

AP[®] UNITED STATES HISTORY

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

Evaluate the extent to which the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) marked a turning point in the debate over slavery in the United States, analyzing what changed and what stayed the same from the period before the war to the period after it.

A. Thesis: 0–1 point

Skills assessed: Argumentation + Periodization

States a thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question. The thesis must do more than restate the question.

1 point

Does not state a thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question or has a thesis that merely restates the question.

0 points

Response is completely blank.

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B. Support for argument: 0–2 points

Skills assessed: Argumentation + Use of Evidence

Supports the stated thesis (or makes a relevant argument) using specific evidence.

1 point

OR

Supports the stated thesis (or makes a relevant argument) using specific evidence, clearly and consistently stating how the evidence supports the thesis or argument, and establishing clear linkages between the evidence and the thesis or argument.

2 points

Response does not use specific evidence to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.

0 points

Response is completely blank.

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C. Application of targeted historical thinking skill: 0–2 points

Skill assessed: Periodization

PERIODIZATION

Describes the ways in which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from OR similar to developments that preceded and/or followed.

1 point

OR

Analyzes the extent to which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from AND similar to developments that preceded and/or followed, providing specific examples to illustrate the analysis.

2 points

Response does not describe the ways in which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from OR similar to developments that preceded and/or followed.

0 points

Response is completely blank.

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Question 3 (continued)

D. Synthesis: 0–1 point

Skill assessed: Synthesis

Response synthesizes the argument, evidence, and context into a coherent and persuasive essay by accomplishing one or more of the following as relevant to the question.				
Appropriately extends or modifies the stated thesis or argument.	OR	Explicitly employs an additional appropriate category of analysis (e.g., political, economic, social, cultural, geographic, race, gender) beyond that called for in the prompt.	OR	Appropriately connects the topic of the question to other historical periods, geographical areas, contexts, or circumstances.
1 point		1 point		1 point
Response does not synthesize the argument, evidence, and context into a coherent and persuasive essay.				
0 points				
Response is completely blank.				
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Question 3 (continued)

SCORING NOTES

Responses define the chronological beginning and end points for the essay; the focus of the response helps determine what information is considered appropriate.

Thesis

An acceptable thesis would evaluate the extent to which the Mexican-American War was a turning point, indicating the extent of change OR continuity. Note: Indicating explicitly the extent of change implies the extent of continuity, and vice versa.

Possible thesis statements emphasizing change could include the following:

- The Mexican-American War marked a turning point in the debate over slavery in the U.S. by unleashing a massive tension between the North and South on what land would be free and what land would be slave.
- The Mexican-American War marked a huge turning point in the debate over slavery because it brought to light the controversy of territorial self-determination and asked the question that would define America on a fundamental level: is this country one of slavery or one of freedom?

Possible thesis statements emphasizing continuity could include the following:

- The questions of slavery and expansion were inevitable political issues.
- The culmination of Manifest Destiny only sped up the process.

Possible thesis statements modifying the position could include the following: The Compromise of 1850 with its controversial points, not the Mexican-American War, was the major turning point of 19th century.

Support for Argument

Possible evidence that could be used includes the following:

BEFORE Mexican-American War

- Manifest Destiny
- Missouri Compromise (1820)
- Increasing fear of slave power
- William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator* (1830)
- Gag rule
- Frederick Douglass
- Annexation of Texas (1845)

Mexican-American War and AFTER

- Opposition to Mexican-American War among northern Whigs
- Abraham Lincoln Spot Resolutions (1846)
- Wilmot Proviso (1846)
- Popular sovereignty
- Stephen A. Douglas
- Compromise of 1850
 - California enters as free state
 - Stricter fugitive slave law
 - Popular sovereignty in Utah and New Mexico Territory
 - Slave trade banned in Washington, D.C.
- Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
- Formation of Republican Party (1854)
- Bleeding Kansas (1855)
- *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857)

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Question 3 (continued)

Application of Historical Thinking Skills

- Essays earn 1 point by describing the ways in which the debates over slavery were different from OR similar to debates over slavery that preceded and/or followed the Mexican-American War.
- Essays earn 2 points by analyzing the ways in which the debates over slavery were different from AND similar to debates over slavery that preceded and/or followed the Mexican-American War, providing specific examples to illustrate the analysis.
- Examples of issues that influenced the debate over slavery could include the following:
 - Discussion of political balance based on slavery before and after the war
 - Discussion of extent of cotton cultivation before and after the war
 - Discussion of the abolition movement before and after the war
 - Discussion of the ideologies of free soil and free labor before and after the war

Synthesis

Responses can earn the synthesis point by crafting a persuasive and coherent essay. This could be accomplished by but not limited to the following:

- Providing a conclusion that extends or modifies the analysis in the essay by explicitly assessing the impact of the Mexican-American War on American Indian and/or Hispanic people living in the territory transferred from Mexico to the United States.
- Introducing another category of historical analysis by explicitly calling out the cultural or gender, or racial elements of a political story.
- Making a connection to another historical period or context. Examples could include the following:
 - Concretely and explicitly linking the Mexican-American War to earlier imperial conflicts such as the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution
 - Explicitly linking the Mexican-American War to subsequent developments such as the Civil War and Reconstruction or the 20th century Civil Rights movement

Mandatory 1	Circle one 2 or (3)
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Debates about slavery in the United States was a conflict that existed since the constitution was written. A significant question ~~at the time~~ that lingered was what would happen to new states when they were annexed - would they be slave states or free states. This was temporarily solved with the Missouri Compromise in 1820 which said all new states from the Louisiana purchase above Missouri would be free and those below would be slave states. This was to keep the sectional balance equal. However, the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), marked a turning point in the debate over slavery because of the newly acquired land and increasing tensions, but ~~also left some~~ ^{also left some} things the same, such as racism and preexisting sectional divides.

The Mexican-American War changed the US because of the land we acquired and the question of whether it would be slave states or free territory. ~~Then~~ After the war, ~~the~~ the US got California, Texas officially, and other south-western territory from Mexico. The Missouri Compromise could not solve what to do because ~~off~~ this was not territory from the Louisiana Purchase. There were many suggestions, such as the Wilmot Proviso, saying it would all be free, or Popular Sovereignty, which allowed the states to decide for themselves. This resulted in the Compromise of 1850 which said California would be free, Texas a slave state, and all others would have popular sovereignty. This infuriated the North because they felt this was a plot ~~to~~ by the South to have more control in the Senate. The Missouri Compromise up to this point had ~~not~~ solved the slavery question, but now there was new tension created, which led directly to the Civil

Mandatory 1	Circle one 2 or (3)
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war a decade later. The Mexican American War changed the country because of the issue it brought with it, increasing sectional tensions more than ever before.

Although the Mexican American War was a huge watershed in the debate over slavery, racism and sectional divider stayed relatively the same. Subsequent to the war, blacks were seen as inferior to whites in both the North and the South, and this did not change after the war, even though the abolition movement grew more strength than ever. ~~Blacks~~ ^{Blacks} continued to be oppressed and in the South, they were still slaves despite uprour in the North. Also, despite the raise in tensions ~~before~~ after the Mexican American War between the North and the South, they had been divided in that way long before the war. Their differences in labor systems served as a distinction that had existed since the foundation of the nation. ~~and~~ The Mexican American war is one of the key events that had results that led to the Civil War; however the ~~racism~~ ^{racism} and African American oppression stayed the same before and after it, and sectional divider had existed long before the war.

The Mexican American War marked a huge turning point in the debate over slavery in the US because of the questions of what to do with the new land that we now had and how to deal with the slavery question. However, there was also continuity in the time period, as blacks remained slaves and subjects of oppression. ~~and~~ Although the Mexican American war served as a trigger for the debate, the question of

Circle the question number that you are answering on this page.

3A

Mandatory 1	Circle one 2 or 3
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3 of 3

Slavery and the division between the North and the South was something that existed long before. The Civil War was inevitable. Questions of slavery rose even at the writing of the Declaration of Independence, when Thomas Jefferson suggested abolition. Slavery ~~was~~^{plays} a huge role in American history, and the Mexican-American War is one of many turning points.

Circle the question number that you are answering on this page.

3B
1 of 2

Mandatory

1

Circle one

2 or 3

Manifest Destiny was the god given right to spread american land and culture through the western land of North America. From this rose other problems like what ~~was~~ was the stance of slaves in these new lands. ~~The~~ During the Mexican-American war the ~~South~~ American not only fought for Texas but also internal conflicts on slavery. The war marked a turning point with the expansion of Texas as a slave state and soon the rush of republicans to all annex a new state on their side.

Mexicans before the war invited Americans to settle on their land. Their They could crop and have more space to farm cattle. This work was not solely done by free people but also slaves who were brought by their owners. The war came around and Americans in the North were already arguing with the South on the abolishment of slavery. Finally the war came around and America won and got Texas as a land of their own. Texas was automatically established as a slave state. This worried the North because in the house of representatives the South had one more vote compared to them. The battle soon began on how the North could top them. Following the war in 1849 many hope for

Circle the question number that you are answering on this page.

3B

Mandatory 1	Circle one 2 or (3)
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2 of 2

migrants moved to California in search of gold in present day San Francisco. Soon after migrants were establishing home all over California and in the compromise of 1850 became a state. Now the north could compete with the way the south were.

The Mexican American war marked a turning point in slavery with the annexation of Texas as a ~~the~~ proslave land. It also furthered the change with the anti slave state of California later on. An occasion where change is made due to the point of migrating west could be when Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana purchase. This land brought heated debate whether it was constitutional or not and how the opposing party at the time (Federalist) responded to it. It also effected France as ~~it effected~~ Mexico was effected with loss of territory. America was separated in views due to the growth of the land.

Circle the question number that you are answering on this page.

3C

Mandatory

1

Circle one

2 or 3

1051

The Mexican-American War (1846-1848) was a major turning point in the debate over slavery. ~~Because~~ Although the South continued to extend the territory of slavery, the issue involved a compromise that increased tensions dramatically and developed a greater divide of sectionalism. ~~the~~

The Mexican American War opened up territories in the southwest, most important of them was Texas and California.

Through the development of the Gold Rush in California, there were a majority of free-soilers in the region who did not want slavery in the region. The South however, had confidence that California would become a slave state. Since California was lost to the gold miners, the South demanded a compromise of 1850.

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2015 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3 — Long Essay

Overview

Long Essay Question 3 allowed students to evaluate the extent to which the Mexican-American War marked a turning point in the debate over slavery in the U.S., analyzing what changed and what stayed the same from the period before the war to the period after. The question assessed the historical thinking skill of periodization and covered Period 5, which ranges from 1844 to 1877.

Sample: 3A

Score—Thesis: 1

This essay has a thesis that is most clearly stated in the conclusion, namely that the war was a “huge turning point” due to the increased tensions that arose out of the newly acquired land.

Score—Support for Argument: 2

This essay uses a significant amount of specific evidence effectively to support the thesis. It notes that the lands acquired from the war posed a particular problem because their slave status could not be determined through the Missouri Compromise, thus giving rise to proposals such as the Wilmot Proviso and popular sovereignty, which ultimately led to the Compromise of 1850. The essay also notes that other tensions (labor systems, abolitionism, etc.) were inflamed by the war.

Score—Application of Targeted Historical Thinking Skill: 2

This essay analyzes both similarities and differences, although the discussion of popular sovereignty notes a difference that is more subtle than the similarities such as racist oppression, labor systems, and the sectional divide that the essay examines.

Score—Synthesis: 1

This essay’s synthesis lies in its examination of the long-term roots of the crisis, arising from the Declaration of Independence and the Louisiana Purchase (and by noting that the new problems were not resolvable using earlier solutions).

Sample: 3B

Score—Thesis: 0

This essay’s thesis lacks the evaluative element required in the prompt and merely notes that the war amounted to a turning point with the expansion of Texas and a rush of Republicans “to annex a new state on their side.”

Score—Support for Argument: 1

This essay uses migrations into Texas and California as examples of expansion, though it mostly restates the thesis, rather than using the evidence to support the argument.

Score—Application of Targeted Historical Thinking Skill: 1

This essay points to westward migration as the basis for the application of periodization: expansion into Texas prior to the war and into California after the war, although it notes no differences.

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Question 3 — Long Essay (continued)

Score—Synthesis: 1

This essay earned a point for synthesis by linking the tensions driven by expansion into Texas and California with the earlier example of heated debates over the constitutionality of Jefferson's acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase.

Sample: 3C

Score—Thesis: 1

This essay has a basic evaluative element; it identifies the Mexican-American War as a turning point in the debate over slavery.

Score—Support for Argument: 0

The limited evidence in the essay is not effectively deployed to support the thesis.

Score—Application of Targeted Historical Thinking Skill: 0

There is no mention of accurate similarities or differences before or after the war. The mention of adding Texas and California to the union, the Gold Rush, Free Soilers, and the Compromise of 1850 is not sufficient for the application of periodization.

Score—Synthesis: 0

The essay does not demonstrate synthesis by extending or modifying the thesis, employing an additional category of analysis, or effectively connecting the topic to other historical periods, areas, or circumstances.