



AP[®] United States History 2005 Scoring Commentary Form B

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AP® UNITED STATES HISTORY
2005 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)

Question 1

Sample: 1A

Score: 8

This well-written essay has a clear, well-argued thesis statement: that the tensions surrounding slavery made compromise impossible. The essay demonstrates an understanding of the changing attitudes toward compromise in the South. A substantial number of documents are used effectively. There is also a rich collection of outside material referenced, including the Missouri Compromise, Fugitive Slave Law, Wilmot Proviso, *The Liberator*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Kansas–Nebraska Act, and John Brown's Raid.

Sample: 1B

Score: 6

This is a good essay that saves its thesis statement until its concluding paragraph. Its greatest strength is in its understanding of the role Manifest Destiny played in the collapse of efforts at compromise between the North and the South. While it incorporates outside information effectively, the essay reflects a poor use of documents. However, the gag rule, the subject of Document C, is mentioned.

Sample: 1C

Score: 3

This essay has a limited thesis stated in the conclusion. The student quotes portions of documents without analyzing them or demonstrating understanding of their meaning. For example, the Resolution of the Pinckney Committee is described as containing “Quick decisions without compromise,” and the student writes that “Senator Webster is in agreement with Senator Clay.” Overall, this is a simplistic treatment of the topic.

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Question 2

Sample: 2A

Score: 8

This essay establishes a clear thesis that undermines the validity of the statement that geography was the primary factor in shaping the development of the British colonies in North America. The essay does discuss the role of geographic differences in the development of the Chesapeake Bay region and Plymouth and provides a general assessment of the differences between southern and northern colonies. However, the student goes on to effectively argue that religion played at least as important a role in the shaping of such colonies as Maryland (“a safehaven [*sic*] for Catholics”), Pennsylvania (“settled by Quakers, strove to be religiously tolerant”), Plymouth, and Rhode Island.

Sample: 2B

Score: 5

While the introductory paragraph is relatively complex, making a good connection between economics and geography and mentioning military and health concerns, the essay itself deals with the various areas of North America in only a superficial way. Aside from tobacco growing in Virginia, no specifics about any other colony are discussed. There is some specific, relevant information concerning European ideas about geography and the creation of empire. The essay’s organization is acceptable.

Sample: 2C

Score: 2

This essay generalizes about the British colonies, describing them as if they were all the same, which goes against part of the idea behind the question. Some geographic concepts are addressed, such as crop development and the locations of colonial capitals, but these topics are not treated with any sophistication. A large number of unsupported generalizations mark this essay (“Everyone was more focused on becoming stable in location”).

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Question 3

Sample: 3A

Score: 8

This essay has a superior opening paragraph that addresses the question directly, arguing that the Constitution was in fact a radical break with the Articles of Confederation. There is an imbalance between the coverage of the Articles and the Constitution, but that is more than compensated for by the extraordinary detail in this essay, including an almost microscopic use of the text of the Constitution. There are also good discussions of the Great Compromise, the issue of slavery, and the process by which the Constitution came into being.

Sample: 3B

Score: 5

This essay presents a balanced, interesting thesis: the Constitution was written because “former colonists did not want to endure again, what they have [*sic*] fought off these past few years.” While the student includes some important information on the Articles of Confederation and the Bill of Rights, more details on both documents, especially on the argument that the Constitution was radical, would strengthen the essay. A couple of minor errors, such as incorrect dates for the Northwest Ordinance, do not detract from the overall quality of the essay.

Sample: 3C

Score: 3

The introductory paragraph of this essay is impressive, indicating an understanding of both the Constitution and the Articles of Confederation, although it does not directly address whether the Constitution was a radical departure from the Articles. The essay goes on to discuss ratification, which again is not a clear response to the question. While the student addresses some of the differences between the two documents, there are a number of errors, including references to the adoption of a proposal for checks and balances by Henry Clay, the passage of the Virginia Plan, and the assumption that “the Articles of Confederation had the Bill of Rights.” The organization and writing are acceptable.

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Question 4

Sample: 4A

Score: 9

This essay is marked by a clear thesis about the Progressive movement and its impact on industrial conditions and on politics. It includes an extraordinary amount of factual information, such as on McClure's magazine, Louis Brandeis, and various labor unions. The essay discusses the two areas in a balanced way and pulls them together in the concluding paragraph. Because of a couple of errors, such as including Boss Tweed in this period and referring to Cleveland mayor Tom Johnson as Samuel Johnson, one could make a case for dropping this essay to an 8 but not out of the top category.

Sample: 4B

Score: 6

This essay contains a clear thesis—Progressive reforms did improve society—that is developed throughout the essay. The section on urban life is full of historical detail and includes references to Hull House and the New Immigration. However, the discussions of the Grimké sisters and Dorothea Dix, none of whom lived during the era, are not appropriate for the time period. There is some imbalance in the areas covered and a digression on popular entertainment from 1890 to 1915, which does not help the essay's score. Overall, the writing and organization are acceptable.

Sample: 4C

Score: 3

This essay presents a mountain of descriptive information on the travails of workers during the Progressive era. It mentions the lack of child labor laws, nativist fears of immigrants, overcrowding, and unsanitary conditions of the tenements. However, there is little mention of progressivism or progressive reforms and their success, the presumed subject of the essay.

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Question 5

Sample: 5A

Score: 8

This essay's excellent opening paragraph notes that: "Women in America, at least middle and upper class women had always been seen as the carers [*sic*] of children." The student explains that during the Second World War, "corporations found out that women were in fact better than some of the men at certain jobs." The essay then argues, effectively, that middle-class women were especially affected by the war. The section on popular culture and literature is superior, with references to the third wave and Friedan, and even ties in the changes to the black Civil Rights movement. The concluding paragraph notes the downside of all these changes, such as the belief that changes in women's roles led to the "breakup of the nuclear American family and an increased divorce rate." This is a fine piece of writing, and more factual information would have elevated the essay to a 9.

Sample: 5B

Score: 5

This essay has a well-developed thesis—women's lives changed because of war and popular culture. The paragraph on the impact of wars on the expectations and roles of women, such as in the workplace, is satisfactory. The second part of the essay, on popular culture, is less effective because the student is confused about the meaning of "mid-twentieth century." For example, there are serious chronological problems with the discussion of the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* preceding references to Wilson's administration. The essay's discussion of the sexual revolution is useful in its application to changes in women's lives. The conclusion is vague.

Sample: 5C

Score: 3

This essay has no thesis—it simply launches into a discussion of the 1920s rather than addressing the mid-twentieth century, which is the focus of the question. The section on literature and popular culture is thin and goes little beyond style (short hair and short skirts). The sentence introducing technology begins: "Telivison [*sic*] and shopping were a big techology/popular [*sic*] culture introduced to the women," and though some of the details are appropriate in this section, they are general and not organized. At its close the essay mentions, entirely out of historical context, the Nineteenth Amendment. There is little here to connect the changes discussed to changes in women's lives.