

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 skills while they learn the required course content. Course themes foster deep analysis by making connections and comparisons across different topics. Each AP History course corresponds to two semesters of a typical introductory college history course.

AP World History Course Overview

The AP World History course focuses on developing students' understanding of the world history from approximately 8000 BCE to the present. This college-level course has students investigate the content of world history for significant events, individuals, developments, and processes in six historical periods, and develop and use the same thinking skills and methods (analyzing primary and secondary sources, making historical comparisons, chronological reasoning, and argumentation) employed by historians when they study the past. The course also provides five themes (interaction between humans and the environment; development and interaction of cultures; state building, expansion, and conflict; creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems; development and transformation of social structures) that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places encompassing the five major geographical regions of the globe: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisite courses, although 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.

Historical Thinking Skills

The historical thinking skills provide opportunities for students to learn to think like historians, most notably to analyze evidence about the past and to create persuasive historical arguments. Focusing on these practices enables teachers to create learning opportunities for students that emphasize the conceptual and interpretive nature of history. Skill categories and examples for each are listed below.

Analyzing Evidence: Content and Sourcing

- Explain the relevance of the author's point of view, author's purpose, audience, format or medium, and/or historical context as well as the interaction among these features, to demonstrate understanding of the significance of a primary source.
- Evaluate the usefulness, reliability, and/or limitations of a primary source in answering particular historical questions.

Interpretation

- Analyze a historian's argument, explain how the argument has been supported through the analysis of relevant historical evidence, and evaluate the argument's effectiveness.
- Analyze diverse historical interpretations.

Comparison

- Compare diverse perspectives represented in primary and secondary sources in order to draw conclusions about one or more historical events.
- Compare different historical individuals, events, developments, and /or processes, analyzing both similarities and differences in order to draw historically valid conclusions. Comparisons can be made across different time periods, across different geographical locations, and between different historical events or developments within the same time period and/or geographical location.

Contextualization

- Situate historical events, developments, or processes within the broader regional, national, or global context in which they occurred in order to draw conclusions about their relative significance.

Synthesis

- Make connections between a given historical issue and related developments in a different historical context, geographical area, period, or era, including the present.
- Make connections between different course themes and/or approaches to history (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual) for a given historical issue.

Causation

- Explain long and/or short-term causes and/or effects of an historical event, development, or process.
- Evaluate the relative significance of different causes and/or effects on historical events or processes, distinguishing between causation and correlation and showing an awareness of historical contingency.

Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time

- Identify patterns of continuity and change over time, and explain the significance of such patterns.
- Explain how patterns of continuity and change over time relate to larger historical processes or themes.

Periodization

- Explain ways historical events and processes can be organized into discrete, different, and definable historical periods.
- Evaluate whether a particular event or date could or could not be a turning point between different, definable historical periods, when considered in terms of particular historical evidence.
- Analyze different and/or competing models of periodization.

Argumentation

- Articulate a defensible claim about the past in the form of a clear and compelling thesis that evaluates the relative importance of multiple factors and recognizes disparate, diverse, or contradictory evidence or perspectives.
- Develop and support a historical argument, including in a written essay, through a close analysis of relevant and diverse historical evidence, framing the argument and evidence around the application of a specific historical thinking skill (e.g., *comparison*, *causation*, *patterns of continuity and change over time*, or *periodization*).
- Evaluate evidence to explain its relevance to a claim or thesis, providing clear and consistent links between the evidence and the argument.
- Relate diverse historical evidence in a cohesive way to illustrate contradiction, corroboration, qualification, and other types of historical relationships in developing an argument.

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 and supporting concepts, course themes, and historical thinking 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.
- Analyze historical texts, interpretations, and evidence.
- Primary and secondary sources, images, graphs, and maps are included.

Section I Part B: Short Answer | 4 Questions | 50 Minutes | 20% of Exam Score

- Questions provide opportunities for students to explain the historical examples that they know best.
- Some questions include texts, images, graphs, or maps.

Section II Part A: Document Based | 1 Question | 55 Minutes (includes 15-minute reading period) | 25% of Exam Score

- Analyze and synthesize historical data.
- Assess written, quantitative, or visual materials as historical evidence.

Section II Part B: Long Essay | 1 Question | 35 Minutes | 15% of Exam Score

- Select one question among two.
- Explain and analyze significant issues in world history.
- Develop an argument supported by an analysis of historical evidence.

AP WORLD HISTORY SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

“In the pages that follow I aim to persuade you of several related propositions. First, that the twentieth century was unusual for the intensity of environmental change and the centrality of human effort in provoking it. Second, that this ecological peculiarity is the unintended consequence of social, political, economic and intellectual preferences and patterns. Third, that our patterns of thought, behavior, production, and consumption are adapted to our current circumstances: the current climate, the twentieth century’s abundance of cheap energy and cheap fresh water, rapid population growth, and yet more rapid economic growth. Fourth, that these preferences and patterns are not easily adaptable should our circumstances change.”

J.R. McNeill, historian, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*, 2000.

McNeill’s argument in the passage is most likely a response to which of the following developments of the twentieth century?

- A) The emergence of the Green Revolution
 - B) The end of the Cold War
 - C) The increasing consumption of natural resources in industrial states
 - D) The increasing government regulation of industrial pollution after the Second World War
- Correct Answer: C

Sample Free-Response Question: Document-Based Question

Using the documents and your knowledge of world history, compare industrialization in Japan and 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 Historical Thinking Skill

Using specific examples, analyze continuities and changes in the relationship between labor systems and social hierarchies in the period circa 600 C.E. to circa 1750 C.E.

Sample Short-Answer Question: Periodization

Answer parts A and B.

Many historians argue that the end of the Cold War (1989–1991) was a turning point in world history.

- A) Provide TWO pieces of evidence that support this argument and explain how each piece supports the argument.
- B) Provide ONE piece of evidence that undermines this argument and explain how it undermines the argument.