



INTRODUCTION

“History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.”
Mark Twain

The quote above captures two important principles for studying the history of the United States: the unique characteristics of each historical time period and the impact that each era has on those that follow. We only begin to do justice to everything that has happened in the past by examining it through many lenses that help us to understand that no one aspect of history stands alone. The political, military, and diplomatic history of the United States has been well documented by countless historians, but history in its broadest sense also includes important social, cultural, intellectual, and economic events and trends. No doubt, Mark Twain understood that the past is not only connected to the present but to the future as well. It is a mistake to assume that all of history leads to a fixed point we call the present because events of the present inevitably influence the future in an ongoing story with no end in sight. These underlying principles shape the AP United States History curriculum with its focus on the time period from 1491 to the present.

United States history covers a lot of ground, both in terms of land space and time. How can one learn all of the history of the country since 1491 in one school year? Clearly that is an impossible task. However, it is possible to learn the broad “story” of the United States by using some tools that help to connect the parts of the story from beginning to end (or present). Once you know the plot, you are in a good position to learn the sub-plots that in turn help make sense of all the facts that support the overall story. This kind of learning with thought enables a life-long expansion of knowledge that gives history meaning that enriches the present and shapes the future.

TOOLS FOR LEARNING HISTORY

What are these magical tools that transform the study of history? We will begin with these:

- 1) **Think About the Big Picture** – Really “big history” dwarfs the importance of United States history if we put it within the context of the history of the universe. Even though the AP United States History course begins rather arbitrarily in 1491, the limited time line since then still means that the “story” of U.S. history is very big. It is important to identify “**marker events**” that make a difference in the course of history, and to distinguish them from the myriad of details that can make us feel that history is just a bunch of unrelated facts.
- 2) **Think About Themes** – An important tool in organizing and understanding history is thinking about themes, or unifying threads, that may be separated, even though they often intertwine. The themes in the AP United States History curriculum that may be followed throughout history are

numerous, and they cover intellectual, cultural, political, diplomatic, social, and economic history.

THEMES IN UNITED STATES HISTORY

The following themes shape the study of United States history by focusing on historical change over time and encouraging conceptual thinking.

Identity – Early in U.S. history, a national identity and group identities formed that have both endured and changed over time.

Work, Exchange, and Technology – Different economies, labor systems, technological innovations, and economic government policies have shaped American society over time.

Peopling – Over time, various people have moved to, from, and within the U.S. They have adapted to new social and physical environments, and the beliefs and practices they brought with them have impacted U.S. society.

Politics and Power – Throughout U.S. history, people have debated the role of the state in society, and tensions between liberty and authority have both endured and evolved.

America in the World – The U.S. originated and developed within a global context, and interactions with other nations and people have shaped U.S. society. American foreign policy and military actions also have affected the rest of the world in many ways.

Environment and Geography – Physical and Human – Environment, geography, and climate have shaped and sometimes constrained human actions. Americans interacting with the environment shaped the development of the U.S.

Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture – Cultural values, ideas, and beliefs have affected both individual and group actions that have shaped the development of U.S. society.

- 3) **Think About Chunks** – The study of U.S. history becomes more manageable if you “chunk it” into different time periods, a process called **periodization**. History textbooks often chunk content into regions, but periodization is much more than that. It requires a student to think cross-regionally about a time period and analyze interactions among different regions in the U.S., as well as changes in political, economic, or social arrangements within the society. Periodization also requires a student to think about how U.S. interactions with other countries have shaped the ongoing story of the United States. Even though history is broken up into periods, you are still seeing the big picture because you are concerned with broad patterns and “**marker events**” that have changed the course of the country’s history. Big picture events and

trends that make one period distinct from another are generally cross-regional and/or international in that they impact several areas of the United States and often other areas of the world, and they usually create change in more than one theme area. For example, an international war (such as World War II in the 20th century) that not only challenges government structures and officials but also brings about major economic and social class changes is likely to be a marker event.

HISTORICAL PERIODS

PERIOD	DATE RANGE	INSTRUCTIONAL TIME %	AP EXAM %
1	1491-1607	5%	5%
2	1607-1754	10%	45%
3	1754-1800	12%	
4	1800-1848	10%	
5	1844-1877	13%	
6	1865-1898	13%	45%
7	1890-1945	17%	
8	1945-1980	15%	
9	1980-present	5%	5%

Historical Periods. The AP United States History course is “chunked” into nine chronological periods that reflect key concepts that characterize each period. Change and continuity exists both between the eras and within each era.

- 4) **Think Comparatively** – Another way to think thoughtfully about history is to analyze through comparison that makes use of the big picture, themes, and chunks. For example, you may be interested in comparing political developments (a theme) in the North and the South during the first half of the 19th century (a chunk). If you think about how political developments in the two regions are different as well as similar, you gain a better understanding of both than you would if you just learned about them separately. You may compare many categories in history: regions, belief systems (such as Catholicism and Protestantism), economic systems (such as capitalism and communism), revolutions (such as the American and French revolutions), or demographic patterns (such as different migrations of people from one area to another).
- 5) **Think About Continuity and Change Over Time** – To approach history as a story necessarily means that you must think about change over time. What happens in the beginning of the story? What events occur that makes the story change? What happens in the middle of the story that is caused by something that occurred earlier? How do all the events and characters that interact throughout the story influence the ending? Every time you tell a story, you are making connections among its various parts. In the same way, history is much more meaningful if you make connections across time periods. What happened in North America during the 18th century that shaped the events in the United States of the 19th century? What happened in the 19th century that shaped the 20th century? How have events and people during all three time periods interacted to help explain modern day news stories? Just as importantly, you must think about continuity over time: despite the changes, what threads remain the same?

- 6) **Think Like a Historian** – We will never know all the events that have occurred in the past because knowledge of most of them was not passed on to later generations. No one thought to tell their children about these occurrences, and so remembrance of them ceased when individuals died. However, some people, places, and events are remembered, sometimes through stories told around the fireside at night, or often through written records. Historians look at all kinds of evidence in order to reconstruct the past, including physical evidence left behind, such as remnants of buildings, pottery, and clothing. In order to find out what really happened, a historian (or history student) needs many skills, including the ability to analyze perspective, or point of view. The slave's view is usually different from the slaveholder's, and the conqueror usually doesn't see things the same way as the conquered. If a historian finds a letter from a late 18th-century colonist that criticizes the English king, the historian must take into account the colonist's point of view. To a historian, history is not a collection of static facts, but instead is an exciting, dynamic puzzle that must be interpreted and analyzed.
- 7) **Think about Causation** – Historical events always have effects on later events, and so it is important to analyze and evaluate the interaction of multiple causes and/or effects. A good historian understands which events are related and which are not, and so distinguishing among coincidence, causation, and correlation are important skills to apply. A correlation exists when a change in one event or pattern coincides with a change in the other. Correlations are an indication that causality *may* be present; they do not necessarily indicate causation. Historical researchers seek to identify the causal link among events and patterns by collecting and analyzing data. Historians are interested in both short term and long term effects of events. For example, a short term effect of the American Revolution was a tremendous amount of debt for the new nation, which in turn inspired Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton to lay plans for economic stability, which had many long-term effects on the young nation.
- 8) **Think about Contextualization** – Historical thinking requires the connection of historical events and processes to both specific circumstances of time and place and to broader processes. Whereas the broad context for world history is the world and the broad context for European history is Europe, the general context for U.S. history is the United States. However, these contexts often intertwine, since events in all contexts are often intertwined. For example, America's involvement in the two 20th century world wars cannot be understood without considering the wars within all three contexts: world, Europe, and the United States. Likewise, regional movements within the United States must always be considered within the context of the country as a whole.

THE AP U.S. HISTORY EXAM

The College Board administers AP exams each May during a two-week period. The AP U.S. History Exam is offered during this time, with a total testing time of 3 hours and 15 minutes. Starting in May 2015, significant changes have been made to the exam, not only in periodization and thematic emphases, but also in question styles. Some minor changes were made in the fall of 2017, including streamlined rubrics for both long essays. The questions are based on the seven themes, and they require you to make use of the tools outlined earlier in this chapter. The exam consists of four parts, organized into two sections:

Section 1:

Part A: Multiple-choice questions (55 questions, 55 minutes); 40%

Part B: Short answer questions (3 questions, 40 minutes); 20%

Section 2:

Part A: Document-based question (1 question, 60 minutes); 25%

Part B: Long-essay question (1 question, 40 minutes); 15%

The questions cover all nine periods in approximately the percentages indicated on the chart.

Section I: Part A: Multiple-Choice Questions

The 55 multiple-choice questions test student knowledge of U.S. history from Pre-Columbian days to the present. Starting in May 2015, the questions will have only four answer-choices, as compared to five choices in previous years. A number of questions may be cross-chronological or may combine themes, and only a few questions cover the period since 1980. All areas of history are included: political, social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and diplomatic. The questions are challenging. Some points to keep in mind about the multiple-choice section are:

- On the exam, the College Board no longer subtracts one-fourth of the number of questions answered incorrectly from the number of questions answered correctly. Since there is no penalty for guessing, it is advisable to answer all questions the best that you can.
- The questions are organized into sets of two to five questions that ask students to respond to a primary or secondary source. These sources may be quotations, cartoons, or charts. While a set may focus on a particular time period, the questions may ask you to make connections to other time periods.

The multiple-choice section consists of sets of questions, with between two and five questions per set, that are based on a primary or secondary source – a text, an image, a chart, a graph, or a map. The questions require you to draw upon knowledge within the bounds of the curriculum framework, and each question will address one of the thematic learning objectives of the course. Most questions focus on one particular period of U.S. history, but some ask you to make connections to the same thematic topic from another period. The questions assess your ability to interpret the stimulus material, but they also require outside knowledge of the historical issue at hand. This book provides many multiple-choice questions throughout that will help prepare you for Section I of the exam.

Section I, Part B: Short-answer questions

Part B consists of three short-answer questions that you answer in 40 minutes. Short-answer questions are based on the thematic learning objectives for the course, but they do not require a thesis statement. Some questions have internal choices, but others do not. You must identify and analyze examples of historical evidence relevant to the question. Questions 1 and 2 are mandatory, but you may choose between questions 3 and 4.

- Question 1 requires you to analyze secondary sources and addresses content from periods 3-8.
- Question 2 requires either the skill of comparison or causation and is based on a primary document or a visual source, such as a map, chart, or image.
- Question 3 deals with periods 1-5, and question 4 deals with periods 5-8. Both questions require either the skill of comparison or causation, but will not be the same skill required in question 2.

Section II: Free-Response Questions

Section II consists of 2 free-response questions that must be answered in 100 minutes. Since you can allocate your time in any way you wish during this time period, it is important to not get bogged down too long in either one of the questions. Otherwise, you will not have enough time to properly answer both questions. Part A is a document-based question (DBQ) that includes a period for reading the documents

and a period for writing the essay (a total of 60 minutes). In Part B, you will answer a thematic question in 40 minutes. The question asks you to use historical thinking skills to explain and analyze significant issues in U.S. history. Both questions require the development of a thesis or argument supported by relevant, specific historical evidence.

Part A: The Document-based Question (DBQ)

The DBQ is designed to test your content knowledge, and also to measure your skills as an historian. The question is presented first, and is followed by a set of primary documents that must be read before the question can be answered. Depending on the topic and focus, the question may or may not require you to discuss change over time. For example, look ahead to see the DBQ for Unit One. The question reads, "Analyze reactions to European explorations and settlements in the Americas between 1491 and 1754." Since you haven't read Unit One yet, don't worry if you can't answer the question, but look at how it is worded. The question is followed by several documents, each written by an individual from the time period. Some DBQs may include photographs, paintings, charts, maps, or graphs about the particular topic. Your task is to come up with a thesis, and then back it with your existing knowledge about the topic and with specific evidence from the documents. Imagine that you are a historian deeply involved in seeking the truth. Documents shed light on the truth, but each is only a small piece of the answer. How can you put them all together to come up with a solid thesis that provides insightful answers to the mysteries of the past? The DBQ exercise is meant to simulate the historian's methods for interpreting the past.

Your response will be assessed according to a rubric with these basic guidelines:

- 1) **Thesis** – Answer the question, don't just repeat it. A good thesis requires some judgment and interpretation of the evidence, and it must be squarely focused on the question. For example, in the Unit One DBQ, you should not just state that there were a number of reactions to European explorations and settlement, but instead you should briefly describe what some of the main reactions were to both explorations and settlement.
- 2) **Contextualization and additional evidence** – You must include a substantial amount of outside factual information that supports your thesis, so you need to organize your existing knowledge of the topic before you start writing and using the documents. You must demonstrate specific outside knowledge – information not included in the documents – in order to score well on the DBQ. The argument must be framed within a broad historical context that is immediately relevant to the question.
- 3) **Evidence** – You must make use of the documents in your response. You may refer to each document in any way you like, but it must be clear to the reader which one you are addressing. For example, you may refer to documents by number (Document 1), by author, or by a brief description. You must demonstrate understanding of the documents, and the documents must be used to support the thesis. You may use a particular quote from the document, or simply describe which part of the document you are using to support your thesis. Do not quote extensively from the documents because it is too time consuming; just make sure that your references are clear. You will receive either 1 or 2 points for your supporting evidence – you earn 2 points for making use of at least six documents, or you earn 1 point for making use of at least three documents.
- 4) **Analysis and Reasoning** – These are the heart of the historian's necessary skills. Look carefully at who wrote the document and when it was written, and critically evaluate how objective the author might be. Clearly, all writers have their own points of view, so what they write will always be affected, even though what they have to say is usually still important to consider. Historians often look for evidence from different points of view to be sure that their analysis approximates what actually happened. Remember, you are seeking the truth, and documents should be evaluated for their reliability. On the exam, you will receive 1 point for explaining why the point of view of the author is relevant to your

DBQ RUBRIC		
A. THESIS (1 point)	The essay states a thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.	The thesis must do more than restate the question and must consist of one or more sentences all in the same place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.
B. CONTEXTUALIZATION (1 point)	The essay must relate the topic to broader historical events, developments or processes.	The essay must clearly frame the topic within the context of the history surrounding it. A phrase or reference is not enough to earn the point.
C. EVIDENCE (0-3 points)	<p style="text-align: center;">Evidence from the documents</p> <p>1 point Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt.</p> <p>2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least six documents.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Evidence beyond the documents</p> <p>1 point The essay uses at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence beyond that found in the documents that supports an argument about the prompt.</p>	<p>For one point, the essay must accurately describe (not simply quote) the content from at least three of the documents.</p> <p>For two points, the essay must accurately describe (not simply quote) the content from at least six documents. The essay must also use the content of the documents to support an argument in response to the prompt.</p> <p>For one point, the essay must describe the evidence, using more than a phrase or reference. This additional piece of evidence must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization.</p>
D. ANALYSIS AND REASONING (0-2 points)	<p>1 point For at least three documents, explains how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.</p> <p>1 point Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to support an argument that addresses the question.</p>	<p>The essay must explain how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument for each of the three documents cited.</p> <p>A complex understanding may be demonstrated in a number of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing multiple variables that affect the issue addressed in the prompt • Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple cases, or explaining both cause and effect • Explaining relevant connections within and across periods • Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes • Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence.

argument in at least three of the documents. For 2 points, you must demonstrate a complex understanding of the topic that is the focus of the question.

A Note about Grouping Documents – Don't just list the documents and comment on each. You must group them in whatever ways make sense to you based on the question asked. Generally, there is no one formula for grouping. Instead, there is a range of possibilities. You may group chronologically, or you may group by region or culture or by theme. You may also group by authors that agree or disagree with one another. There is no one way to organize groups, but it is important that your groups are clearly identified. Again, imagine an historian separating documents into piles according to their point of view, or according to what aspect of the issue they are commenting on. For the DBQ, you must group in several ways, depending on the question.

PART B: LONG ESSAY QUESTION (40 Minutes)

For the long essay question, you will have a choice of three questions that explain and analyze significant issues in U.S. history as defined by the thematic learning objectives. Each question is based on the same theme, but the options are based on different time periods:

- Periods 1-3
- Periods 4-6
- Periods 7-9

The questions will focus on topics that allow you to include any number of examples that you may use as evidence for your thesis. Each question will target one of the following historical thinking skills:

- Comparison
- Causation

Make your choices carefully based on the topics you feel most comfortable writing about, and be sure that each essay meets the following criteria:

- **A relevant thesis** – It doesn't have to be complex, but the thesis must answer the question directly, and must not simply repeat the question.
- **Thorough answer** – Don't neglect to answer any part of the question. This means that it is important to read the question thoroughly, and in your planning outline, be sure to have a section for each part of the question.
- **Specific evidence** – You may choose to use any evidence that comes to mind, but it must directly substantiate your thesis and make your arguments more convincing. Clear, specific examples are usually helpful in coming up with successful arguments.
- **Clear, consistent, supportive organization** – A well-organized essay states a thesis clearly, and organizes supporting evidence clearly so that the reader can easily follow the main arguments. This criterion is best met if you outline your essay carefully before you actually begin to write.

For the free-response questions, it is important to plan your answers carefully and to be sure that you answer ALL parts of the question. Once you know what to expect on the exam, the best preparation for the exam is to know your stuff. The questions do require reading and writing skills, but the surer you are

LONG ESSAY QUESTION RUBRIC (6 points)

<p>A. THESIS (0-1 point)</p>	<p>The essay states a thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.</p>	<p>The thesis must do more than restate the question and must consist of one or more sentences all in the same place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.</p>
<p>B. CONTEXTUALIZATION (0-1 point)</p>	<p>The essay describes a broader historical context relevant to the question.</p>	<p>The essay must clearly frame the topic within the context of the history surrounding it. A phrase or reference is not enough to earn the point.</p>
<p>C. EVIDENCE (0-2 points)</p>	<p>1 point OR 2 points</p> <p>The essay provides examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the question.</p>	<p>The essay supports an argument in response to the question using specific and relevant examples of evidence.</p> <p>For one point, the essay must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the question.</p> <p>For two points, the essay must use specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the question.</p>
<p>D. ANALYSIS AND REASONING (0-2 points)</p>	<p>1 point OR 2 points</p> <p>The essay uses historical thinking skills (comparison, causation, change over time) to frame an argument that addresses the question.</p>	<p>The essay demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development of the question. The evidence provided must support an argument that addresses the question.</p> <p>For one point, the essay must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame an argument, although the reasoning might be uneven or incomplete.</p> <p>For two points, the essay must demonstrate a complex understanding of the topic. A complex understanding may be demonstrated in a number of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing multiple variables that affect the issue addressed in the prompt • Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple cases, or explaining both cause and effect • Explaining relevant connections within and across periods • Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes • Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence.

of the material, the more likely you are to answer the questions correctly. This book provides the concepts and information, as well as plenty of practice questions that will prepare you for the exam.