins, colored women have been turned out of different jobs [and] projects to make us take other jobs...and white women were hired and sent for and given places that colored women was made to leave or quit.

Let us say that if we cannot work on W.P.A. projects and be compelled to take these poor paying jobs that [instead] food, clothes, and rent money be provided for us at once because we are suffering. We the Workers Council understood that...colored women cannot be hired this winter on any of the W.P.A. projects. We wish you to tell us why."

© 2025 College Board.

Document 2

Source: United States War Food Administration, pamphlet distributed to farmers, 1943

"If the local U.S. Crop Corps mobilization, including the Women's Land Army and Victory Farm Volunteers, fails to supply the necessary farm labor requirements,...the office of Labor of the War Food Administration will bring skilled or semiskilled workers from surplus farm labor areas.

Many migrant farm laborers that farmers in special-crop areas depended on in past years have gone into war plants or into the service or have year-round farm occupations. Where labor of this type is essential, arrangements are made to bring in workers from Mexico, Jamaica, and the Bahamas. Laborers from these foreign countries will be treated in accordance with agreements reached between their governments and ours."

Document 3

Source: Federal officials attending an exhibition about the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, a law that funded the creation of a system of interstate highways across the United States, 1957

Federal Highway Administration

© 2025 College Board.

Document 4

Source: President John F. Kennedy, State of the Union address, 1962

"A strong America cannot neglect the aspirations of its citizens—the welfare of the needy, the health care of the elderly, the education of the young. For we are not developing the Nation's wealth for its own sake. Wealth is the means—and people are the ends. All our material riches will avail us little if we do not use them to expand the opportunities of our people....

In matters of health, no piece of unfinished business is more important or more urgent than the enactment...of health insurance for the aged....

Private health insurance helps very few—for its cost is high and its coverage limited.... I now urge that its coverage be extended [by the government] without further delay to provide health insurance for the elderly."

Document 5

Source: Barry Goldwater, speech accepting the Republican Party presidential nomination, 1964

"My fellow Americans, the tide has been running against freedom.... We must, and we shall, set the tide running again in the cause of freedom. And this party, with its every action, every word, every breath, and every heartbeat, has but a single resolve, and that is freedom....

It is the cause of Republicanism to resist concentrations of power, private or public, which enforce such conformity and inflict such despotism. It is the cause of Republicanism to ensure that power remains in the hands of the people....

We must assure a society here which, while never abandoning the needy or forsaking the helpless, nurtures incentives and opportunity for the creative and the productive.... We Republicans seek a government that attends to its inherent responsibilities of...encouraging a free and a competitive economy.... We Republicans define government's role where needed at many, many levels, preferably through the one closest to the people involved."

Document 6

Source: César Chávez, leader of the National Farm Workers Association, a labor union that included many Mexican-descended migrant farm workers, statement to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 1969

"How can the Nation, how can Congress help the farmworker close the yawning gap between his own social and economic condition and that of other wage earners...?

Answer? Through strong, effective, well-run unions. The road to social justice for the farmworker is the road of unionization. Our cause [and] our strike...are all founded upon our deep conviction that...unionization holds far more hope for the farmworker than any other single approach....

Unionization cannot make progress in the face of hostile employer attitudes unless it receives effective governmental support.... If farm unionism is to make progress, we need sufficient economic power under law to be able to wrench signed [labor] agreements from unwilling hands of [agricultural] growers who still refuse to admit that unionization and collective bargaining have a rightful place to take in agriculture....

Today we ask the American people and the Congress to help us build our union."

© 2025 College Board.

Document 7

Source: Marjorie S. Holt, Republican member of Congress, *The Case Against the Reckless Congress*, 1976

"Today we ask whether the noble American experiment in freedom is dissolving into a new tyranny....

Spending by all levels of government in these United States consumes 37 percent of the gross national product.... By taxation and inflation, government drains away so much of our savings that we lack the capital necessary for investment in expanding private industry and creating jobs....

How did we get into this mess? The answer is that Congress has brought us here. For three decades Congress has consistently demonstrated incompetence to do anything except promise more and spend more.... It has done nothing to slow the growth of government, and has actually proceeded to accelerate that growth....

Social and economic planning by the central government is the surest road to tyranny.... The people are best served by policy set at the state and local levels. The cause of freedom is best served at a level where the individual voice can be heard."

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org**

Answer Question 2 or Question 3 or Question 4.

In your response you should do the following:

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

---

2. Evaluate how Native American societies adapted to the presence of European colonists in North America from 1500 to 1754.

---

3. Evaluate how different reform movements in the United States responded to industrialization from 1820 to 1900.

---

4. Evaluate how United States foreign policy responded to changes in the world from 1890 to 1930.

STOP

END OF EXAM

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org**