

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP History Program

The AP Program offers three history courses: AP European History, AP United States History, and AP World History. All three history courses focus on helping students develop historical thinking while learning required course content. Course themes foster deep analysis by making connections and comparisons across different topics.

AP World History Course Overview

AP World History is designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester introductory college or university world history course. In AP World History students investigate significant events, individuals, developments, and processes in six historical periods from approximately 8000 B.C.E. to the present. Students develop and use the same skills, practices, and methods employed by historians: analyzing primary and secondary sources; developing historical arguments; making historical comparisons; and utilizing reasoning about contextualization, causation, and continuity and change over time. The course provides five themes that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places: interaction between humans and the environment; development and interaction of cultures; state building, expansion, and conflict; creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems; and development and transformation of social structures.

PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for the AP World History course. Students should be able to read a college-level textbook and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

AP World History Course Content

The AP World History course is structured around themes and concepts in six different chronological periods from approximately 8000 BCE to the present:

- Technological and Environmental Transformations (to c. 600 BCE)
- Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies (c. 600 BCE to c. 600 CE)
- Regional and Transregional Interactions (c. 600 CE to c. 1450)
- Global Interactions (c. 1450 to c. 1750)
- Industrialization and Global Integration (c. 1750 to c. 1900)
- Accelerating Global Change and Realignment (c. 1900 to the Present)

Within each period, key concepts organize and prioritize historical developments. Themes allow students to make connections and identify patterns and trends over time.

AP History Disciplinary Practices and Reasoning Skills

The AP history courses seek to apprentice students to the practice of history by emphasizing the development of disciplinary practices and reasoning skills while learning historical content. The practices and skills that students should develop in all AP history courses are listed below, along with a condensed description of what students should be able to do with each. Every AP Exam question will assess one or more of these practices and skills.

AP HISTORY DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES**Practice 1: Analyzing Historical Evidence****Primary Sources**

- Explain the relative historical significance of a source's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience.
- Evaluate a source's credibility and/or limitations.

Secondary Sources

- Explain how a historian's claim or argument is supported with evidence.
- Analyze patterns and trends in quantitative data in non-text-based sources.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a historical claim or argument.

Practice 2: Argument Development

- Make a historically defensible claim in the form of an evaluative thesis.
- Support an argument using specific and relevant evidence.
- Use historical reasoning to explain relationships among pieces of historical evidence.
- Consider ways that diverse or alternative evidence could be used to qualify or modify an argument.

AP HISTORY REASONING SKILLS**Skill 1: Contextualization**

- Use context to explain the relative historical significance of a specific historical development or process.

Skill 2: Comparison

- Explain the relative historical significance of similarities and/or differences between different historical developments or processes.

Skill 3: Causation

- Explain the difference between primary and secondary causes and between short- and long-term effects.
- Explain the relative historical significance of different causes and/or effects.

Skill 4: Continuity and Change Over Time

- Explain the relative historical significance of specific historical developments in relation to a larger pattern of continuity and/or change.

AP World History Exam Structure

AP WORLD HISTORY EXAM: 3 HOURS 15 MINUTES

Assessment Overview

The AP Exam questions measure students' knowledge of world history and their ability to think historically. Questions are based on learning objectives, key concepts, course themes, and AP history disciplinary practices and reasoning skills. Exam questions represent various geographical regions, with no more than 20 percent of the multiple-choice questions focusing solely on Europe.

Format of Assessment

Section I Part A: Multiple Choice | 55 Questions | 55 Minutes | 40% of Exam Score

- Questions appear in sets of 2–5.
- Students analyze primary and secondary texts, images, graphs, and maps.
- Questions cover all course periods.

Section I Part B: Short Answer | 3 Questions | 40 Minutes | 20% of Exam Score

- Students respond to 2 required questions and choose between 2 options for a third question.
- Questions 1 and 2 cover periods 3–8 of the course; students choose between answering either question 3 (covering periods 1–3) or question 4 (periods 4–6).
- Students analyze historians' interpretations, historical sources, and propositions about history.

Section II Part A: Document Based | 1 Question | 60 Minutes | 25% of Exam Score

- Students assess written, visual, and quantitative sources as historical evidence.
- Students develop an argument supported by an analysis of historical evidence.
- Question covers periods 3–6 of the course.

Section II Part B: Long Essay | 1 Question | 40 Minutes | 15% of Exam Score

- Students select one question among three different periods (1–2, 3–4, 5–6) of the course.
- Students explain and analyze significant issues in world history.
- Students develop an argument supported by an analysis of historical evidence.

AP WORLD HISTORY SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

"The ruler is a boat; people are the water. The water can carry the boat; the water can capsize the boat. . . . A man may be the descendant of kings, lords, or nobles, but if he does not observe the norms of ritual and proper behavior he must be relegated to the status of a commoner. Similarly, he may be a descendant of commoners, but if he accumulates learning of the texts, corrects his behavior, and observes the norms of ritual and proper behavior—then he must be elevated to the ranks of high ministers, lords, and nobles."

Xunzi, Chinese philosopher, circa 250 B.C.E.

Ideas similar to those expressed in the passage have directly contributed to the development of which of the following aspects of later Chinese imperial history?

- (A) The long-standing tradition of Chinese leadership in technological, agricultural, and commercial innovation relative to the rest of the world
- (B) The expectation that emperors must be judged by a different set of ethical standards all other members of society
- (C) The virtual elimination of the threat of rebellion against established political authority
- (D) The practice of recruiting capable bureaucrats on the basis of educational achievement rather than noble birth

Correct Answer: D

Sample Short-Answer Question: Comparison

- A) Identify ONE similarity in the way elites used art or architecture in Europe and in Asia during the period 1450–1750.
- B) Explain ONE difference in the way elites used art or architecture in Europe and in Asia during the period 1450–1750.
- C) Explain ONE reason for the difference in the way elites used art or architecture in Europe and in Asia during the period 1450–1750.

Sample Free-Response Question: Document-Based Question

Evaluate the extent to which industrialization in Japan was similar to industrialization in Russia between 1850 and 1914.

Students examine seven primary source documents, including a secret diplomatic letter, excerpts from two different magazine articles, image of Japanese silk factory, excerpts from two different memoirs, chart documenting Japanese silk workers' impressions of life in the factories.

Sample Free-Response Question: Long Essay Question Focused on Continuity and Change over Time

Evaluate the extent to which the relationship between labor systems and social hierarchies changed in the period c. 600 C.E. to c. 1750 C.E.