

The AP World History Exam

Exam Description

The AP World History Exam is 3 hours and 15 minutes long and includes both a 1 hour and 45 minute multiple-choice/short-answer section and a 1 hour and 30 minute free-response section. Each section is divided into two parts, as shown in the table below. Student performance on these four parts will be compiled and weighted to determine an AP Exam score.

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Timing	Percentage of Total Exam Score
I	Part A: Multiple-choice questions	55 questions	55 minutes	40%
	Part B: Short-answer questions	4 questions	50 minutes	20%
II	Part A: Document-based question	1 question	55 minutes (includes a reading period with a suggested time of 15 minutes)	25%
	Part B: Long essay question	1 question (chosen from a pair)	35 minutes	15%

Time Management

Students need to learn to budget their time so that they can complete all parts of the exam. Time management is especially critical with regard to Section II, which consists of two essay questions. Time left is announced, but students are not forced to move to the next question. Students often benefit from taking a practice exam under timed conditions prior to the actual administration.

How Student Learning Is Assessed on the AP Exam

Each AP Exam question will measure students' ability to apply historical thinking skills to one or more of the 49 thematic learning objectives. Both the multiple-choice and free-response questions on the exam require students to apply a historical thinking skill to a learning objective within a particular historical context. Additionally, the free-response section also requires students to provide specific historical evidence.

Student understanding of the course content will be assessed on the AP Exam in one of two ways. First, multiple-choice questions will expect that students are familiar enough with the concepts in each period of world history to be able to

analyze related primary and secondary source material. Second, all of the free-response questions will reward students for accurately citing the content and the evidence that their local curriculums prioritized for each concept statement.

The wording of each concept statement gives teachers flexibility to select specific historical content for use in helping students develop mastery. AP Exam questions do not require that all students know the same example for a given concept statement, so teachers can focus on teaching one example of that concept well, rather than many examples superficially.

It is the nature of history as a discipline that individual statements are open to differences of interpretation. Like all historical claims, the statements in the concept outline should be examined in light of primary sources and evidence as well as historical research. Teachers can help students examine these concepts as claims, based on current scholarship about world history, similar to those typically analyzed in a college-level survey course. Teachers may wish to use differences of interpretation as opportunities for student analysis of multiple perspectives.

In addition, the following are general parameters about the relationship between the components of the curriculum framework and the questions that will be asked of students on the AP Exam:

- ▶ Students' achievement of the thematic learning objectives will be assessed throughout the exam. Each exam question will explicitly target one or more learning objectives and the corresponding parts of the concept outline. (Correlations between the learning objectives and the concept outline are provided in the tables in Sections II and IV of the curriculum framework.)
- ▶ Students' use of the historical thinking skills will be assessed throughout the exam.
- ▶ Students' understanding of all six periods of world history will be assessed throughout the exam.
- ▶ Students will always write at least one essay (in either the document-based question or long essay question) that examines long-term developments that span historical time periods.
- ▶ The coverage of the periods in the exam as a whole will reflect the approximate period weightings.

Multiple-Choice Questions

The multiple-choice section will contain a number of sets of questions, with between two and five questions per set that ask students to respond to stimulus material: a primary or secondary source, including texts, images, charts, graphs, maps, etc. This stimulus material will reflect the types of evidence that historians use in their research on the past. The set of multiple-choice questions about the material will draw upon knowledge required by the curriculum framework, and each question will address one of the learning objectives for the course. While a set may focus on one particular period of world history, the individual questions within that set may ask students to make connections to thematically linked developments in other periods.

Multiple-choice questions will assess students' ability to reason about the stimulus material **in tandem with** their knowledge of the historical issue at hand. The possible answers for a multiple-choice question will reflect the level of detail present in the required historical developments found in the concept outline for the course. Events and topics contained in the illustrative example lists will **not** appear in multiple-choice questions unless accompanied by text that fully explains that topic to the student.

Short-Answer Questions

Short-answer questions will directly address one or more of the thematic learning objectives for the course. At least two of the four questions will have elements of internal choice, providing opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know best. All of the short-answer questions will require students to use historical thinking skills to respond to a primary source, a historian's argument, nontextual sources such as data or maps, or general propositions about world history. Each question will ask students to identify and analyze examples of historical evidence relevant to the source or question; these examples can be drawn from the concept outline or from other examples explored in depth during classroom instruction.

Document-Based Question

The document-based question measures students' ability to analyze and synthesize historical data and to assess verbal, quantitative, or visual materials as historical evidence. As with the long essay, responses to the document-based question will be judged on students' ability to formulate a thesis and support it with relevant evidence.

The documents in the document-based question are not confined to a single format, may vary in length, and are chosen to illustrate interactions and complexities within the material. Where suitable, the documents could include maps, charts, graphs, or pictures, as well as written materials. In addition to calling upon a broad spectrum of historical skills, the diversity of materials will allow students to assess the value of different sorts of documents.

The document-based question will typically require students to relate the documents to a historical period or theme and, thus, to focus on major periods and issues. For this reason, outside knowledge beyond the specific focus of the question is important and must be incorporated into students' essays to earn the highest scores.

Long Essay Question

To provide opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know best, they will be given a choice between two comparable long essay options. The long essay questions will measure the use of historical thinking skills to explain and analyze significant issues in world history as defined by the thematic learning objectives. Student essays must include the development of a thesis or argument supported by an analysis of specific, relevant historical evidence. Questions will be limited to topics or examples specifically mentioned in the concept outline but framed to allow student answers to include in-depth examples of large-scale phenomena, drawn either from the concept outline or from additional topics discussed in the classroom.