



AP[®] World History 2005 Scoring Commentary

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Question 1

Overview

The intent of the document-based question (DBQ) is to assess students' skills in working with a preselected set of documents. Students are asked to analyze the documents, draft an appropriate line of reasoning, and compose an analytical essay. This year's documents all focused on secular nationalism, pan-Arab nationalism, and pan-Islamic nationalism in South Asia and North Africa during the twentieth century. Muslim males wrote all six of the documents. All except one were written or published between 1900 and 1938—a 1985 speech was the single exception. The attribution/source for each document included facts about the authors' social/professional status and about their political activities; in some instances, the dates; and the medium of each document (e.g., letter, speech). In addition, the historical background provided with the question offered information on the 1947 partitioning of South Asia into Pakistan and India and the dates of Algeria's and Egypt's independence from France and Great Britain, respectively. This year's document-based question included no maps, charts, or pictures.

Sample: 1A

Score: 9

The essay has an acceptable thesis, relating the issues of foreign influence and knowledge (1 point). All six documents are appropriately employed and support the thesis (2 points). The essay offers good analysis and displays a nuanced understanding of the documents, which are meaningfully grouped (1 and 3; 2, 3, and 5; 4, 5, and 6) (2 points). The author's point of view in document 1 is adequately analyzed (1 point). Two additional appropriate types of documents are related to the essay's argument (1 point). The student earned 2 expanded-core points for the careful, insightful analysis of the documents and the analysis of an additional grouping.

Sample: 1B

Score: 6

The essay exceeds the minimum standards for 6 of the 7 points in the basic core-scoring guideline. It has an acceptable thesis (1 point). The student demonstrates understanding of all six documents, which are grouped appropriately (2 and 5; 1 and 4; 3 and 6), and provides evidence for the essay's thesis using every document (4 points). The essay requests an additional document of past Muslim leaders such as Mongols or (and perhaps more appropriately) Ottomans, to further its analysis of the issues (1 point). Although the essay attempts analysis of point of view in several instances, each instance does not go beyond simple attribution.

Sample: 1C

Score: 4

The essay has an inaccurate thesis. The student uses all six documents, exhibits a basic understanding of documents 1, 2, 4, and 6, and groups the documents appropriately (1 and 6; 2 and 5) (3 points). Even though document 5 is misinterpreted, it is correctly grouped with document 2. None of the evidence correctly relates back to the thesis. Though analysis of point of view is attempted with document 1, it is inadequate because it does not move beyond description of the individual to explain why the author's point of view is significant. The essay requests an appropriate additional document (1 point).

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Question 2

Overview

The change-over-time question required students to work within the context of the Atlantic world from 1492 to 1750. Noting that the period was one of new contacts between Western Europe, Africa, and the Americas, the question asked students to analyze the social and economic transformations that resulted from those contacts. The question provided sufficient chronological and geographic information to position the Atlantic world within the context of global history.

Sample: 2A

Score: 9

The thesis statement in the first paragraph incorporates the three regions of the Atlantic world while making an argument about social and economic transformations (1 point). The essay describes three economic transformations (global economy, slave trade, and plantations) and three social transformations (slave trade and African society, slave trade and society in the Americas, and hybrid cultures). While the entire essay is analytical, the specific analysis of the slave trade in the global economy is noteworthy (2 points). The essay contains more than adequate historical evidence, including references not often seen in mainstream responses: “creole languages” and “*engenhos*” (2 points). The student places the Atlantic world in the context of world history and connects the Atlantic world to global processes (“trans-Saharan slave trade”). Interactions between regions within the Atlantic world are evident throughout the essay (1 point). Three expanded-core points were awarded for thesis, global context, and evidence.

Sample: 2B

Score: 6

This essay meets all of the requirements of the basic core. The thesis statement (in the first paragraph) draws together elements of social and economic transformation (1 point). Although the term “genocide” is misused in the first paragraph, the error is not a factor in the remainder of the essay. There are two social transformations (new social classes in the Americas and new foods) and two economic transformations (mercantilism and the slave trade). Analysis is limited, but it is present in the connection between the requirements of mercantilism and the productivity of plantations in the Americas (2 points). The essay contains adequate supporting evidence (2 points). Global context is evident in the discussion of interactions in the Atlantic world and in the connection to later events (1 point).

Sample: 2C

Score: 4

This essay represents a typical 4. While there is a weak connection between social/economic transformations and colonization in the first paragraph, the essay lacks a clear thesis statement. The essay includes one social transformation (the Columbian Exchange) and one economic transformation (mercantilism and resources), along with an attempt at analysis in the discussion of the Columbian Exchange (1 point). There is sufficient evidence to support the discussion of transformations (2 points). Minimally acceptable global context is evident in the discussion of the Columbian Exchange (1 point). The discussion of the colonization of Africa is irrelevant to the time frame of the question.

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Question 3

Overview

The primary task of the comparative essay was to analyze similarities and differences, comparing and contrasting the effects of Mongol rule in two of three Eurasian societies. Students were to focus on the period after Mongols took power; therefore, evidence about Mongol invasions and military prowess was irrelevant. Students were to provide political and economic examples of the effects of Mongol rule.

Sample: 3A

Score: 9

The thesis is indeed the first sentence, where differences and similarities of the effects of Mongol rule are spelled out (1 point). All four parts of the question are addressed in a comparative political paragraph and a comparative economic paragraph (2 points). There are many more than four pieces of correct and relevant evidence (2 points) and several direct and relevant comparisons for both political and economic topics (1 point). The structure of the essay, with its two comparative paragraphs, lends itself to consistent and multiple direct comparisons. The best political comparison is the last sentence in the second paragraph (“It boils down to the fact that the Mongols exerted much more influence over Chinese sovereignty [*sic*], culture, and policy than they did over those of the Russians.”), while the whole economic paragraph is interwoven with comparisons and contrasts. This essay fulfills the basic core requirements and earned expanded-core points for its consistent attention to analysis and its use of correct and relevant examples. It is not perfect; the thesis is not entirely focused, and the political analysis of Russia is weaker than the other analyses. (The fact that there is no conclusion is immaterial: conclusions are not required, since this is not a composition test.)

Sample: 3B

Score: 6

The thesis is the first sentence, which meets the minimum qualification of similarities and differences (1 point). Each region is addressed in an economic and a political paragraph (2 points). There are four pieces of correct and relevant evidence: silk roads, conveyance of technology and science, centralized Yuan, and decentralized Russia (2 points). The topic sentences of the second and third paragraphs function as the direct economic and political comparisons (1 point). (Using a topic sentence as a direct comparison was particularly effective in many student essays.) The essay fulfills all core requirements but does nothing that extends it beyond the basic core.

Sample: 3C

Score: 3

The essay does not contain a thesis that deals with similarities and differences. (The last paragraph deals only with differences.) There is a political paragraph and an economic paragraph that mention both regions, so the essay addresses all four parts of the question (2 points). There are only three pieces of correct evidence: both Mongol regimes allowed religious freedom; new economic center in Russia (although it is Moscow, not St. Petersburg); and the “Mongols maintained the silk road” (1 point). There is one correct political comparison in the second paragraph, but the other attempts at direct comparisons are inaccurate, and thus the essay received no points for comparisons.