
AP World History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] WORLD HISTORY 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

Short Answer Question 2

Use the passage below to answer all parts of the question that follows.

“First and most important in the early modern era [1450–1750 C.E.] is the intensified human land use in every world region. Rising human numbers put increasing pressure on the land. Almost invariably [human] expansion caused a reduction in the quantity and diversity of vegetation or, to put it in other terms, a reduction in biomass and biodiversity. That is, sedentary cultivation depended on selection of one or a few favored plant species . . . in place of a variety of grass, shrubs, and trees. . . . Agriculture was and continues to be the single most important means by which humans change the world’s lands and its ecosystems.

John F. Richards, historian, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*, 2003

- Identify and explain ONE historically specific example of intensified human land use in the period 1450–1750 C.E. that would support the author’s argument.
- Identify and explain ONE historically specific example from the period before 1450 C.E. in which humans interacted with the environment in ways similar to those described in the passage.
- Identify and explain ONE late-twentieth-century development that likely explains historians’ interest in the subject of the passage.

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 —

Is completely blank

Scoring Guide

0–3 points

- ONE point for identifying AND explaining one historically specific example of intensified human land use in the period 1450–1750 C.E. that would support Richards’s argument.
- ONE point for identifying AND explaining one historically specific example from the period before 1450 C.E. in which humans interacted with the environment in ways similar to those described in the passage.
- ONE point for identifying AND explaining one late-twentieth-century development that likely explains historians’ interest in the subject of the passage.

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Short Answer Question 2

Scoring Notes

Examples of responses to part (a) that would earn credit:

- The establishment of plantation agriculture in the Americas after 1492 resulted in new forms of intensive agriculture for cash crops for export, such as sugar, that reduced the agricultural diversity of the region.
- The Aztecs altered the surrounding landscape through the use of *chinampas* in order to produce specific crops.
- The Columbian Exchange dramatically changed the biodiversity and expansion of agriculture in Ming and Qing China through the cultivation of sweet potatoes, maize, and potatoes.

Examples of responses to part (b) that would earn credit:

- The agricultural revolution in Mesopotamia resulted in intensive cultivation of cereal grains and use of irrigation, leading to increased salinization of the soil.
- Greater rice cultivation and the spread of cash crops like tea and cotton during the Song Dynasty led to transformation of the landscape to meet the economic needs of the rising merchant class.
- An agricultural revolution in medieval Europe led to the use of the three-field system, resulting in increased deforestation as more land was cleared for cultivation.

Examples of responses to part (c) that would earn credit:

- The Green Revolution's focus on increasing agricultural productivity in the 1960s led historians to consider other events or times when human agency also impacted the ecosystem.
- The growing environmental movement of the late twentieth century brought greater attention to the damaging effects of deforestation and pollution.
- The massive mobilization and relocation of people to increase agricultural production in China during the 1950s and 1960s led to environmental stresses.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Write your answer to **SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 2** on this page only.

- a) When the Spanish and Portuguese conquered Latin America in the 1450-1750 CE period, they established sugar cane plantations there, cash crops that were grown in Latin America. They only grew that one ^{for profits} crop, intensifying the land use. As they only grew sugar cane, they purposely reduced the biodiversity in the plantations and lands of Latin America, exploiting the lands and vegetation for a profitable crop (sugar cane).
- b) ~~Before 1450 C.E., a feudal society was~~ China was a largely agricultural society, therefore established farms and plantations specifically growing rice to support their growing population. They even brought in a fast-growing rice from Vietnam, showing how they 'selected one or a few favored plant species' in order to benefit their population, reducing biodiversity. ~~to~~ This shows how humans changed natural vegetation before 1450 C.E.
- c) A late 20th century development was the Green Revolution, ~~part~~ ^{and other nations} evident in Mexico. Humans developed more efficient variations of a crop, which improved agricultural productivity. In the Green Revolution, humans also used fertilizers to kill bugs, in order to have more and better crops (make more money). The ~~part~~ purposeful selection of specific more ^{efficient} ~~efficient~~ genes of a crop to grow reduces the diversity of plants and vegetation, leading to concerns about the negative impact of agriculture on ~~the~~ Earth's ecosystems and lands.

End of response area for Q2

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Write your answer to **SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 2** on this page only.

A historical example of intensified human land use in 1450-1750 that would support the author's argument is coal mining in England. When the mines were discovered and the British realized how ~~much~~ much profit they could potentially make, they went full force. Machines were made and trading networks developed. An example from before 1450 where humans interacted similarly was during Early River civilizations. Groups settled along rivers with rich resources such as the Nile River and Huang He. Settlements also occurred along the Fertile Crescent where people took advantage of their perfect growing conditions. As a result, soil lessened in nutrients but through the 3 field system and other irrigation techniques, was solved. The development of global warming and climate change can likely explain historians' interest in the subject of the passage. It's a direct result of carbon emissions, and it primarily affects agriculture. Deforestation is prevalent when Richards states how, "agriculture was ... (how) humans change the world's ... ecosystems." People have grown plants, then cut them down in favor of money. However they're shaping ecosystems, and as a result animals must adapt. This sparked interest in historians to find the root of the problem, and it dates way back in history.

End of response area for Q2

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Write your answer to SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 2 on this page only.

Humans intensified land use in many ways, one way they did it through the time period ~~1450-1750~~^{before} ce would be when they were really getting their agricultural systems together because you need land use when putting together a system to feed and water an amount of people. Now a way they intensified it through 1450-1750 ce would be when migrations would come through, making the amount of people obviously intensify the land. When this article was written (2003) what could have been going on would be the debate on global warming on what it's really doing to the earth. That intensifies things because it's putting a lot of stress on the earth.

End of response area for Q2

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Short Answer Question 2

Overview

This question presented students with a passage written by a historian who studies environmental history in the early modern period (1450–1750 C.E.). Students were asked to identify and explain a historically specific example of intensified human land use in that period that would support the author’s argument, one historically specific example of intensified human land use in the period before 1450 C.E. that would also support the author’s argument, and one late-twentieth-century development that explains the historian’s interest in the subject of the passage. The question tests students’ ability to comprehend the passage and then apply their understanding relative to the use of land in a historically meaningful way across three different time periods.

Sample: 2A

Score: 3

- a) The response earned the point because its discussion of how the establishment of cash-crop plantations by the Spanish and the Portuguese in Latin America reduced biodiversity supports Richards’s argument about land use.
- b) The response earned the point because its discussion of how rice cultivation and the introduction of champa rice (i.e., “fasting-growing rice from Vietnam”) reduced biodiversity in China in the period before 1450 C.E. is a historically specific example of how humans interacted with the environment in ways similar to those described by Richards.
- c) The response earned the point because its discussion of how the Green Revolution led to increased concerns about the reduction of biodiversity serves as a late-twentieth-century example that would explain historians’ interest in the subject of intensified human land use.

Sample: 2B

Score: 2

- a) The response did not earn the point because coal mining is not an example of intensified land use and would not support Richards’s argument.
- b) The response earned the point because its discussion of how early human settlement in river-valley civilizations reduced soil nutrients is a historically specific example of how humans interacted with the environment in ways similar to those described by Richards.
- c) The response earned the point because it identifies and explains how climate change and deforestation affect ecosystems, and it states that these changes have led historians to become interested in the subject of intensified human land use.

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Short Answer Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2C

Score: 1

a) The response did not earn the point because it does not use a specific historical example to explain explicitly how the development of agriculture would support Richards’s argument.

b) The response did not earn the point because it does not use a specific historical example to explain how human migration led humans to interact with the environment in ways similar to those described by Richards.

c) The response earned the point because it connects debates about global warming’s “stress on the earth” to explain why historians such as Richards might be interested in environmental history.