

**AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES HISTORY**  
**2008 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)**

**Question 3**

Use TWO of the following categories to analyze the ways in which African Americans created a distinctive culture in slavery.

Family

Music

Oral traditions

Religions

**The 8–9 Essay**

- Contains a clear, well-developed thesis addressing the ways African American slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the given categories.
- Supports the thesis with substantial, relevant information illustrating how slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the categories.
- Effectively analyzes the ways that slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the areas; coverage of the two may be somewhat uneven.
- Is well organized and well written.
- May contain minor errors.

**The 5–7 Essay**

- Contains a thesis, which may be partially developed, addressing the ways that African American slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the given categories.
- Provides some relevant information illustrating how slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the categories.
- Essay analyzes to some degree the ways that slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the categories; coverage of the two may not be balanced.
- Has acceptable organization and writing.
- May contain errors that do not seriously detract from the essay.

**The 2–4 Essay**

- Presents a thesis that may be confused, simplistic, or undeveloped in terms of addressing the ways that African American slaves created a distinctive culture in two of the given categories; or presents no thesis.
- Includes little relevant information illustrating how slaves created a distinctive culture in two categories.
- Contains little analysis of the ways that slaves created a distinctive culture in two categories; or may cover only one category.
- May be poorly organized and/or poorly written.
- May contain major errors.

**The 0–1 Essay**

- Lacks a thesis or restates the question.
- Includes no relevant information concerning the ways that African American slaves created a distinctive culture.
- Contains no analysis of the ways that slaves created a distinctive culture.
- Is poorly organized and/or poorly written.
- May contain numerous errors, both major and minor.

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**Question 3 (continued)**

**The — Essay**

- Is completely off topic or blank.

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## 2008 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

### Question 3 Information List

#### Several broad factors cut across these categories, including

- Survival of elements of West African customs, languages, traditions, family patterns, and religious practices.
- The influence of slaves who ran off and established hidden communities.
- More recently arrived slaves during the nineteenth century who sustained some African practices.
- Activities by slaves living and working in more urban settings, enabling them to meet, develop, share, and sustain practices and customs, such as in Congo Square in New Orleans, where Sunday meetings were permitted.
- Autonomy on larger plantations that enabled slaves to gather and sustain language, traditions, and practices.
- The influence of rebel leaders, such as Gabriel, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey, as well as conjurers, in sustaining customs, practices, religious beliefs, etc.
- In addition to West African survivals, the blending of influences from the Spanish and French in terms of language, culture, and religion.

#### Family

- Emphasis on informal family arrangements, extended family ties, and the role of “fictive kin”—fellow slaves regarded as “family” although not actually linked by blood ties.
- Developed sense of community, especially on the larger plantations, whereby families were aided by others, and children were cared for by all those living there.
- Because of the breakup of many families, children were often raised primarily by the mothers, creating female-centered household traditions that persisted after slavery.
- Many families were broken up by the sale of a member of the family, and yet family connections were often preserved (and many rejoined after the Civil War). Slaves who were sold and moved on to new plantations/farms connected with others who had family members in previous settings from which they had come reinforced many such informal linkages.
- Naming traditions (families giving a name different from that imposed by the slaveowner).

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## 2008 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

### Question 3 Information List (continued)

#### Music

- Instruments and music styles brought over from Africa and preserved in the United States included stringed instruments (banjo, fiddle, and mandolin), gourds, drums, clapping, and freer bodily expressions such as dancing and the “shout.”
- Gospels, hymns, and spirituals created in religious settings; songs that evolved while working in fields (especially to provide work rhythms) and as expressions of resistance and protest, often in Creole or pidgin English not understood by most whites.
- Many slaves attended white churches and picked up and expanded on practices observed there as well as in urban settings, and in churches begun by free African Americans.
- Subsequent renowned styles of music, such as the blues and jazz, evolved out of the various styles sustained during slavery, with regional variations.

#### Oral traditions

- Heavy reliance on models of oral traditions brought over from Africa and further developed; spread by fugitives, griots, conjurers and shamans (thought to have spiritual or magical powers), slaves sold in the Deep South, and black preachers who embraced Christianity, especially because most white communities prohibited the teaching of literacy to slaves.
- On larger plantations and in urban settings, African Americans were able to meet, especially in the evenings after work, and such occasions were used to disseminate oral traditions and beliefs in their ultimate liberation.
- Influence of Creole, pidgin English, and distinct language variations, such as the Gullah dialect, added to the distinctive oral traditions among slaves and free African Americans.
- Use of folk tales, such as Br’er Rabbit, that taught lessons about surviving under oppression.

#### Religion

- Some religious practices (such as call and response, rhythmic clapping), as well as some elements of Islam, were brought from Africa and sustained and emulated in America.
- Blending traditions (including voodoo) recalled from Africa. Practices were adapted from Europeans and Americans, e.g., Catholicism in locations where the Spanish and French colonized and Protestantism where the British colonized. This was especially true in areas where slaves attended services in segregated white churches.
- Ideas and practices were disseminated by African American preachers, rebel leaders, abolitionists, and groups such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as well as in churches begun by free African Americans (especially in urban settings).

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**Question 3 Information List (continued)**

- While Christianity was presented to slaves as demanding subservience and obedience, the slaves interpreted it as a message of liberation and understood Christ as ministering to the poor and oppressed, not to the rich and oppressive.

Circle the Section II question number you are answering on this page.

Mandatory <b>1</b>	Part B — Circle one <b>2 or 3</b>	Part C — Circle one <b>4 or 5</b>
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1 of 2

Slavery obviously played a magnanimous role in the ~~of~~ shaping of African American culture. Although this effect was produced through a myriad of different mediums, two of the most prominent were its oral traditions and religions. Each influence went hand-in-hand in producing a culture diverse from that of white Americans.

Oral traditions among slaves originated from their great importance in the native African societies. They were mainly used ~~for~~ to recall events (as there was not a common system of writing), explain phenomenon (such as the creation of Earth), and in teaching morals and ethics. A prime example of such tales are those about Anasazi, a spider who learns about the world through trial and error. Slaves carried their stories and traditions into America with them during a time where basically none of them were literate. This process emphasized the importance of the spoken word, still visible through the works of African American public speakers (ex-Martin Luther King Jr), poets (ex-Langston Hughes), and writers (ex-Toni Morrison).

Religion was also a major center for slave life. The slaves lost everything including possessions, family, and dignity when they were dragged

Circle the Section II question number you are answering on this page.

Mandatory <b>1</b>	Part B — Circle one <b>2 or (3)</b>	Part C — Circle one <b>4 or 5</b>
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2 of 2

into America by slaveholders. The only thing they really had for themselves anymore was their religious willpower. Slaves believed that enduring their pain and suffering without too many uprisings would someday deliver them from their ~~site~~ oppression. Thus, slaves sang in the fields, and attended church services to uphold their connection with "God." ~~Thier~~ Their religious faith remains almost as strong as it was in the past now, with a majority of ~~intermingling~~ black communities and churches. They ~~mainly~~ still rejoice their deliverance, ask for help when needed, and praise the lord for the things life has "given" them.

As you can see, both oral traditions and religion work in tandem with each other to produce the African American culture that persisted through slavery up until today. Slaves kept from basically falling apart by trusting their fates in religion, and upholding moral standards through generations in storytelling.

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Mandatory 1	Part B — Circle one 2 or 3	Part C — Circle one 4 or 5
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3B

1 of 2

African Americans, during the period of their enslavement, had created a distinctive culture that differed from the culture fed to them by their white "masters". In the areas of ~~music~~ music and of religion, African Americans created for themselves distinctive traditions that not only offered a sense of community and hope to all those enslaved, but would also carry on until long after the practice of slavery ended in the mid-1860s.

Most slaves taken from Africa were Muslim or believed in some other type of deity; they were not Christians. However, after they were stolen from their homeland and forced to work on the plantations, their white Christian slave masters forced them to follow Christianity. However, this version of Christianity taught to them in some way, using a certain interpretation of the bible, justified slavery and made it seem like the slaves were in all ways inferior. The African Americans however, modified their religion, so that it was Christianity, but retained a hope that God would someday rescue them as he did "his promised people" from Egypt.

In addition, African Americans used music during their enslavement to create a sense of community and togetherness. They created "negro spirituals" that incorporated the bible into their hope for freedom. Also, they included drums and African-based dancing in their socials. In a way, their music and "negro spirituals" was a hidden act of rebellion.

Circle the Section II question number you are answering on this page.

3B  
2 of 2

Mandatory <b>1</b>	Part B — Circle one <b>2 or (3)</b>	Part C — Circle one <b>4 or 5</b>
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towards their white masters. One famous spiritual, "Go Down Moses" was sung and affirmed their belief that they would someday be freed.

Today, the distinctive culture created by African American slaves is still preserved in certain aspects of modern African American culture and traditions. The Black Baptist church many African Americans attend now is the legacy of that established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also, the music cultivated by African Americans then eventually evolved into the Blues and Jazz, and then, arguably, to the beginnings of Rock and Roll. All of this is the legacy of the distinctive culture created by African Americans enslaved in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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Mandatory <b>1</b>	Part B — Circle one <b>2 or 3</b>	Part C — Circle one <b>4 or 5</b>
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During the 18th and 19th century, when slavery was commonplace (at least in the south), the African Americans living in slavery developed their own way of life. This way of life was completely different than the culture they lived in, and had its roots back in Africa. The culture of their owners also had an impact on the way the culture of slaves developed. African American culture developed distinctively, especially in the aspects of family and oral tradition.

The family became the most important part of the African American culture that developed. Although ~~most~~<sup>many</sup> families were split in slavery, ~~the concept of~~ it caused the concept of family to be different than it had been before. The "family" could include grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, parents, children, and any stragglers who were apart from their biological family. The concept of family became more of a "we're all in the same boat" attitude, rather than based on blood relation. However, this is not to say there were no biological families present, but slavery introduced a new type of family, creating a new concept of family.

~~The~~ The oral traditions created by enslaved African Americans were also rather distinctive.

Circle the Section II question number you are answering on this page.

3C  
2 of 2

Mandatory <b>1</b>	Part B — Circle one <b>2 or 3</b>	Part C — Circle one <b>4 or 5</b>
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Because almost all slaves were illiterate, the stories passed down orally were very important. ~~Q~~ ~~Q~~ All stories, from traditions to folk tales, were passed down through bedtime stories. This is unlike any literate culture, and had never been the tradition of America. However, it allowed for a new type of culture, one with oral traditions, to develop. The ~~oral~~ stories that were passed down through generations were immortalized forever in the minds of the people to whom the stories were told.

The enslavement of African Americans allowed for a distinctive culture to develop, especially when it came to family and oral traditions. The family developed into more of a group rather than a small number of people who are all blood related. The oral traditions passed down were also distinct from any culture that had previously been in America. It was due to slavery that a new culture could develop.

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**2008 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

**Question 3**

**Sample: 3A**

**Score: 9**

A strong thesis statement regarding interrelationships between the developing religion and oral traditions sets this essay apart. The analysis excellently links African roots and the adaptation and preservation in slavery. The essay also notes ways in which oral traditions developed in preliterate African societies were still practiced under American slavery. In the section on religion, the essay emphasizes that slaves believed spirituality “would someday deliver them from their oppression.” Specifics and analysis are superior, the conclusion is good, and the writing and organization are excellent. There are no significant errors.

**Sample: 3B**

**Score: 6**

This essay has a satisfactory thesis and conclusion. It traces the evolution of a distinctive adaptation within religion, emphasizing slaves breaking away from the prevailing practices of their “white masters.” The discussion of music is more detailed, overlapping with changes in religion. The analysis is good but lacks the details to be at the top of the score category. The writing and organization are satisfactory.

**Sample: 3C**

**Score: 4**

This essay has a thesis that claims that slave culture “had its roots back in Africa” and reasserts the claim when speaking of family culture, but it provides no information regarding those roots. There is general information on the family but no analysis of how that family came to be—to what was the family adapting? The analysis of oral traditions is marginally better, suggesting a sense of causation (e.g., illiteracy led to a reliance on oral culture), but the information lacks specificity. The essay is adequately organized and adequately written.