



SAMPLE QUESTIONS

AP[®] United States History Exam

Originally published in the October 2012
AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework

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Introduction

These sample exam questions were originally included in the *AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework*, published in fall 2012. The *AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description*, which is out now, includes that curriculum framework, along with a new, unique set of exam questions. Because we want teachers to have access to all available questions that support the new exam, we are making those from the fall 2012 curriculum framework available in this supplementary document.

The sample exam questions illustrate the relationship between the curriculum framework and the redesigned AP U.S. History Exam, and they serve as examples of the types of questions that appear on the exam.

Each question is followed by the main learning objective(s), skill(s), and key concept(s) it addresses. A question may partially address other learning objectives, skills, or key concepts, but only the primary ones are listed. For multiple-choice questions, the correct answer is also provided.

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

As demonstrated in the following examples, multiple-choice question sets are organized around two to six questions that focus on a primary source, secondary source, or other historical issue.

Set 1

In this secondary source, historian Michael McGerr makes an argument about the nature of the Progressive movement (addressed in learning objectives WXT-7 and POL-3).

Questions 1–3 refer to the following quotation.

“I believe that progressivism was a radical movement, though not by the common measures of economic and political radicalism. . . . Progressives were radical in their conviction that other social classes must be transformed and in their boldness in going about the business of that transformation. . . . The sweep of progressivism was remarkable, but because the progressive agenda was so often carried out in settlement houses, churches, and schoolrooms, in rather unassuming day-to-day activities, the essential audacity of the enterprise can be missed. Progressivism demanded a social transformation that remains at once profoundly impressive and profoundly disturbing a century later.”

— Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870–1920*, 2003

- Which of the following activities from the middle of the 19th century most closely resembles the Progressive Era reforms that McGerr describes?
 - Participation by women in moral reform efforts
 - Calls for the annexation of Texas
 - Efforts by nativists to restrict immigration
 - Removal of American Indians from the Southeast to the West

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
A	POL-3 Explain how activist groups and reform movements, such as antebellum reformers, civil rights activists, and social conservatives, have caused changes to state institutions and U.S. society.	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Comparison	4.1.II 6.2.I 7.1.II

2. Which of the following efforts most directly resulted from the Progressive Era reform movements?

- Attempts to consolidate large corporations
- Local campaigns against urban social problems
- Calls to restrict migration from southern and eastern Europe
- Plans to develop an extensive social welfare system by the federal government

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
B	POL-3 Explain how activist groups and reform movements, such as antebellum reformers, civil rights activists, and social conservatives, have caused changes to state institutions and U.S. society.	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Historical Causation	6.2.I 7.1.II

3. Which of the following movements from the period of 1870 to 1920 would most directly support McGerr's argument in the excerpt above?

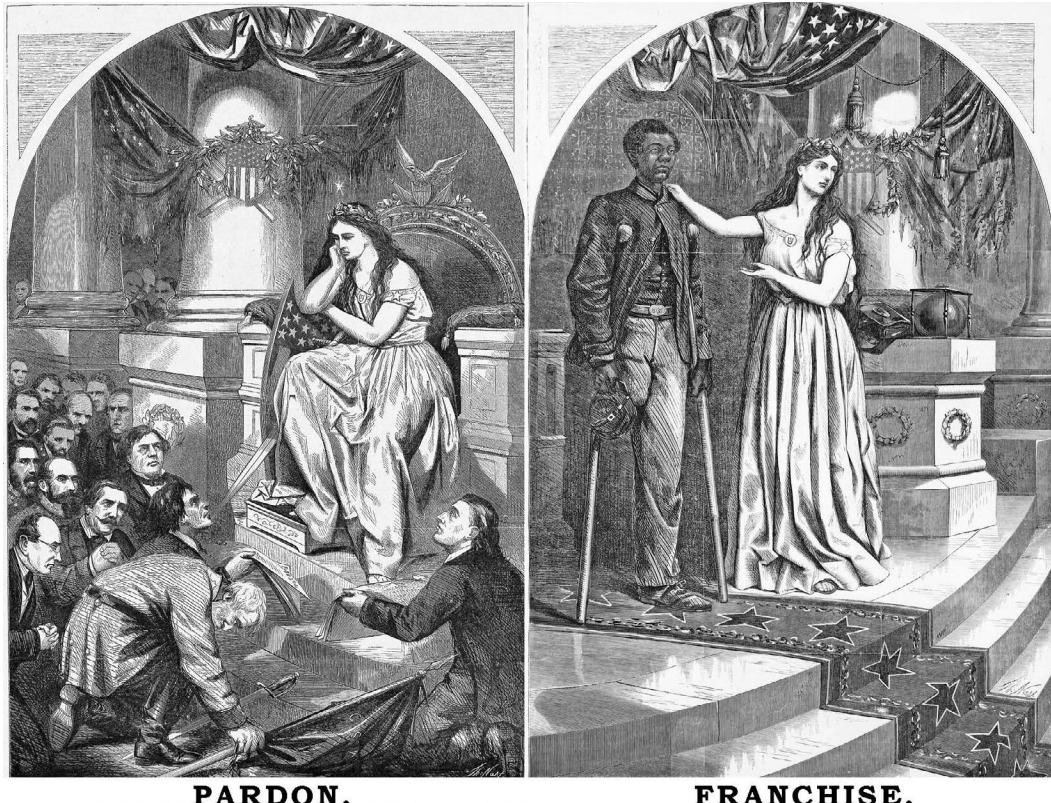
- The movement for temperance and Prohibition, which sought to limit consumption of alcohol
- The movement by good-government advocates, who sought to eliminate public corruption
- The movement by the federal government to conserve and protect environmental resources
- The movement to protect consumers from unfair practices by businesses

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
A	POL-3 Explain how activist groups and reform movements, such as antebellum reformers, civil rights activists, and social conservatives, have caused changes to state institutions and U.S. society. WXT-7 Compare the beliefs and strategies of movements advocating changes to the U.S. economic system since industrialization, particularly the organized labor, Populist, and Progressive movements.	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Historical Argumentation	6.2.I 7.1.II

Set 2

This cartoon by Thomas Nast focuses on the debates over political values (addressed in learning objective POL-6) and national identity (learning objective CUL-2) in the aftermath of the Civil War.

Questions 4–8 refer to the following 1865 cartoon by Thomas Nast.



Courtesy of HarpWeek

Courtesy of Library of Congress

4. Which of the following groups would be most likely to support the perspective of the cartoon?

- Southern politicians
- Radical Republicans
- Northern opponents of the war
- Veterans of the Confederate Army

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
B	CUL-2 Analyze how emerging conceptions of national identity and democratic ideals shaped value systems, gender roles, and cultural movements in the late 18th century and the 19th century.	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Contextualization	5.3.I

5. The sentiments expressed in the cartoon above most directly contributed to which of the following?

- The passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments
- The movement of African Americans away from the farms where many had been held as slaves
- The prevalence of the sharecropping system
- The passage of segregation laws in Southern states

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
A	<p>POL-6 Analyze how debates over political values (such as democracy, freedom, and citizenship) and the extension of American ideals abroad contributed to the ideological clashes and military conflicts of the 19th century and the early 20th century.</p> <p>CUL-2 Analyze how emerging conceptions of national identity and democratic ideals shaped value systems, gender roles, and cultural movements in the late 18th century and the 19th century.</p>	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Historical Causation	5.3.I 5.3.II

6. The controversy highlighted in the cartoon above most directly led to the

- emergence of more vigorous Southern resistance to African American rights
- industrialization of some segments of the Southern economy
- issuance of court rulings such as *Plessy v. Ferguson* sanctioning racial segregation
- development of African American efforts to support vocational education

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
A	<p>POL-6 Analyze how debates over political values (such as democracy, freedom, and citizenship) and the extension of American ideals abroad contributed to the ideological clashes and military conflicts of the 19th century and the early 20th century.</p>	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Historical Causation	5.3.II

7. The ideas expressed in the cartoon above most directly reflect which of the following continuities in United States history?

- Debates about federalism and states' rights
- Debates about access to voting rights
- Debates about the role of the federal government in the economy
- Debates about the proper role of political parties

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
B	<p>POL-6 Analyze how debates over political values (such as democracy, freedom, and citizenship) and the extension of American ideals abroad contributed to the ideological clashes and military conflicts of the 19th century and the early 20th century.</p> <p>CUL-2 Analyze how emerging conceptions of national identity and democratic ideals shaped value systems, gender roles, and cultural movements in the late 18th century and the 19th century.</p>	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time	4.1.II 5.3.III

8. Which of the following 20th-century issues most closely parallels the controversy depicted in the cartoon above?

- The opposition to the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s
- The growth of conservatism in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s
- The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s
- The expansion of migration to the United States after 1965

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
C	<p>POL-6 Analyze how debates over political values (such as democracy, freedom, and citizenship) and the extension of American ideals abroad contributed to the ideological clashes and military conflicts of the 19th century and the early 20th century.</p> <p>POL-7 Analyze how debates over civil rights and civil liberties have influenced political life from the early 20th century through the early 21st century.</p>	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Comparison	5.3.II 8.2.I

Set 3

This excerpt is taken from journalist John L. O'Sullivan's 1845 essay "Annexation," in which he first used the phrase "manifest destiny." The concepts of Manifest Destiny and expansionism are addressed in learning objectives ID-2 and WOR-6.

Questions 9–11 refer to the following quotation.

"Our ... destiny [is] to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions. . . . The Anglo-Saxon foot is already on [California's] borders. Already the advance guard of the irresistible army of Anglo-Saxon emigration has begun to pour down upon it, armed with the [plow] and the rifle, and marking its trail with schools and colleges, courts and representative halls, mills and meetinghouses. A population will soon be in actual occupation of California. . . . Their right to independence will be the natural right of self-government belonging to any community strong enough to maintain it."

— John L. O'Sullivan, 1845

9. The ideas expressed in the passage above most clearly show the influence of which of the following?

- (A) Models of limited government inherent in the Articles of Confederation
- (B) Beliefs in separation of powers articulated in the United States Constitution
- (C) Concerns about foreign alliances expressed in George Washington's Farewell Address
- (D) Concepts of republican democracy found in the Declaration of Independence

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
D	ID-2 Assess the impact of Manifest Destiny, territorial expansion, the Civil War, and industrialization on popular beliefs about progress and the national destiny of the U.S. in the 19th century.	Historical Causation	5.1.I

10. The process described in the passage above most directly led to political controversies in the 1840s and 1850s over the

- expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories
- authority of the Supreme Court to overturn federal laws
- role of the federal government in economic development
- use of natural resources in newly acquired territories

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
A	ID-2 Assess the impact of Manifest Destiny, territorial expansion, the Civil War, and industrialization on popular beliefs about progress and the national destiny of the U.S. in the 19th century.	Historical Causation	5.1.I

11. Which of the following events in the late 19th and early 20th centuries represents a continuation of the process described in the passage above?

- Efforts to restrict immigration to the United States
- The Supreme Court's endorsement of racial segregation
- The United States gaining possession of overseas territories
- Political parties' attempts to regulate economic activities

Answer	Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
C	WOR-6 Analyze the major aspects of domestic debates over U.S. expansionism in the 19th century and the early 20th century.	Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time	7.3.I

Section II: Short-Answer Questions

The following questions are meant to illustrate the types of questions that might appear in this section of the exam. Note that the short-answer questions do not require students to develop and support a thesis statement.

Question 1

This question asks students to respond to the arguments of two historians about the nature of the American Revolution (addressed in learning objective POL-1). Students must first correctly identify the respective interpretations of each historian, and then briefly cite historical evidence gained from the AP U.S. History classroom that tends to support one argument or another.

Question 1 is based on the following two passages.

“Massachusetts did not have a social order before the American Revolution that would breed sharp internal class conflicts. The evidence does not justify an interpretation of the Revolution in Massachusetts as an internal class conflict designed to achieve additional political, economic, and social democracy. Although democracy was important as a factor in the conflict, it was a democracy which had already arrived in the colony long before 1776. . . . [B]efore 1776, [democracy was] a reality which interfered with British policies. If the British had been successful, there would undoubtedly have been much less democracy in Massachusetts—hence [my] interpretation that the Revolution was designed to preserve a social order rather than to change it.”

— Robert E. Brown, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691–1780*, 1955

“Those who . . . have asserted that the Revolution aimed only at separation from Great Britain are quite right, but only insofar as they have described the attitudes of the elite: what the common people and articulate radicals made of the Declaration of Independence may have been quite a different matter. . . .” “[P]oor people in early America expressed discontent in some way against the rich. During the period of the American Revolution there was just such an expression from below: the powerless refused to stay in the places to which a theory of deference and subordination assigned them. Among the most blatant cases are those of Negroes who petitioned for that freedom to which . . . they claimed they had a natural right.”

— Jesse Lemisch, “The American Revolution Seen from the Bottom Up,” 1968

1. Based on the two interpretations above of the origins of the American Revolution, complete the following three tasks:
 - A) Briefly explain the main point made by Passage 1.
 - B) Briefly explain the main point made by Passage 2.
 - C) Provide ONE piece of evidence from the era of the American Revolution that is not included in the passages, and explain how it supports the interpretation in either passage.

Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
POL-1 Analyze the factors behind competition, cooperation, and conflict among different societies and social groups in North America during the colonial period.	Contextualization, Interpretation	3.1.II

Question 2

This question asks students to relate the development of American national identity (addressed in learning objectives ID-1 and ID-5) to a relevant piece of information from the Revolutionary period that the students learned in their AP U.S. History class. Students must provide an explanation of why the connection they made is plausible, but they do not need to develop an entire thesis argument. Students then need to counter the other options, again by referencing evidence about U.S. history that they have encountered in their class.

2. United States historians have proposed various events to mark the beginning of an American identity.
 - A) Choose ONE of the events listed below, and explain why your choice best represents the beginning of an American identity. Provide at least ONE piece of evidence to support your explanation.
 - End of the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War) in 1763
 - Signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776
 - Ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788
 - B) Contrast your choice against ONE of the other options, demonstrating why that option is not as good as your choice.

Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
<p>ID-1 Analyze how competing conceptions of national identity were expressed in the development of political institutions and cultural values from the late colonial through the antebellum periods.</p> <p>ID-5 Analyze the role of economic, political, social, and ethnic factors on the formation of regional identities in what would become the United States from the colonial period through the 19th century.</p>	Periodization	3.1.II 3.2.I 3.3.I 3.3.III

Question 3

This question asks students to interpret the point of view of this painting, to explain its significance in terms of one of three major topics in 19th-century U.S. history, and to connect the analysis to a specific action. Students need to see the linkage between this primary source and the context of 19th-century debates over westward expansion, Manifest Destiny, or “progress.” In choosing examples to illustrate these connections, students are able to refer to any appropriate examples discussed in depth in their own classrooms while covering the relevant learning objectives (ID-2, WXT-2, and PEO-4).

Question 3 is based on the following image.



Courtesy of Library of Congress

3. Use the image above and your knowledge of United States history to answer parts A, B, and C.

A) Explain the point of view reflected in the image regarding ONE of the following:

- ♦ Migration
- ♦ Technology
- ♦ American Indians

B) Explain how ONE element of the image expresses the point of view you identified in Part A.

C) Explain how the point of view you identified in Part A helped to shape ONE specific United States government action between 1845 and 1900.

Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
<p>ID-2 Assess the impact of Manifest Destiny, territorial expansion, the Civil War, and industrialization on popular beliefs about progress and the national destiny of the U.S. in the 19th century.</p> <p>WXT-2 Analyze how innovations in markets, transportation, and technology affected the economy and the different regions of North America from the colonial period through the end of the Civil War.</p> <p>PEO-4 Analyze the effects that migration, disease, and warfare had on the American Indian population after contact with Europeans.</p>	Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Contextualization	4.2.III 5.1.I 6.2.II

Section III: Long-Essay Questions

The following questions are meant to illustrate an example of a question pairing that might appear in this section of the exam, in which both questions focus on the same historical thinking skill (in this case, **periodization**) but apply it to different time periods. Therefore, the question pairing allows the student to make a choice concerning which time period and historical perspective he or she is best prepared to write about.

Questions 1–2

These questions ask students to make an argument justifying different ways of periodizing U.S. foreign policy history in the late 19th and 20th centuries. In both cases, students can support their thesis by referring to the historical evidence used by their teacher to illustrate the learning objective (WOR-7).

1. Some historians have argued that the Spanish–American War in 1898 marked a turning point in United States foreign policy. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.

Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
WOR-7 Analyze the goals of U.S. policymakers in major international conflicts, such as the Spanish–American War, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, and explain how U.S. involvement in these conflicts has altered the U.S. role in world affairs.	Periodization	7.3.I

2. Some historians have argued that the development of the policy of containment after the Second World War marked a turning point in United States foreign policy. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.

Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
WOR-7 Analyze the goals of U.S. policymakers in major international conflicts, such as the Spanish–American War, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, and explain how U.S. involvement in these conflicts has altered the U.S. role in world affairs.	Periodization	8.1.I

Section IV: Document-Based Question*

For this question, the main historical thinking skill being assessed is **continuity and change over time**, although other document-based questions may focus on other skills. The learning objective addressed in the example document-based question is PEO-3. Each document-based question will also always assess the historical thinking skills of **argumentation, use of evidence, and synthesis**. The directions to students explain the discrete tasks necessary to score well on this question.

Learning Objectives	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
PEO-3 Analyze the causes and effects of major internal migration patterns such as urbanization, suburbanization, westward movement, and the Great Migration in the 19th and 20th centuries.	Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time, Historical Argumentation, Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Synthesis	7.2.III

Directions: Question 1 is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. You are advised to spend 10 minutes planning and 50 minutes writing your answer.

Write your responses on the lined pages that follow the questions.

In your response you should do the following.

- ▶ State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- ▶ Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
- ▶ Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into your argument.
- ▶ Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.
- ▶ Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
- ▶ Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
- ▶ Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay.

Question 1. Analyze major changes and continuities in the social and economic experiences of African Americans who migrated from the rural South to urban areas in the North in the period 1910–1930.

* This sample document-based question is the same as that given in the *U.S. History Course and Exam Description*.

Document 1

Source: Southern African American folk saying, 1910s

De white man he got ha'f de crop
Boll-Weevil took de res'
Ain't got no home,
Ain't got no home.

Document 2

Source: Letter from a prospective African American migrant, April 27, 1917

New Orleans, La., 4/27/17

Dear Sirs:

Being desirous of leaving the South for the betterment [sic] of my condition generally [sic] and seeking a Home Somewhere in Ill' Chicago or some other prosperous town I am at sea about the best place to locate having a family dependent upon me for support. I am informed by the *Chicago Defender* a very valuable paper which has for its purpose the Uplifting of my race, and of which I am a constant reader and real lover, that you were in position to show some light to one in my condition.

Seeking a Northern Home. If this is true Kindly inform me by next mail the next best thing to do Being a poor man with a family to care for, I am not coming to live on flowry [sic] Beds of ease for I am a man who works and wish to make the best I can out of life I do not wish to come there hoodwinked not know where to go or what to do so I Solicite [sic] your help in this matter and thanking you in advance for what advice you may be pleased to Give I am yours for success.

Document 3

Source: Dwight Thompson Farnham, a northern White efficiency expert, article titled "Negroes as a Source of Industrial Labor," *Industrial Management*, August 1918

A certain amount of segregation is necessary at times to preserve the peace. This is especially true when negroes are first introduced into a plant. It is a question if it is not always best to have separate wash rooms and the like. In places where different races necessarily come into close contact and in places where inherited characteristics are especially accentuated, it is better to keep their respective folkways from clashing wherever possible.

Document 4

Source: *Jackson (Mississippi) Daily News*, a southern White-owned newspaper, on the race riot in Chicago, July 28, 1919

The only surprising feature about the race riot in Chicago yesterday is that it did not assume larger proportions.

Trouble has been brewing in that city for several months, and nothing short of exceptionally good work by the police department can prevent further clashes.

The native white population of Chicago bitterly resents the influx of negro labor, and especially the housing of blacks in white neighborhoods.

.... the decent, hard-working, law-abiding Mississippi negroes who were lured to Chicago by the bait of higher wages, only to lose their jobs, or forced to accept lower pay after the labor shortage became less acute, are hereby notified that they will be welcomed back home and find their old positions waiting for them.

Mississippi may lynch a negro when he commits the most heinous of all crimes, but we do not blow up the innocent with bombs, or explode sticks of dynamite on their doorsteps.

Document 5

Source: Lizzie Miles, African American singer, lyrics to the song “Cotton Belt Blues,” 1923

Look at me. Look at me.
And you see a gal,
With a heart bogged down with woe.
Because I’m all alone,
Far from my Southern home.
Dixie Dan. That’s the man.
Took me from the Land of Cotton
To that cold, cold minded North.
Threw me down. Hit the town.
And I’ve never seen him henceforth.
Just cause I trusted. I’m broke and disgusted,
I got the Cotton Belt Blues.

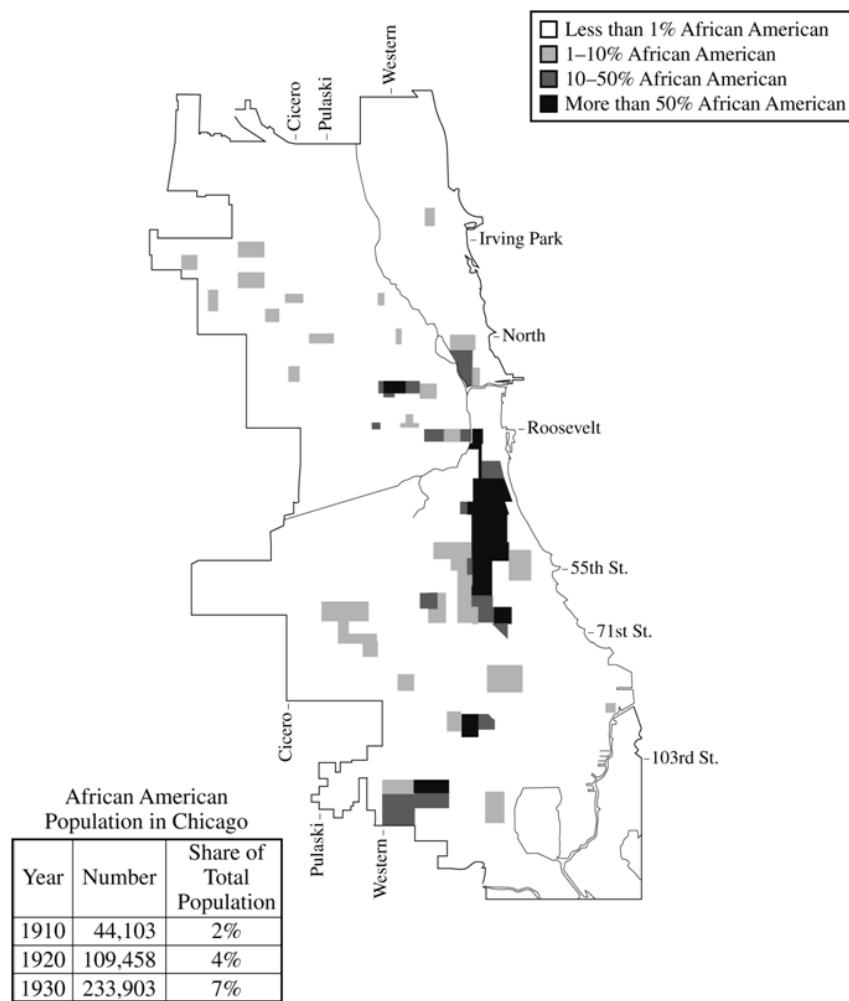
Document 6

Source: George Schuyler, an African American journalist, article in *The Messenger*, a political and literary magazine for African Americans, August 1925

It is generally thought by both Negroes and whites that Negroes are the chief strikebreakers in the United States. This is far from the truth. The Negro workers' part in strikes has been dramatized by virtue of the striking contrast of race which invariably provoked race riots. But the fact is that there are many more scabs among the white than black workers, partially because there are numerous industries in which Negroes are not permitted to work, which, too, are by no means one hundred percent organized. Out of twenty or more millions of workers in the United States, less than five million are organized. Note the potential for scabs!

Document 7

DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION IN CHICAGO, 1930



Credits

Page 3: Nast “Pardon” cartoon — Courtesy of HarpWeek

Page 3: Nast “Franchise” cartoon — Courtesy of Library of Congress
LC-USZ62-102257

Page 11: *American Progress* painting — Courtesy of Library of Congress
LC-DIG-ppmsca-09855