2025

AP® African American Studies

Free-Response Questions

Set 1

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AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

SECTION I PART B

TIME – 10 MINUTES

Directions:

Section I, Part B has 1 question and lasts 10 minutes. The question is a written response about your course project.

This part of the exam requires answers written in complete sentences. An outline or bulleted list is not acceptable.

You may use scratch paper for planning, but credit will only be given for responses entered in this application. 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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1. Explain how two of your sources provide different perspectives on one aspect of your topic.

END OF SECTION I

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AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

SECTION II

TIME – 85 MINUTES

Directions:

Section II has 3 short-answer questions and 1 document-based question (DBQ), and lasts 85 minutes.

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:

It is suggested that you spend 40 minutes on the 3 short-answer questions and 45 minutes on the DBQ.

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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I grew up like a neglected weed,—ignorant of liberty, having no experience of it. Then I was not happy or contented: every time I saw a white man I was afraid of being carried away. I had two sisters carried away in a chain-gang,—one of them left two children. We were always uneasy. Now I've been free, I know what a dreadful condition slavery is. I have seen hundreds of escaped slaves, but I never saw one who was willing to go back and be a slave. I have no opportunity to see my friends in my native land. We would rather stay in our native land, if we could be as free there as we are here. I think slavery is the next thing to hell. If a person would send another into bondage, he would, it appears to me, be bad enough to send him into hell, if he could.

Source: Harriet Tubman's reflection in *The Refugee* by Benjamin Drew, 1856

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

A. Describe one claim the author makes in the source.

B. Describe one piece of evidence not included in the source that supports a claim the author makes.

C. Explain how Harriet Tubman contributed to change for African Americans in the nineteenth century.

D. Using a specific example, explain how an African American woman or African American women's political activism in the twentieth or twenty-first century helped overcome the legacy of enslavement.

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Jesse Owens Running the 200-Meter Race, 1936 Summer Olympics, Berlin, Germany

brandstaetter images / Contributor / Getty

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

A. Describe the broader historical context of the image.

B. Describe one example of an African American athlete, other than Jesse Owens, who broke discriminatory barriers in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries.

C. Using a specific example, explain how African Americans' increased access to education contributed to overcoming discrimination in the twentieth or twenty-first century.

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

A. Describe a cultural or artistic contribution made by one of the ancient African societies.

B. Describe an effect trade had on ancient West African empires such as Ghana, Mali, or Songhai.

C. Explain how a contribution made by one of the ancient West African societies can be connected to a tradition, practice, or development in the nineteenth, twentieth, or twenty-first centuries.

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4. Explain how the cultural contributions of African Americans promoted resilience during Jim Crow segregation.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical or disciplinary context relevant to the topic of the prompt.
- Support an argument in response to the prompt using at least three of the sources.
- Use at least one additional piece of specific evidence (beyond that found in the sources) relevant to your argument.
- For at least two sources, explain how or why the perspective, purpose, context, and/or audience for each source is relevant to your argument.
- Reference or cite the sources you use in your argument. You can reference or cite the source letter, title, or author.

Source 1

Source: Jubilee Singers of Fisk University, 1875

Photo by © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images

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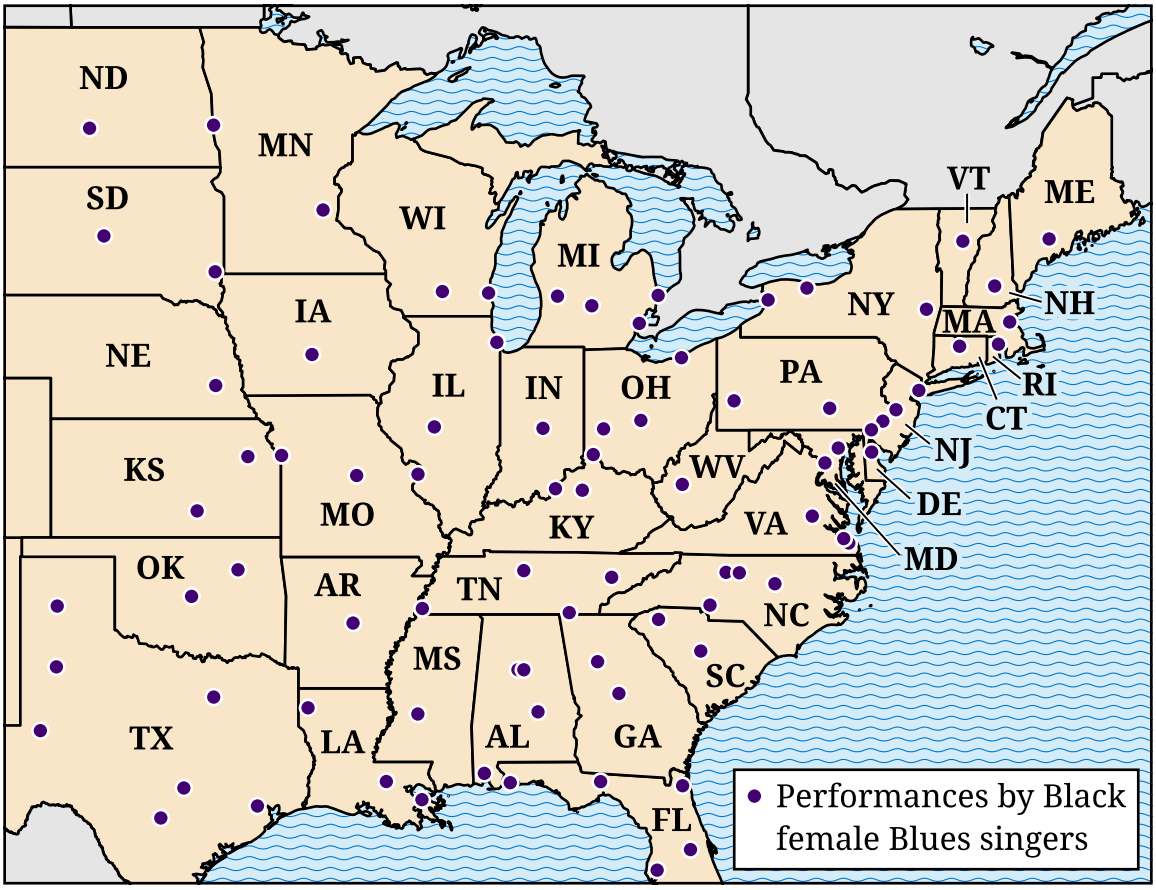
Source 2

Source: Map of Black Female Blues Singers' Performances, 1910 to 1930



Taylor Wesseln, Raina Rosemary, Abigail Davis, Meggie Synder, Dayo Ogunmodede, and Louis Epstein, "Women Performers on the T.O.B.A. Circuit," Musical Geography Project, St. Olaf College (2021).

The map shows the places where African American female blues singers performed on the Theater Owners Booking Association (T.O.B.A.) touring circuit for Black artists.

Source 3

Source: James Weldon Johnson, author and NAACP activist, article published in mainstream United States magazine *Harper's Monthly* during the Harlem Renaissance

"The common idea is that the Negro reached America intellectually, culturally, and morally empty, and that he is here to be filled—filled with education, filled with religion, filled with morality, filled with culture. In a word, the stereotype is that the Negro is nothing more than a beggar at the gate of the nation, waiting to be thrown the crumbs of civilization. Through his artistic efforts the Negro is smashing this immemorial stereotype faster than he has ever done through any other method he has been able to use....

I do not think it too much to say that through artistic achievement the Negro has found a means of getting at the very core of the prejudice against him, by challenging the Nordic superiority complex."

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Source 4

Source: Mary Schmidt Campbell, author, published in *Renaissance Art of Black America*, 1987

"Driven by the charismatic zeal of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican who had migrated to New York, the Harlem-based UNIA [Universal Negro Improvement Association] captured the grass-roots sensibility of the New Negro [and]…the fervent[1] belief in the beauty and nobility of an African homeland, and the deep cultural cleft between Black and White America.

If Garvey's movement was evidence of a breach between the races in the promised land of the North, art was the hope for a reconciliation. For intellectuals like [Alain] Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois…art could bridge the gap between the Black and the White worlds if only the Black artist was allowed the opportunity to hone his talents.

Given his rich folk background, his African heritage, and his ethnic pride, the Black artist had an aesthetic and a message to impart. Art, the essence of the civilized man, would be final proof that the New Negro not only had something positive to contribute to American life but had, indeed, ascended to new cultural heights. Harlem, the center of the New Negro Movement and the capital of Black America during the 1920s, was naturally the center of the artistic movement as well."

1: intense

Source 5

Source: Interview with Bob Moses, a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer, where he recalls meeting Fannie Lou Hamer in 1962, interview conducted in 2014

"I met Fannie Lou Hamer, I'll never forget it, August 31st, 1962. Amzie [Moore] has organized a school bus to take people from Ruleville [Mississippi] down to Indianola [Mississippi] right, the county seat. We're on this bus and they're mostly older women in their fifties.... I'm sitting up front, and there's this lady sitting right behind me who's turned around facing the back of the bus, and when the bus pulls off she starts singing. And she never stops, so it's one church song, it's like she knew every song that anybody had sung in a Black church, right. And so what was actually happening was she was really driving away fear. The people were really immersed in the messages of the songs, and that was Mrs. Hamer. We got off and tried to leaflet,[1] they arrested us, and we were in jail for overnight."

1: pass out fliers

STOP

END OF EXAM

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