2025

AP® United States History

Free-Response Questions

Set 2

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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.

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Source 1

"Conflict over economic issues was a critical cause of Soviet-American tensions [after the Second World War]....

The key element of U.S. foreign policy after World War II was economic security, the reliance upon economic power to achieve strategic aims.... The Truman administration [responded during the Cold War] to what it saw as the long-term need of American business for an open worldwide economic environment. Washington officials recognized that foreign trade enhanced domestic prosperity and that U.S. corporations needed access to cheap overseas raw materials in order to remain competitive....

Rather than rely primarily upon private institutions, U.S. leaders were determined to make extensive use of governmental and multilateral agencies to reshape world commercial, monetary, and financial systems. America's unrivalled economic power offered the most cost-effective means of securing political ends in the postwar period."

Source: Robert A. Pollard, historian, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945–1950*, published in 1985

Source 2

"[After the Second World War], leading American officials...worried mainly about the psychological appeal of [Soviet ideas] to frightened citizens of unstable countries.... In part because they worried about their security, the Soviets proceeded to oppress their eastern European neighbors and to threaten Western interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East.... [Americans] came to fear that the USSR was bent on even wider territorial expansion that would endanger the economic and political supremacy of the United States....

In these years it was the Soviet Union, more than the United States, whose behavior—especially in eastern Europe—seemed alarming in the world. Not just the United States but also other Western nations concluded that 'appeasement' would be disastrous. 'Credibility' required that they resist."

Source: James Patterson, historian, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974*, published in 1996

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

A. Briefly describe one major difference between Pollard's and Patterson's historical interpretations of the origins of the Cold War.

B. Briefly explain how one event or development from 1940 to 1960 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Pollard's interpretation of the origins of the Cold War.

C. Briefly explain how one event or development from 1940 to 1960 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Patterson's interpretation of the origins of the Cold War.

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"The colored women of the United States [have] bonded themselves together to fulfill a mission to which they feel peculiarly adapted and especially called.... It is not because we are discouraged at the progress made by our people that we have uttered the cry of alarm which has called together this band of earnest women assembled here tonight. In the unprecedented advancement made by the negro since his emancipation, we take great pride....

In public questions affecting our legal status, let us engage intelligently and continuously, whenever and wherever it is possible to strike a blow for equality and right.... Let the cause of temperance and morality be especially espoused in our effort to better humanity and elevate the race.... Let us consecrate[1] ourselves anew to the mission which we have been called to fulfill....

Let us not only preach, but practice race unity, race pride, reverence and respect for those capable of leading and advising us."

Source: Mary Church Terrell, president of the National Association of Colored Women, first presidential address to the association, 1897

1: dedicate

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

A. Briefly describe the author's purpose as expressed in the excerpt.

B. Briefly explain how one historical development between 1865 and 1897 contributed to the ideas expressed in the excerpt.

C. Briefly explain how the ideas expressed in the excerpt contributed to one historical development between 1897 and 1945.

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Answer either Question 3 or Question 4.

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

A. Briefly describe one political debate in British North America from 1763 to 1783.

B. Briefly describe one effect of the ratification of the United States Constitution from 1789 to 1800.

C. Briefly explain how one group responded to debates about federal government power from 1800 to 1840.

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

A. Briefly describe one political debate in the United States between 1910 and 1929.

B. Briefly describe one effect of the New Deal from 1932 to 1945.

C. Briefly explain how one group responded to debates about government power from 1945 to 1970.

END OF SECTION I

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UNITED STATES HISTORY

SECTION II

TIME – 1 HOUR AND 40 MINUTES

Directions:

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

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

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

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

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

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1. Evaluate the extent to which economic changes influenced United States society between 1865 to 1910.

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: Francis Vinton, minister, sermon delivered in 1869

"This [completion of the transcontinental railroad] is indeed a great event of the world.... It is a triumph of commerce—a triumph indicating free trade as a future law of the nation.... When we contemplate this achievement we can hardly realize its magnitude. Three thousand two hundred and eighty-five miles of continuous railway.... It begun when the nation was agitated by war, and is finished now when we enjoy a reign of peace.... It will populate our vast territory and be the great highway of the nations.... But there is another aspect in which we view it as a blessing, and in connection with which we esteem it of still greater importance. It will preserve the Union of these States.... [It] binds the States of the Atlantic and Pacific into one nation."

Document 2

Source: Henry George, journalist and politician, *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions, and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth*, 1879

"The enormous increase in productive power which has marked the present century and is still going on with accelerating ratio, has no tendency to extirpate[1] poverty or to lighten the burdens of those compelled to toil....

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma[2] of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social, and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain. From it come the clouds that overhang the future of the most progressive and self-reliant nations.... So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent."

1: end
2: mystery

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Document 3

Source: Lucy Parsons, formerly enslaved woman and industrial activist, interview in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, a newspaper published in Missouri, 1886

"The great monopolies and corporations and syndicates...are now rapidly extinguishing the middle classes, which we regard as the great bulwark between the monopoly and the great producing or working classes. There will come a time when there will be in this world ONLY TWO CLASSES, the possessing class and the non-possessing class, the middle classes having been forced into the wage class owing to the enormous capital now needed to remain in the field of production. These two classes will therefore find themselves arrayed against each other; a struggle in the revolutionary stage will come, and the order of things in the world will be changed by the people themselves....

Witness the strikes without number that have swept up and down this broad land like a great cyclone.... The wage system in this country has now reached its full development. It no longer satisfies the needs and wants of the people; facts which are illustrated by the poverty and starvation to be met with in the midst of plenty."

Document 4

Source: Benjamin Harrison, former Republican president of the United States, speech in New York City supporting Republican candidates for election to the House of Representatives, 1894

"The trouble with the Democratic party now is that it is an incoherent party. Who could tell what it was going to do?...

I have wondered why our Democratic leaders should hate [American factories].... They have in these campaigns described the American manufacturer as a thieving robber-baron.... I never could see why this could be so—why it was an offense against society or country for a man to build a [factory] and give employment to men and women at decent wages inside of it. But these appeals have been made, and the minds of the workingmen were inflamed against their employers. They were made to believe that...they must assume toward [employers] the attitude of hostility....

Let us put bitterness out of [our hearts]. Let us stop these [class] envyings and these jealousies.... Let us stop this war on American industry and American homes."

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Document 5

Source: M. E. J. Kelley, female labor reformer, "The Union Label," *North American Review*, 1897

"The union label is a distinctively American product.... Men [first in California] were urged... to buy the products of well-paid white citizens employed at living wages in decent shops. To distinguish [goods] made by white workmen...the local [trade] union issued a label [applied to the packaging].... The union label is usually considered a guarantee that the article on which it appears was made in a factory complying with the factory laws, and not in a sweatshop....

The effect of the use of the label upon consumption will be to bring an ethical element into economic transactions.... Whether goods shall be made under sweat-shop conditions, under conditions which mean the brutalization of the great mass of humanity, or under conditions which permit the development of all that is best in the workers, and which are the best conditions for the interests of society as a whole, depends upon the consumers and not upon the producers. When the ethical sense of the community is so highly developed that no one will wear a garment for which just wages have not been paid, the sweatshop will disappear."

Document 6

Source: "Industrial Leadership," article in the *New York Times*, 1900

"The hero of the future is the Captain of industry, not the Captain of armies. The struggle is to produce the most, and most cheaply—not to destroy the most and the most quickly. The strong nation is the one whose manufactures and whose merchant marine reach furthest in supplying the needs of the peoples, and return best laden with the needed goods of other lands. The keynote of success, the secret of power, is economy—economy in production, in methods, in management.... Before engineers and managers lie the duty of meeting the conditions—and the other great duty of using their influence and their power in the affairs of the nation, so that justice and wisdom may govern the State at home and abroad. The task is a responsible one, but home and foreign politics have proved...the triumphant success which follows when the industry and commerce of the country speak clearly to its rulers."

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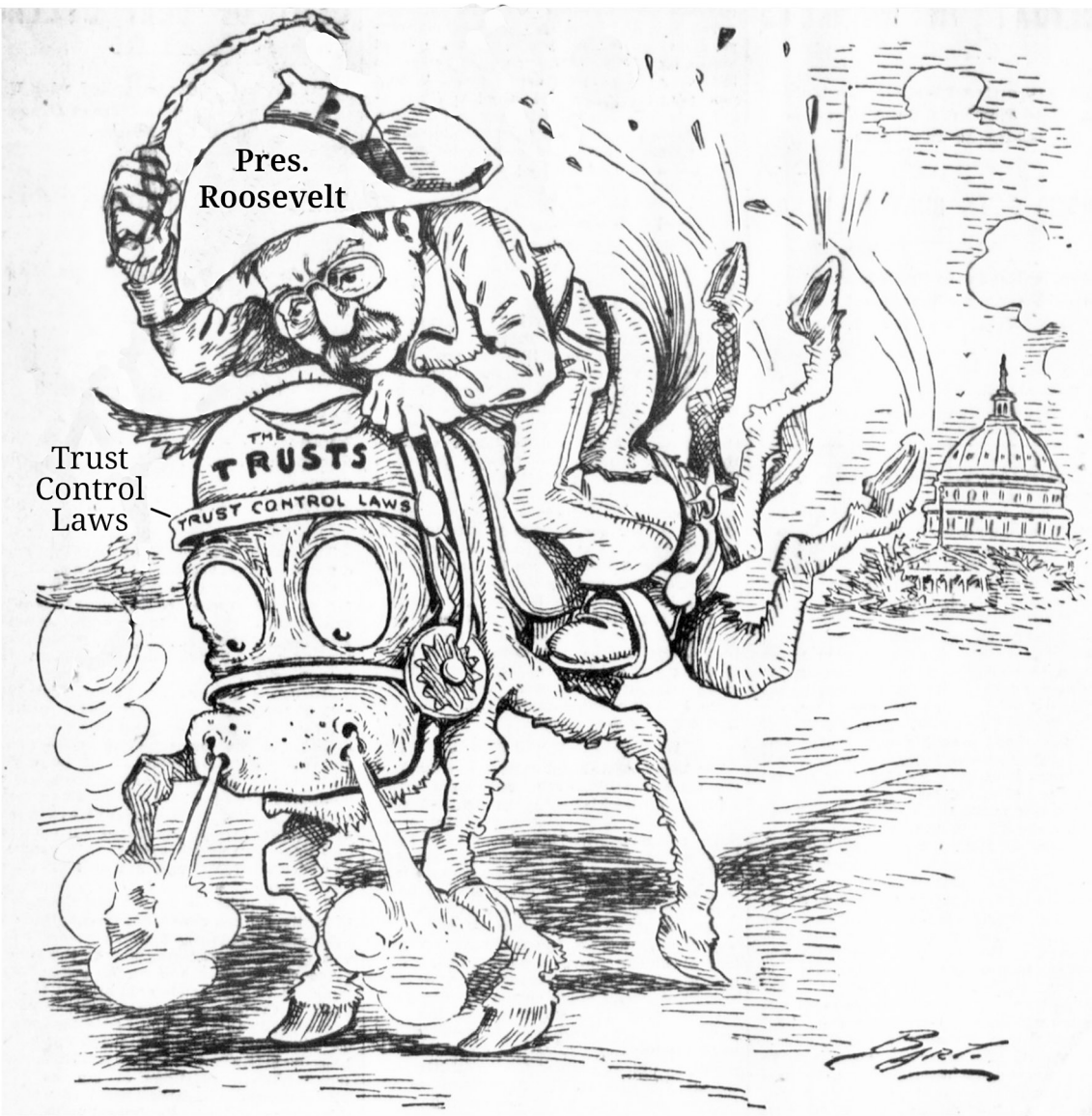
Document 7

Source: Charles Lewis Bartholomew, cartoonist, "The 'Trust Buster,'" political cartoon in the *Minneapolis Journal*, a newspaper published in Minnesota, 1903



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Caption: *"He Has the Octopus Bridled and Saddled"*

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Answer Question 2 or Question 3 or Question 4.

In your response you should do the following:

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

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2. Evaluate how British colonists in the Americas adapted to their environments from 1607 to 1754.

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3. Evaluate how sectional tensions shaped United States society from 1800 to 1848.

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4. Evaluate how United States society responded to economic changes from 1960 to 2000.

STOP

END OF EXAM

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