



AP[®] US History (Operational) 2004 Sample Student Responses

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When the Revolutionary war ended, American leaders were given the opportunity to set up a new nation, with a radically innovative government, new values, ideals, and a new culture. America broke away from Britain and was free to become whatever it dreamed of becoming. Building the United States after the revolution was like an experiment: no one knew how it would be organized / set up or how well it would work. The "American Revolution" was not only a struggle for political freedom, but also a chance for Americans to take a new stance on current issues and moral debates such as the appropriate role of women in society, and slavery.

Around the time of the revolution, colonial women were beginning to speak up and gain respect. In America, white women had more of a say in society and in families than almost anywhere else. First of all, women were given new opportunities in society. For a brief period of time, more women began working outside their homes, participating in the early industrialization of America. Also, before the Constitution was ratified, some states considered allowing women to vote. But most importantly, women were gaining influence in their families. Women often were the voices behind their husbands' policies, such as Mrs. Adams, wife of our second

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president, John Adams (president until 1800). She influenced him quite a bit, and made comments like "Dear, when you make those new laws... I do hope you remember the Ladies," and "Maybe we women will have our own revolution [if not granted the rights to vote, etc]". The main way women's status was elevated after the revolution was the concept of "republican motherhood". This was the idea that women were responsible for raising good, smart American children + upholding + passing on the "moral conscience" of the nation on to their children. This gave women a significant responsibility and contribution to American society.

The American Revolution also impacted slavery. Before, colonies had "imported" slaves from Africa and the West Indies to work when the "indentured servant" system was no longer adequate. The new agriculture-based, manual labor-based "king cotton" economy in the south required slave labor to operate. Eli Whitney's cotton gin further increased the need for slave labor in the south. However, many northerners didn't see slavery as moral or necessary. Early authors of the Articles of Confederation and later the Constitution debated the slave issue. A compromise was reached when law makers decided to allow the slave trade to continue until 1807, when

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It was to be shut off and no new slaves brought into the U.S. This law still allowed for many slaves to be shipped to America, and after reproducing, the slave population in the U.S. grew rapidly. Another debate occurred with the conflicting Virginia and New Jersey / Large state and small state plans. The large state plan (proposed @ the Constitutional convention) suggested a Congress with representation by population, while smaller states preferred a Congress with equal representation for each state. The Great Compromise resolved this debate with two bodies in Congress - the Senate (2 per state) and the House of Representatives (based on population). Slavery entered the debate when southerners wanted slaves to count for representation purposes (to get more southerners into the House of Reps.). But the north said slaves shouldn't count for representation. The 3/5 compromise decided that in this case, slaves should count as 3/5 of a person. This resolved the conflict, but was degrading to blacks. The government regarded them as worth 3/5 of a person, + slave owners saw them as property. With this mentality, the "peculiar institution" of slavery was here to stay. The Revolution slightly elevated the status of women in society by giving them influence in the culture / their families, but meanwhile lowered the status of slaves + engrained slavery into a part of our country that would stick with us until the Civil War.

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The War for American Independence was a critical event for both the colonies and its people. With an increased appreciation for liberty, social changes were almost guaranteed to occur. The institution of slavery, as well as the limited ~~life~~ lives of women, were set on the course towards eventual equality and freedom. The stresses of the war and the ideas that had been fought for became all important.

The Articles of Confederation, and then the Constitution, sought to guarantee proper governance of the collection of former English colonies. Having fought so hard for freedom, the framers of the Constitution wanted to establish a democratic republic founded on equality, popular sovereignty, and free-will. The Southern colonies wanted to be equally represented among the more populous Northern colonies, and so desired to have their slaves counted among the population counted for representation in the House of Representatives. This was not motivated out of morality, but desire for power. The 3/5ths Compromise counted 3 out of every 5 slaves in the South,

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and this raised two issues: abolitionists, inspired the high ideas of the Revolution decried not having slaves count as full persons, but there were also those who saw hope in the fact that they were counted at all. The tenants of the Revolution had gone awry.

Many blacks fought in the Continental Army, many also fought in the British Army. American leaders saw this, and other instances where freedom was being held up as a "to-die-for" cause, and some realized the irony that thousands of Americans would die for freedom from unjust taxation, ~~and~~ and that millions of slaves were denied this. Leaders began to look at slavery for what it was: a denial of freedom to living, sentient beings. Revolution-era leaders, such as Jefferson and Washington, may have held slaves, but they both realized the inefficiency of slave labor in the long run, and knew that it would end of its own volition.

But there were those who clung to slavery despite this perception. US independence required economic entrepreneurship as well, and many

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Southerners turned to slave-picked cotton and tobacco to secure their economic independence and security. The grip of slavery was tightened, but the ideas of freedom and liberty were championed by abolitionists with a renewed ambition for change.

Many of these abolitionists were women. The Revolution had thrust change on many women. As men called for freedom and the right to decide their own destinies, women became conscious of these ideas. With men away as soldiers or politicians, women had to learn to run households, businesses, plantations, and even money-exchanges and major investments. Even without suffrage or equal legal protection, women of the post-Revolution era found themselves more accepted by a society dominated by men. Abigail Adams tried to encourage her husband John Adams to address feminine issues with the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

While the physical advances made by abolitionists and women because of the Revolution were limited, the ideas of the Revolution had become the central primary goals of both parties for the next hundred and more years.

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The American revolution was an epochal moment in American history. Not only did the American revolution fought against Britain by Patriots in the American colonies, free the colonies from British rule, the revolution also greatly impacted both slavery and the status of women. Sentiments brought about by the revolution, such as freedom, brought many Northerners to free blacks; ~~would not~~ while women proved time and time again ~~the~~ their usefulness during the war.

The American revolution was fought by the American colonist to gain "life, liberty, and freedom." ~~When~~ when the colonist won the revolution, there was a great nationalistic spirit; and many colonist felt the ~~need~~ ^{need} to display ~~the~~ a libertarian spirit. ~~Farmer~~ Farmers in the north freed or at least set up the eventually freedom for blacks. Even in Virginia, some plantation owners freed their slaves. The belief that "all men are created equal" held true to these colonist and that same spirit led to the freedom of some blacks. +

However, those in the south, who were dependent on the slaves as a source of labor, did not free their slaves. Because of the fragility of the new

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country, when the Constitution was written by leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States and a Secretary of State to Washington at the time, wrote the Constitution. Slavery was not abolished, despite the equality ideas inspired by the Revolution. This was not done to prevent sectional disorders and consequently would establish major problems over the "peculiar institution" and help eventually lead to the Civil War after which slavery would be abolished, mainly of this due to sentiments created during the American Revolution.

Not only ~~was~~ was slavery affected by the American Revolution, women's roles and status ~~was~~ elevated. Women, such as Molly Pitcher, a Quaker who is known for helping in the war effort by her husband's side and even after his death in battle, showed that women helped win the war also. However, women ~~directly~~ helped most by running homes, ~~over~~ farming, or running the family business, usually a trade such as blacksmith, in their husband's place. The sentiments of the Revolution placed women as the mothers of the ^{new} American society. Women were

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responsible for teaching the ~~that~~ youth of America and instilling ~~the~~ important values such as honor, trust, and patriotism. However, ~~and~~ the bond of equality fell flat when it came to making significant changes in women's rights. Despite Abigail Adams's "remember the ladies" statement to her husband ~~John~~ John Adams second president of the US. during the writing of the constitution, women were not given the much coveted right to vote. However, women were still given a higher status, but only as ~~care~~ care-takers of the new nation.

In conclusion, the effects of the American Revolution were far reaching. Slavery was abolished in the north, and women were valued more because of their aid in the war and also as the mothers for the new nation. Despite the fact that slavery was not totally abolished and women were not equal to men, the American Revolution instilled a spirit in the American people and their prosperity that would eventually lead to greater improvements in both slavery, and the status of women.