

2017

**AP**<sup>®</sup> CollegeBoard

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# AP United States History

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES HISTORY

## 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Short Answer Question 1

Answer (a), (b), and (c).

- a) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical development represents an accomplishment of the national government under the Articles of Confederation.
- b) Briefly explain ONE specific argument critics used in the 1780s to support revising the Articles of Confederation.
- c) Briefly explain ONE specific way in which the United States Constitution addresses a criticism of the Articles of Confederation.

### Scoring Guide

0–3 points

Score 3

Response accomplishes **all three** tasks set by the question.

Score 2

Response accomplishes **two** of the tasks set by the question.

Score 1

Response accomplishes **one** of the tasks set by the question.

Score 0

Response accomplishes **none** of the tasks set by the question.

Score NR

No response. Response is completely blank.

### Scoring Notes

- a) Response briefly explains how ONE specific historical development represents an accomplishment of the national government under the Articles of Confederation.  
NOTE: responses may address either the Articles of Confederation or the actions of the national government under the Articles.

Examples of responses to (a) that would earn the point:

- The Articles created a confederation government for the former British colonies after declaring independence from the crown.
- The Articles prevented states from forming their own republics.
- The Articles allowed states to maintain the governments and elected bodies they had already formed.
- The national government coordinated the actions of the new states in the former British colonies, especially defense.
- The national government passed Northwest Ordinances in 1785 and 1787, establishing orderly procedures for settling the Northwest Territory and admitting new states from it.

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## 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Short Answer Question 1 (continued)

- b) Briefly explains ONE specific argument critics used in the 1780s to support revising the Articles of Confederation.

Examples of responses to (b) that would earn the point:

- The national government under the Articles of Confederation was weak and often unable to conduct routine business.
- The national government had no authority to tax directly. Instead states had the authority to tax.
- The national government had no authority to regulate interstate commerce.
- Money lost value because both state and national governments had the power to coin money and many states wantonly printed debt instruments.
- Some states wanted independence from the Confederation.
- Some leaders called for stronger national government, a stronger executive office, and/or a Constitutional Convention.
- Shays' Rebellion demonstrated the weaknesses of the government.
- The government under the Articles lacked a national court system.

- c) Briefly explains ONE specific way in which the United States Constitution addresses a criticism of the Articles of Confederation.

Examples of responses to (c) that would earn the point:

- The Constitution gave the federal government the power to tax.
- Printing and coining money became a power reserved only for the federal government under the Constitution.
- The creation of a bicameral legislature under the Constitution, especially the House of Representatives, allowed people to express a voice in government while still maintaining a strong central authority.
- The Constitution granted specific powers to the federal government and reserved other powers for the states.

Write your answer to **SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 1** on this page only.

The Northwest Ordinance represented a significant accomplishment by the government of the Articles of Confederation. The ordinance resulted in all states giving up their western land claims to the federal government ~~to~~ to be sold to fund it and established the system by which all future states would eventually become states. By doing so, the Ordinance prevented possible future conflicts and generated funds to help pay the debts of the nation. (A)

Late 18th century critics of the Articles of Confederation argued that the Articles left the federal government too weak and consequently made the nation weak and unstable, citing Shays's Rebellion, in which overtaxed Massachusetts farmers rebelled against excessive taxation by the state government and could not be stopped for ~~several weeks~~ a while due to the weak powers of government. Because the decentralized, state-focused government ~~was not~~ <sup>could not</sup> effectively stop the rebellion, critics argued that the Articles needed revision to strengthen federal authority. (B)

The Constitution reserved authority over interstate commerce to Congress in response to criticism of the Articles. Under the Articles, various trade disputes between states occurred as a result of actions such as tariffs on other states' goods, and as a result, power over interstate commerce were reserved for Congress under the Constitution in order to prevent infighting between states that would weaken the government and the economy. (C)

Write your answer to **SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 1** on this page only.

a. During the Articles of Confederation the national government was able to achieve a single government unifying the United States. With the creation of the weak federal government, there was at least one federal government for all 13 states.

This assembled the separate states into a loose union, which had not been done before.  
b. In the 1780s, critics of the Articles of Confederation stated that the federal government did not have enough power or say over the states. More specifically they did not have a military and could not provide defense for the nation, this was proved by Shays's Rebellion in 1786 which was only stopped when George Washington and his soldiers marched in to stop them. This encouraged a national army rather than state militia.

c. The Constitution of the United States addresses the criticism of the Articles of the Confederation where the federal government did not have enough power over the states. It is addressed by the 9th Amendment where it lists all of the powers available to the federal government. The powers it does not have are given to the states in the 10th amendment.

Write your answer to **SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 1** on this page only.

An accomplishment ~~of the~~ contributing to the Articles of Confederation <sup>was</sup> the election of a president and the establishment of a government. This is evident with George Washington's position along with his cabinet. Because of these articles, the U.S. was able to begin an independent nation.

One argument used by critics was the lack of a Bill of Rights. They argued how there was a lack of ~~the~~ amendments expressing and acknowledging the concerns of the entire nation, not just the Founding Fathers. Because of these critics and their views, the Articles of Confederation soon became the Constitution and included amendments.

The Constitution addresses criticism of the Articles of Confederation ~~by~~ by showing its weakness through ~~the~~ supplying specific wants of the colonists, such as individual and states rights. Because these were shown, the criticism of a weak governing document were no longer prevalent, given the strength of the Constitution.

# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES HISTORY 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

## Short Answer Question 1

### Overview

Responses were expected to briefly explain how one specific historical development represents an accomplishment of the national government under the Articles of Confederation, briefly explain one specific argument critics used in the 1780s to support revising the Articles of Confederation, and briefly explain one specific way in which the United States Constitution addresses a criticism of the Articles of Confederation.

This question assessed the skill of Continuity and Change over Time.

The Learning Objective assessed in this question focuses on politics and power (explaining how and why political ideas, beliefs, institutions, party systems, and alignments developed and changed).

### Sample: 1A

#### Score: 3

- a) The response earned 1 point because it accurately describes the Northwest Ordinance relating to the economy as an accomplishment of the government under the Articles.
- b) The response earned 1 point because of the discussion of Shays' Rebellion and decentralization as a reason for revising the Articles.
- c) The response earned 1 point because of the discussion of the authority to regulate commerce under the Constitution as addressing a weakness of the Articles.

### Sample: 1B

#### Score: 2

- a) The response earned 1 point because of the discussion of a "weak" national government. References to "federal" government are considered minor errors.
- b) The response earned 1 point because of the discussion of the lack of national control over the states under the Articles. While the confederation government had a military, it was ineffective in countering Shays' Rebellion.
- c) The response did not earn the point because the discussion of the Ninth Amendment and the federal versus state powers does not address a weakness of the Articles.

### Sample: 1C

#### Score: 1

- a) The response did not earn the point because the discussion of a president under the Articles is incorrect.
- b) The response did not earn the point because the discussion of the Bill of Rights is not relevant to the Articles of Confederation but rather to the Constitution.
- c) The response earned 1 point with a discussion of the Constitution's correction of the Articles as a weak governing document, despite the incorrect reference to individual and states' rights.