



**AP[®] US History
2004 Sample Student Responses
Form B**

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Between the Two World wars, United States foreign policy changed from being isolationistic to having increasing fears of what global events might do to the ~~the~~ free world if they did not do something to help out in world war II. Until the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the United States remained reluctant to have any active role in the war for fear of another aftermath like that of World War I in which Europe had massive debt to the United States which it could not pay back and an American society that turned isolationistic and cynical, with writers of the Lost Generation like F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the Roaring Twenties characterized by mass consumerism and materialism. Americans just wanted to keep to themselves until sometime after the Great Depression of the early 1930's where a war-stimulated economy may have become a more appealing idea.

President Woodrow Wilson's plan of the League of Nations after World War I presented a conflicting issue within the United States over the U.S. participation in it. Warren Harding's view in Document A clearly reflects the isolationistic view that most Americans held. It was a conflict between the irreconcilables and the reservationists. Wilson was stubborn ~~and~~ in his determination to get the U.S. to participate in the League of Nations (the irreconcilable side) while others, such as ~~and~~ Henry Cabot Lodge, ~~and~~ opposed Article X of the charter which stated that the U.S. would have to join

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in a war if its alliances did so. The election of Harding in 1920 represented the popular ~~view~~^{opinion} of rejection of the League of Nations and participation in this world Court that would put limitations ~~on~~ on the U.S. The 1920s would show a trend of Republican, laissez-faire presidents like Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, who would only focus on domestic policy ~~and~~ (limited as it was) and keep totally out of world issues. Document B, however, shows the concern of some over the armaments build up ~~within~~ within Europe. Although the Treaty of Versailles would limit German militarism, the years leading up to WWII with the rise of Hitler would overturn this. Nonetheless, Americans remained reserved throughout the Twenties.

After the stock market crash in October 1929, the spark of the Great Depression, the 1930's would show increasing awareness of global issues and perhaps a need to get involved. In Document C, when James refers to "a conference on reparations", he is talking about the Young Plan and Dawes Act in which the United States agreed to alleviate the debt of Germany from WWI ~~and~~ and extend the payment time. This is reflective of some opinions that perhaps the United States does have a role to play in a world court, being a superpower. However, James says "Our dollars are powerful" and that the U.S. is economically ~~stable~~ stable, even though this was stated in October 1930, a year into the Great Depression, and this questions the validity of this person's

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opinion of U.S. readiness for global participation. With the Japanese invading Manchuria and the "Rape of Nanjing" being ~~publicized~~ publicized in the New York Times, this reflects increased public sentiment toward what is happening outside of the U.S. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal Program is allowing the economy to slowly get back on its feet with increased social legislation and government regulation of business. By the time this article appeared in 1937, ~~the~~ the public's eyes were opened to the horrors occurring in China as so descriptively revealed in Document C.

Documents E ~~and~~, showing the platforms of the Republican and Democratic parties for the election of 1940, are incredibly similar. Both reflect the resolution to keep out of World War II, started in 1939. Both are determined to uphold the Monroe ~~Doctrine~~ Doctrine of isolationism. The Republican party criticizes the New Deal but, like the Democrats, advocated preparedness and military buildup. The comment of ~~the~~ the need for a strong navy by the Democrats reflects the opinions of Alfred Mahan, who expressed that the country who rules the seas rules the world. Document F criticizes FDR's principle of aiding Great Britain in the war. The public was concerned with this because of the Nye committee report which stated that the reason America was dragged into World War I was because of the bankers who had economic ties with Europe by lending them money. However, FDR is wary of this and establishes the cash and

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Carry rule, in violation of the Neutrality Acts, ~~and~~ and states that Britain may receive supplies from the U.S. only if they pay cash and carry the supplies in their own ships, in order to prevent the debt problem of WWI. The cartoon of Document G reflects the growing question of the U.S. role in ~~this~~ this war and the confusion and differences of opinion. Some people question the "wisdom" in Appeasing Hitler while many are determined to remain isolated. However, it is clear that since these are becoming major issues and questions, the U.S. ~~is~~ is no longer totally to themselves. The Statement FDR makes in Document H and his analogy to the fire ~~have~~ reflects ~~the~~ the need he sees to keep Great Britain alive by helping it defend himself. If Britain falls, there is threat of the rest of the free world falling to communism or fascism. William H. Taft, now the Supreme Court Chief Justice, referred to FDR's statement as the "chewing gum theory" — once you lend a country war supplies, you don't want it back. This portrays the other opinion of keeping totally out of the war.

Until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. would continue to lend supplies to the allies but do everything else to not fight. ~~Nonetheless~~ Nonetheless, this shows a change from the general feeling of the 1920's of complete isolationism to the growing concern of the fate of the free world during WWII.

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Between 1920 & 1941, American foreign policy went from ~~refusing~~ refusing to join the League of Nations to allying with Britain & France against the Axis powers in World War 2. This shift from Isolationism to the support of a war ^{that} ~~which~~ took place in Europe propelled the United States to the front of foreign policy in Asia and Europe. America's shift towards pro-European foreign policy was caused by the actions of the Allied powers and Axis powers, which ended up sending the U.S.A. into a war it had opposed so recently.

In 1920, the recent "Great War" was still fresh on everyone's mind, and Americans were calling for isolationism—the belief that the U.S. was responsible for itself and no one else. Though President Wilson tried to ~~convince~~ convince ~~the~~ Congress to join the League of Nations, the majority of American sentiment, both in Congress and at home, ^{was} ~~were~~ opposed to binding America to the European "corrupt" countries, as described in Doc. A. Harding plainly states the American popular opinion in the statement, "... [the] League strikes a deadly blow at our constitutional integrity & surrenders to a dangerous extent our independence of ~~our~~ action." This quote shows the Republican opinion that joining the League would cause America to lose her freedom, by binding her to less democratic nations, which America had tried to break from since the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

However, by 1941, the United States was allied to Britain

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and joined, once again, into a war between European powers. This change was not desired by many Americans, however, which could be viewed as a contrary argument to this statement. For example, Doc. E gives the platforms of both the Republican & Democratic parties in 1940. Both parties were "...opposed to involving [America] in a foreign war," and upholding the Monroe doctrine, which stated that European powers needed to stay out of the American continents and was a statement ~~defending~~ ^{defending} America's freedom and sovereignty. These two platforms also declare that America was unprepared for war & would build up its army, navy, & air force in order to "...defend the U.S.A. ... [and] officially uphold ~~the~~ ^{the} war ~~is~~ the Monroe Doctrine. Though these 2 statements are against the war, they leave the necessity for America to go to war open, stating that they would build up the military, i.e. "just in case." Thus this lead to the possibility of joining the global powers. Further evidence can be found in Doc. ~~B~~ C, which states that because "...the American position is among the most important... few world problems arise in which the influence of the U.S. will not swing the decision if we take real interest." This document argues that America must take a larger role on the global scale, because "...we must deal with the world & the world must deal with us."

So why did America undergo this major shift in foreign policy? The answer lies in the actions of the Axis & Allied powers ~~is~~ ~~the~~ preceding to the entry of America into

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the 2nd world war. One major example can be found in Doc. D, which details the "atrocities & vandalism at Nanking." This event showed the world the danger of Japan and also the extremes they were willing to take. Though this does not directly relate to the U.S., indirectly it affected American trade with China, which was an important market for American goods. Furthermore, the actions committed by Germany and Japan against the U.S. made Americans realize that they were also in danger. For example, the Zimmermann notes by the German ambassador to Mexico & Germany's unrestricted warfare in the ocean outraged Americans. ~~These~~ These fears and dangers are illustrated in Doc. G, in which Uncle Sam looks at ironic signs with messages ~~that~~ that show the negative effects of isolationism, for example "The Atlantic Ocean is impregnable" and "Hitler will be satisfied if he takes [Britain.]" This cartoon shows the flaws of isolationism, and this indicates a change in popular opinion over American foreign policy.

Between 1920 & 1941, the previous & impending wars scared and exhausted Americans. After WWI, Americans hoped to escape this through isolationism, but by 1941, America had no choice but to join the fight & global foreign policy front, because, as FDR proposed, "we should do everything to help the British Empire defend itself."

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After 1920 the world was recovering from the horrors of WWI. Many Americans were upset with the loss of life that had occurred, which led to a policy of isolationism. With the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe and the start of WWII, America grudgingly began to react. ~~the event it was not until 1941, after Pearl Harbor, that the United States entered the war.~~ There were many reasons for this change from isolationist to world player, both at home and abroad.

The end of WWI left Americans shocked and horrified at the deaths that had occurred. Congress did not support the Versailles treaty, and politicians spoke out against it, specifically the League of Nations. (Document A) People felt that the League would encroach upon American policies, and Americans didn't like the idea of Europeans having a say in their affairs.

In the roaring 20s the economy boomed and to continue economic success protective tariffs were raised. Military spending was down and there was an effort to disarm. (Document B) This idea that the weapons would ~~no~~ no longer be needed was founded in the idea ~~for~~ that the first world war had been so bad that there would never be another. This in turn led to the policy of ~~isolationism~~.

After black Tuesday 1929 the economies of all the nations in the world were doing badly. The London Conference was called and Hoover promised to go. It was important that America attend because many of the war debts were owed to her, and one of the main goals was to stabilize currency. America's dollar was relatively strong, but in the end Hoover elected not to

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attend the conference ^{His} ~~then~~ no show rendered the conference useless (document C), and continued America's policy of isolationism. On September 18th 1931 Japan attacked Manchuria. America condemned the action but did nothing. It was not until many years later that ~~public~~ public opinion (shown by document D) ~~was~~ had shifted enough to support embargoes against Japan. ~~As~~ still no military action was taken but the US could no longer ignore world affairs.

After the outbreak of WWI, specifically the defeat of France and the battle of Britain the US began taking a more active role in world affairs. Still neutral America continued to maintain that it would not enter the war (document E) this was very important to FDR because he was re-elected on the campaign slogan "he kept us out of the war". However tariffs had been lowered during the "New Deal" and trade with foreign powers commenced on the basis that they pay cash and take bought goods away themselves.

As America began siding more and more with the Allies isolationism broke down. ^(document H) FDR developed a policy of "lending" munitions and supplies to England, France and eventually Russia. Many Americans disliked this ^(document F)

In the 20 years between 1920 and 1940 America went from completely isolated to taking an active (but ~~not~~ not neutral) part in world affairs. In 1941 ~~the~~ the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and war was declared. By this point the army and navy had been built up (document G) and America was ready for war.