



**Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:  
2025 AP<sup>®</sup> European History Set 1  
Free-Response Questions**

• Number of Students Scored	86,850		
• Number of Readers	530		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	12,185	14.0
	4	30,171	34.7
	3	20,704	23.8
	2	16,491	19.0
	1	7,299	8.4
• Global Mean	3.27		

The following comments on the 2025 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> European History were written by the Chief Reader, Clark Hultquist, University of Montevallo. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

## Short Answer Question 1

**Task:** Short Answer Question—Secondary Source

**Topic:** Women in the Soviet Union, 1917–1990

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Part A</b>	1	0.80
<b>Part B</b>	1	0.87
<b>Part C</b>	1	0.25
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	1.92	

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Responses to Part A were expected to describe an argument that demonstrated comprehension of Francine du Plessix Gray’s assertion that women throughout the later stages of the Soviet Union continued to face social inequalities despite the legislation passed by Lenin’s Bolshevik government. The excerpt describes various types of inequalities women faced compared to men in the Soviet Union, with particular focus on the 1980s. Responses could describe a number of Plessix Gray’s arguments made in the passage, which center around Unit 9, Topic 9.8 and Learning Objective H on how women’s roles and status developed throughout the 20th century.

Responses to Part B were expected to describe one piece of evidence used by the author to support her argument. Successful responses described Plessix Gray’s evidence that women earned only two-thirds as much as the average male, how forty percent of women were employed in unskilled or low-skilled manual labor, or that higher professions had higher percentages of men in high administrative positions.

Responses to Part C were expected to explain one historical development in the second half of the 1900s that likely influenced the author’s perspective. Historical developments relevant to this question are found in Topic 9.8 of the CED and include feminism and Western European women’s access to greater educational opportunities and professional careers. Additional expected answers would include new modes of marriage partnership, divorce, and reproduction giving women more options in their personal lives as well as women gaining high political office. Another historical development relevant to Part C is the role of Gorbachev’s internal reforms of perestroika and glasnost, as found in Topic 9.7 of the CED. Reforms attempting to deal with economic stagnation to make the Soviet system more flexible and open was one expected response to Part C.

### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

Responses to Parts A and B were very successful in describing an argument made by the author, and describing one piece of evidence used by the author. Students scored very well in both these parts of the question, reflecting their ability to identify and then describe the author’s argument and then identify and describe a piece of evidence in support of that argument.

In Part A, most student responses were successful in interpreting an argument made in the excerpt. The most common responses referenced the failure of the Soviet Union to put into practice earlier ideals regarding the economic equality of women. In Part B student responses were generally able to describe a piece of evidence used by the author, commonly describing one of the statistics used by the author.

For Part C, successful responses explained second-wave feminism’s influence upon the author, but other successful responses focused on glasnost reforms made by Gorbachev in the late Soviet era, or the impact of prominent women in high office such as Margaret Thatcher. Successful students explained how the author was affected by modern feminism, often including as evidence Simone de Beauvoir’s book *The Second Sex*, or attempts to improve women’s equality in the workplace in the West, or the social effects of birth control. Other successful responses explained how the historical development of glasnost and general reforms made in the late Soviet Union affected the author by allowing her access to information in the late 1980s that would previously have been unobtainable behind the Iron Curtain. Student examples that were not successful often pointed to historical developments that occurred before the second half of the 1900s. These included the role of women in factories in the world wars, or women being kicked out of their factory jobs as the men returned from war. Other unsuccessful responses included explanations of women’s suffrage affecting the author.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Part C, students failed to use a historical development from the second half of the 1900s.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“One historical development in the second half of the 1900s that likely influenced the author’s perspective would be the development of the second wave feminist movement in Europe. The second wave of feminism was a movement centered around the idea that while women have succeeded in achieving suffrage, they have failed to achieve full equality to men and should continue to push for equal status. This ideology is reflected in Francine du Plessix Gray’s writing in this excerpt, where she focuses on the pay gap between men and women as well as the lack of female representation in high level professions, criticizing the Soviet Union for not creating professional equality which aligns with second wave feminist ideas.”</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Students would perform better on questions that ask about historical developments in the second half of the 1900s affecting women in both Eastern and Western Europe by using the resources available on AP Classroom covering the later parts of Unit 9. Unfortunately, the demands of a busy academic year and the very early date of the AP Euro exam in May could have resulted in teachers cutting short their study of Unit 9. This would have had an impact on the ability of students to answer Part C of this question.

Advice for teachers on improving student performance on the exam therefore includes not only assigning AP Classroom resources, such as AP Daily videos from unit 9.8 and 9.7, but also some practice MCQs and SAQs from these sections. In addition, it is strongly recommended for teachers not to leave the teaching of Unit 9 to the very last moment in their pacing guide. Planning a week or two of AP exam review at the end of the course just before the exam allows for some leeway to use a few of those days to cover fully Unit 9.

Another option is to include Unit 9 topics early and throughout the academic year. Students have an awareness of modern issues in society today, and the later parts of Unit 9 reference a European society and world similar to their own. Therefore, connecting earlier historical periods and units to Unit 9 in a meaningful way allows later content to be introduced earlier in the course. In addition, encouraging students to examine connections between periods in European history and similarities and differences in historical developments, such as women's roles and rights, is an excellent way to build those essential historical thinking skills.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Unit 9, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of women's roles in the Soviet Union after 1945.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this SAQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units' Personal Progress Checks.
- Unit 9 PCs and Topic questions offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of women's roles in Europe after 1945 and the Soviet Union.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about women's roles in the Soviet Union after 1945.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to women's roles in European society after 1945 and the Soviet Union can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an SAQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

## Short Answer Question 2

**Task:** Short Answer Question—Primary Source

**Topic:** Napoleonic Wars

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Part A</b>	1	0.47
<b>Part B</b>	1	0.50
<b>Part C</b>	1	0.38
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	1.35	

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Responses to Part A of the prompt were expected to describe the artist’s likely intended purpose for a Spanish engraving depicting a woman firing a cannon in the siege of the Spanish city of Zaragoza during the Napoleonic wars. Some of the successful responses described how the engraving was meant to portray Spanish nationalism during a time of foreign invasion, to demonstrate the immense bravery of the woman (Agustina de Aragón) as she defends her city against Napoleon’s troops, or to commemorate the Spanish strength and glory defending their homeland during the invasion. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 5.5 (The French Revolution’s effects) and 5.6 (Napoleon’s Rise, Dominance, and Defeat).

Responses in Part B of the prompt were expected to describe the broader historical context of the engraving. Some of the successful responses described how the engraving was a reaction to the Napoleonic wars during the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula when Napoleon was expanding his empire through conquest. Others discussed how Napoleon used his Grand Army to expand the ideals of the French Revolution to conquered territories, or how nationalism was used as a way to unite people in Spain and other conquered areas to resist the invasion of the French army. Some successful responses also described how the rise of Enlightenment ideals led to the discussion about the role that women should play in society. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 5.5 (The French Revolution’s effects) and 5.6 (Napoleon’s Rise, Dominance, and Defeat).

Responses in Part C of the prompt were expected to explain one way that events such as those referenced in the engraving affected European politics in the period after 1815. Some of the successful responses explained how the Congress of Vienna established the Concert of Europe to maintain a balance of power in Europe so that no one country (or leader of a country) could dominate Europe the way that France or Napoleon did. Other responses focused on how Metternich enforced conservative principles or policies to combat liberal or nationalistic movements, or how the Congress of Vienna led to conservatism reestablishing monarchs, like the Bourbons, back on the throne to combat the liberal ideas of the French Revolution and Napoleon. Some responses also explained that because of the participation of women in the French Revolution or the Napoleonic Wars, a feminist movement emerged to push for voting and political rights for women. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 5.7 (The Congress of Vienna), 5.9 (Continuity and Change in 18th Century States), 6.5 (The Concert of Europe and European Conservatism), and 6.6 (Reactions and Revolutions).

### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

In Part A many students found it challenging to successfully describe the artist’s intended purpose; many were just describing what they saw in the engraving. The most successful responses described the likely purpose of the engraving as a way to stir Spanish nationalism to unite Spain to fight against the invasion of

Napoleon’s troops by showing the woman fighting bravely for her country. The point could be earned in a variety of ways. Many others described how this painting was meant to commemorate the Spanish victory over the French or to celebrate the bravery of the woman defending her city against the French.

In Part B the students were generally successful in describing the broader historical context of the engraving. The point could be earned in a variety of ways. The most successful responses described the engraving as part of the Napoleonic wars when Napoleon’s Grand Army invaded Spain as a part of his conquests to expand the French empire. Some successful responses described Napoleon’s conquest of territory to expand revolutionary ideas. Others emphasized that Napoleon wanted to expand his empire beyond the European continent but was stopped because of the failure of an invasion in Russia, which built on earlier failures in Spain. Many students discussed how nationalism was on the rise in the countries conquered by Napoleon as they sought to end his occupation of their lands.

In Part C, many students were successful in explaining how events such as those referenced in the engraving affected European politics after 1815. The most successful responses explained how Metternich established the Concert of Europe during the Congress of Vienna to keep a balance of power after the defeat of Napoleon. Some responses addressed how conservatism was used after Napoleon was defeated to stop liberal and nationalistic movements. Some responses recognized that while conservatism was used to stop nationalistic movements, conservative leaders such as Metternich could not fully stop the rise of nationalism, as evidenced by the revolutions of 1848.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part A, the responses just described what they saw in the image, not linking it to the purpose of the engraving.</li> <li>• “it details what seems to be a woman on top of a passed out man, steering a cannon towards the enemy.”</li> <li>• In Part A, some responses merely restated information that was in the title of the engraving (which described the “successful defense of the siege of Zaragoza”).</li> <li>• In Part A, some responses mistakenly said the purpose of the engraving was to show women’s roles were changing in society.</li> <li>• “this image shows femanist ideals in the napolionic wars by showing a women on a battlefield capturing one of naoplions army, witch shows an increased role for women in european society.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The intended purpose of the engraving was to project Spanish nationalism and pride during a time of foreign conquest. In the engraving, a women demonstrates immense bravery, as she successfully defends against a mob of Napoleon’s armies invading the Spanish city, Zaragoza. Given that the engraving was painted by Spanish artists, it highlights a desire to display Spanish strength and glory despite foreign enemies attempting to take the state over.”</li> <li>• “one intended purpose of the engraving was to support spanish nationalism. The illustrations were commisioned by the spanish commander who won the battle. This proves that the engraving was made to support spanish nationalism because the general wants support and strong soanish nationalism in the fight against Napoleon because he is a general fighting for the spanish.”</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part B, the responses described the historical context too broadly, or with statements that were too vague.</li> <li>• “Historical context for this event was The rise of Napoleon and The Napoleonic wars”</li> <li>• “One of the historical context that this engraving depicted was Napoleoan conquering much of Europe.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The broader historical context for the events depicted in the engraving was the Napoleonic Wars that terrorized Europe following the French Revolution. After Napoleon successfully seizes the French throne and establishes the first empire, he held great aspirations to expand his empire across Europe. Consequently, he initiated several Napoleonic wars to spread his liberalist ideals, including one in Spain. Despite his conquests, many states such as Spain feverishly fought back as shown in the engraving with a Spanish women defending Zaragoza against Napoleon's armies.”</li> <li>• “The event depicted in the engraving is part of Napoleon's various foreign seiges during his ruling of France as Emperor and 1st Consolate. These foreign seiges were part of an extensive militaristic and nationalist campaign to promote his absolute rule over France as well as radical nationalism throughout Europe as seen with Russian campaigns.”</li> <li>• “The Napoleonic Wars were a series of wars in which Napoleon and the French armies tried to claim territories all around Europe but were met with resistance from many countries. The countries extreme nationalism and resistance to Napoleon led to full support from all members of society, women included, to resist foreign occupancy from Napoleon and his armies.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part C, the responses did not fully explain what they meant by the concept of “balance of power” and/or how that affected European politics in the period after 1815.</li> <li>• “The events showed int his image lead to The vienna conference and establishing a balance of power. This battle and many others lead to the downfall of Napoleon. This inturn caused the conference of Vienna between the winning powers of the Napoleonic wars who established a balance of power.”</li> <li>• In Part C, the explanations of events that affected European politics in the period after 1815 were too vague.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One way the Napoleonic wars affected European politics after 1815 was the establishment of the Concert of Europe and the spread of conservatism. Horrified by the Napoleonic Wars, Austrian leader, Klemens von Metternich met with other European leaders to form the concert system. The concert system mandated the great powers to promote political conservatism and fight back against nationalistic and liberal movements. The conservative movement demonstrated a change from pre-1815 European politics where the continent began witnessing a wave of liberalism and nationalism.”</li> </ul>

- “These events would inspire the Congress of Vienna which would result in the returning of Europe to the way it was previous to Napoleon’s rule.”

- “In the period after 1815, European powers were forced to rebalance the power in Europe following the devastation from the Napoleonic Wars. The engraving represents the loss of life and destruction that occurred throughout Europe due to Napoleon’s military advancements. After his defeat, the remaining European powers signed the Treaty of Vienna which reallocated lands in Europe and resettled the balance of power in Europe. After this, politics became more conservative as nations wanted to remain peaceful and avoid further rebellions and fighting.”

***Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?***

Practicing sourcing and contextualization of a variety of primary source documents, but particularly images, political cartoons, etc., would greatly benefit students when they encounter images on an exam. Practicing with time-specific or overlapping time periods would help the students situate the source in a historical era. With a visual stimulus as the prompt, students should be taught to not just describe what they see in the source, but to make sure they carefully read the prompt so that they can be more successful in their response. Students should be taught not to merely restate facts they find in the title or the gloss of the source, but to concentrate on how those facts will help them answer the questions. Having students examine primary source documents together as a group to discuss and answer sourcing questions is a good way to get them ready to answer sourcing questions on the exam.

***What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?***

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Units 5 and 6, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this SAQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units’ Personal Progress Checks (PCs).
- The PCs and Topic questions in Units 5 and 6 offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about the French Revolution, Napoleonic wars, the Concert of Europe, and ideologies such as conservatism, nationalism, and liberalism.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an SAQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

### Short Answer Question 3

**Task:** Short Answer Question—No Stimulus

**Topic:** Motivation, Change, and Impact of European Expansion in the Years between 1450 and 1900

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Part A</b>	1	0.74
<b>Part B</b>	1	0.43
<b>Part C</b>	1	0.38
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	1.54	

#### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Responses to Part A of the prompt were expected to offer an accurate and historically defensible description of one motivation for European expansion from 1450 to 1600. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 1.7 (Rivals on the World Stage), 1.8 (Colonial Expansion and Columbian Exchange), 1.10 (The Commercial Revolution), and 1.11 (Causation in the Renaissance and Age of Discovery).

Responses to Part B of the prompt were expected to provide an accurate description of a change in European expansion between 1600 to 1700. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 1.7 (Rivals on the World Stage), 1.8 (Colonial Expansion and Columbian Exchange), 1.10 (The Commercial Revolution), and 1.11 (Causation in the Renaissance and Age of Discovery), 3.1 (Contextualizing State Building), and 3.4 (Economic Development and Mercantilism).

Responses to Part C of the prompt were expected to provide an accurate explanation of how European expansion affected the European economy between the years 1700 to 1900. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 5.2 (The Rise of Global Markets), 5.3 (Britain’s Ascendancy), 7.6 (New Imperialism: Motivations and Methods), and 7.7 (Imperialism’s Global Effects).

#### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

In Part A, most student responses were successful in describing one motivation for expansion during the period 1450 to 1600. Responses commonly described how the motto “God, glory, and gold” resulted in Spanish and Portuguese expansion into the Americas or incentives to develop new trade routes for the spice trade in Asia. Some responses included the development of mercantilism as context for the increased desire for gold and silver. Less common were responses that described an increase in political power as a motivation, particularly with Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain.

In Part B, a little less than half of the responses were successful in describing one change in European expansion between 1600 and 1700. Examples of descriptions of change include the development of the transatlantic/triangular trade (or the increased use of enslaved labor); the rise of mercantilism among competing European empires; the dominance of the Dutch and British East India companies (including the impact of joint-stock companies); the emergence of British and French settlement in North America (including the growth of settler colonialism); and the decline of Spain and Portugal as expansionist powers.

In Part C, around forty percent of the responses were successful in explaining the effect of European expansion on the European economy in the years between 1700 and 1900. Examples of the effects on the European economy include the importation of raw materials from the colonies as essential to industrial production; the increased availability of new raw materials and new goods that contributed to the development of capitalism; the emergence of new markets outside of Europe for finished European-produced goods; the increased importance of African raw materials (due to the “Scramble for Africa”) that led to increased wealth in Europe; and the growth of a capitalistic commercial class who benefitted from increased manufacturing and trade of products borne out of expansion.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Part A, many responses identified general terms such as “wealth,” “trade,” and “power” as motivations without adequate elaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“One significant motivation for European overseas expansion from 1450 to 1600 was the desire to extract wealth in the form of bullion as well as natural resources from overseas colonies.”</li> <li>“Many European nations believed in mercantilism which is that there is finite amount of wealth (gold) and each nation wanted to have the most of it. This rush to accumulate the most gold/wealth led to Europe’s overseas expansion.”</li> <li>“One significant motivation for European overseas expansion between 1450-1600 was to spread Catholicism to the New World. European missionaries desired to spread Catholicism and “save” the natives who lived there.”</li> <li>“One motivation for European expansions overseas in the period 1450 to 1600 was the goal for Spain and Portugal to reach the Spice Islands, this led to Portugal setting up trade routes along Africa and India and Spain finding more land in the Americas which led to the discovery of gold and silver.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Part B, many responses lacked historical evidence that was directly connected to the period 1600 to 1700.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“One significant change in European overseas expansion in the period 1600 to 1700 was the establishment of the slave trade. This is evident as colonized parts of the Americas had established plantations, like those in Brazil, that required workers that wouldn't contract disease like the native population. This led to the shipment of Millions of Africans from Africa to</li> </ul>

	<p>the Americas, as they were used as free labor in order to maximize plantations profits.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “European overseas expansion from 1600 to 1700 shifted to be oriented towards exerting colonial dominance as opposed to the previous popularity that exploration to locate new trade routes had. This meant that the establishment of colonies became a priority for European states, as reflected with the rise of entities such as the Dutch East India company or VOC.”</li> <li>• “Europeans began establishing more permanent settlements and trading relationships, which would only grow in the 1800s. The British and French began establishing more permanent settlements in India at this time, and the Dutch also were establishing trading relationships through the Dutch East India Company.”</li> <li>• “A significant change in European overseas expansion was the development of settler colonies such as those created by the British. Colonies where Europeans travelled to the Americas and created new homes and cities became the primary goal for colonization for powers such as England and France.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Part B, many responses erroneously claimed that technologies such as the compass, lateen sail, and astrolabe changed European expansion after 1600.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One significant change in European overseas expansion was the continual development of new maps to assist in expansion. At the beginning of overseas expansion in Europe, there were maps of the world that were not entirely accurate due to the lack of inclusion of the continent of present-day North and South America.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Part C, many responses did not adequately explain the impact of expansion on the European economy between 1700 and 1900 but rather described historical developments outside of Europe or prior to 1700.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Cash crops such as cotton and sugar from the Americas, as well as finished goods such as textiles from India, provided Europeans with access to inexpensive consumer goods that had never been present before, partially contributing to the rise of consumerism in western markets.”</li> <li>• “These [sugar cane and tobacco] plantations made them very rich very quickly adding to Europe’s overall wealth amongst other continents. The new natural resources allowed for Europe to open up a new market in the global economy.”</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Over the period of 1700-1900 the territories colonized by Europe would bolster their economies as they served as suppliers for raw materials fueling the industrialization of Europe, and the growing capitalist consumerism sentiment.”</li></ul> |
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**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Practicing the historical thinking skills of continuity and change over time within and between historical periods would greatly benefit students during the exam when they are presented with the task. Students are frequently required on the AP European History Exam to track continuity and change in historical developments over disparate periods.

For this particular SAQ, students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of historical evidence in the discrete periods of 1450–1600, 1600–1700, and 1700–1900. To build periodization knowledge over the five-hundred-plus-year timeframe of the course, teachers may wish to provide students with a study guide of important historical periods and key dates. These periods can be incorporated into quizzes throughout the year and into review sessions in the weeks and days prior to the AP Exam. For example, students will benefit from remembering approximate dates of early imperialism (e.g., c. 1450 to 1650) and the “New Imperialism” (e.g., c. 1870 to 1914) as a means of analyzing continuities and change between the two periods.

Likewise, as the Commercial Revolution typically appears on the exam, students will benefit from reviewing the highlights of the Commercial Revolution between the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. These highlights include the age of discovery and exploration, new international trade networks, mercantilism and colonialism, banking, capitalism, and later, industrialism and consumerism.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Units 1, 3, 5, and 7, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of how European imperialism changed over time.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this SAQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units’ Personal Progress Checks (PCs).
- The PCs and Topic questions in Units 1, 3, 5 and 7 offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of European overseas imperialism.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about European imperialism across various time periods.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to European imperialism can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an SAQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

## Short Answer Question 4

**Task:** Short Answer Question—No Stimulus

**Topic:** Description of Two Phases of the Industrial Revolution and Effect on Politics

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Part A</b>	1	0.37
<b>Part B</b>	1	0.75
<b>Part C</b>	1	0.47
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	1.58	

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Responses to Part A of the prompt were expected to describe one significant feature of European industrialization in the period 1750 to 1800. Acceptable responses could characterize industrialization in this early period in terms of inventions, geographic settings, products, or fuel sources, but they had to have occurred within the specific period to receive the point. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 3.3 (Continuities and Changes to Economic Practice and Development), 6.1 (Contextualizing Industrialization and Its Origins and Effects), and 6.2 (The Spread of Industry Throughout Europe).

Responses to Part B of the prompt were expected to describe one significant change in industrialization in the period 1800 to 1900. Acceptable responses could describe the creation of new machines, new technologies of transportation, rapid urbanization to accommodate factory work, or the changing role of women and children in industrial work outside the home. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 6.2 (The Spread of Industry Throughout Europe), 6.3 (Second Wave Industrialization and Its Effects), and 6.4 (Social Effects of Industrialization).

Responses to Part C of the prompt were expected to explain one way that industrialization affected European politics in the nineteenth century. Acceptable responses could explain the emergence of labor unions, political parties, political ideologies, and efforts by political leaders either to free up the hands of factory owners or to regulate conditions for their workers. Alternatively, the prompt could be interpreted in terms of international politics, rather than domestic, but tensions among European powers in Europe and around the globe had to be connected to the processes and needs of industrialization. These concepts are addressed in the course framework in topics 6.7 (Ideologies of Change and Reform Movements), 6.8 (19th-Century Social Reform), 6.9 (Institutional Responses and Reform), and 7.3 (National Unification and Diplomatic Tensions).

### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

In Part A, most student responses were successful in describing a feature of early industrialization. The most common responses described inventions such as the spinning jenny or Britain's leading role in early industrial innovations. Many responses mistakenly attributed features of later industrialization to this earlier period (e.g., urbanization and the expansion of factory labor, the expansion of railroads, the development of heavy industry).

For Part B, responses typically described specific concepts and examples related to a change in industrialization in the period 1800 to 1900, such the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, the Bessemer

process, the internal combustion engine, and multiple acts of the British Parliament regulating industrial work.

For Part C, student responses were generally successful in explaining how industrialization affected European politics in the nineteenth century. Successful responses typically focused on the development of labor unions or government reforms that sought to improve the conditions of labor. Unsuccessful responses often did not sufficiently explain how industrialization affected “politics,” even though this term was interpreted broadly for Part C.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part A, some responses incorrectly described later developments, such as the creation of railroad networks by steam locomotive (after the 1820s) and the Bessemer process for steel production (1850s), as occurring in this earlier period.</li> <li>• In Part A, responses often did not acknowledge Great Britain’s leading role in industrial development over the period 1750–1800, and they instead described industrialism as a Europe-wide phenomenon.</li> <li>• In Part A, while many responses described urbanization, the details concerning it were often derived from 19th-century contexts, sometimes from the United States, and they did not describe the reasons for migration to cities (i.e., for factory work).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One significant feature of industrialization in Europe in the period of 1750 to 1800 was new machinery made to quicken old production methods. Previously, European production was mostly known by the putting out system where production was split into separate parts, mostly individual and at home work. During the period of 1750 to 1800, though, new machines such as the water frame and spinning jenny made production go by much faster and much less personally. Where people used to do individual work in their homes, these new machines required much more space and more hands to work them.”</li> <li>• “One significant feature of industrialization in Europe in the period of 1750 to 1800 was the textile industry. 1750 to the 1800s was the period of the First Industrial Revolution in which inventors like Kay, Arkwright, and Cartwright invented new technologies for spinning cotton and the overall production of textiles (spinning jenny, mule etc.). These technologies like the Water Frame also introduced the factory system, all of which facilitated the growth of the textile industry, especially in Britain.”</li> <li>• “One significant feature of Industrialization in Europe in the period 1750 to 1800 was the fact that Industrialization was mainly only in Britain, and not the eastern states. This was partially due to the fact that Britain had an abundance of iron and coal, and many eastern states did not. Additionally, Britain had favorable governmental policies that encouraged innovation, with</li> </ul>

	<p>organizations such as the British Royal Society for the arts and sciences granting rewards for innovation.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Part B, some responses incorrectly described 18th-century inventions like the spinning jenny and the seed drill or 20th-century inventions like nuclear power plants, airplanes, radio, and television as occurring in the 19th century.</li> <li>• Some responses described industrialization as a Europe-wide phenomenon, with equal industrial advances by the newly unified Germany and Russia occurring by the late 19th century.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One change in industrialization in Europe from 1800-1900 was the advancements of previous inventions. One example is the improvement of the steam engine. The locomotive engine was invented during the first industrial revolution, and later improved by Watts, to make the more-modern steam engine. This improvement revolutionized transportation and created more opportunities for travel and labor.”</li> <li>• “One significant change in industrialization in the period 1800 to 1900 was the increase in production of heavy machinery and metal based goods using the Bessemer process, rather than textile goods. This change in production came with an increase in military weapons, new heavy machinery that could increase factory production speed, and railways that could transport goods over land as fast as it could overseas now.”</li> <li>• “Once significant change in industrialization in the period 1800-1900 is that industrialization spread from Britain to the rest of continental Europe. This was particularly significant in the German states and subsequently the unified Germany after 1871, although it was significantly slower in reaching Eastern Europe where feudalism was still prevalent.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part C, some responses mentioned strikes, labor unrest, or general discontent, but they did not offer specific details or explain how they were effects of industrialization.</li> <li>• Several responses identified the labor of women and children as a topic of political concern, but they did not specify how investigations and legislation attempted to remedy—or not—these particular abuses.</li> <li>• Other responses mentioned the New Imperialist and colonial ventures in Africa and Asia, but they did not explain how these were affected by the need for raw resources in industrial processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Industrialization effected politics through the rise of Labour movements and strikes. In Britain during the industrial era many workers would go on strike they wanted more protection from their government. This then evolved into the Chartists movement who along with demanding greater protections for workers also demanded the vote for workers. Eventually the British government would acquiesce to their demands and allow the workers to vote. This is significant as it shows how the urban working class was able to influence their nations policies and help give rise to mass politics through greater political participation.”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “One way industrialization affected European politics was that it brought child labor into question. Factory owners advocated for child labor, since they could pay children a lesser wage, as well as children being naturally smaller and able to reach small cavities like in coal mines or other tight spaces. This impacted European politics since acts started to pass determining when and how long children could work along with debates on if children should work at all.”</li><li>• “Industrialization also began to affect European politics during the period from 1800 to 1900 by creating rivalries between states for control of overseas colonies. For example, the Scramble for Africa during the 1800s was a period in which different European powers vied for control of the African continent, which had a plentiful abundance of materials such as rubber and ivory. Thus, the Berlin Conference was necessary in order to establish precedents for African colonization and prevent conflict. Therefore, European politics were increasingly influenced by colonization and the need to secure raw goods for industrial processes from 1800 - 1900.”</li></ul>
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***Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?***

Because Parts A and B of the prompt were bounded by date ranges, it would be helpful to place a few key dates on a timeline, and it would also be good to show maps of the relative sophistication of railroad networks in western Europe, particularly in Britain, and southern and eastern Europe in the mid-19th century.

Teachers could also draw on multiple media forms to illustrate the differences between industrialization in the two periods, and also to provide relatable human experiences for those suffering or benefiting from industrialization. For example, a drawing of Richard Arkwright’s original patent for the water frame from 1769 could be contrasted with a schematic or video presentation of the Bessemer process at work. Moreover, the social, environmental, and political effects of industrialization could be illustrated with reference to works of literature.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Unit 6, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of European industrialization.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this SAQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units' Personal Progress Checks (PCs).
- The PCs and Topic questions in Unit 6 offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of industrialization in Europe.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about industrialization and political responses to it in the nineteenth century.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related industrialization can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an SAQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

## Document-Based Question 1

**Task:** Document-Based Question

**Topic:** French Revolution

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Thesis/Claim</b>	1	0.83
<b>Contextualization</b>	1	0.67
<b>Evidence from Documents</b>	2	1.65
<b>Evidence Beyond Documents</b>	1	0.42
<b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>	1	0.38
<b>Complex Understanding</b>	1	0.23
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	4.18	

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

The Document-Based Question (DBQ) is designed to evaluate the degree to which students can analyze various types of historical documents in constructing an essay that responds to the tasks required by the prompt. Responses are assessed on the extent to which they meet seven requirements specified in the generic rubric and the scoring guidelines.

The 2025 DBQ asked students to evaluate whether the French government upheld the ideals of the French Revolution during the period 1789 to 1794. Students were provided with seven documents (one of which was a print by an anonymous French artist) on which to base their responses. To answer this question, students needed an understanding of Unit 4 and Unit 5 topics relating to the Enlightenment as well as the causes and consequences of the French Revolution up to 1794.

Students were asked to write an essay containing a historically defensible thesis that takes a position and establishes a line of reasoning about whether the French government upheld the ideals of the Revolution during the period 1789 to 1794. The responses were expected to provide context by linking the French Revolution to a broader historical context relevant to the prompt (e.g., Enlightenment ideas about natural rights, political discontent under the French monarchy, or success of earlier revolutions, such as the American Revolution).

To earn one point for evidence, students were required to describe the content of at least three documents to address the ideals of the French Revolution. To earn two evidence points, students had to accurately use the content of at least four documents to support an argument or arguments related to whether the French government upheld the ideals of the French Revolution. To earn a third evidence point, students were required to use one additional relevant piece of specific historical evidence in support of an argument related to the prompt.

For at least two documents, students were expected to identify and explain how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument associated with the French government's response to the ideals of the French Revolution from 1789 to 1794.

Finally, responses were required to demonstrate a complex understanding of whether or not the French government upheld the ideals of the French Revolution. There were many possible paths to earn the point for complex understanding. For example, most responses this year that earned a point for demonstrating a complex understanding did so by effectively using all seven documents in support of one or more arguments related to the prompt. Another way to earn a point for complex understanding is by effectively sourcing four documents. Other paths to earning the point for complex understanding include analyzing multiple variables

or causes, linking arguments to change and continuity over time, making relevant and insightful connections within and across time periods or geographical areas, or qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence. Occasionally responses earned a point for demonstrating complex understanding by using the documents as well as outside evidence to make a nuanced comparison of the French Revolution to other revolutions or intellectual movements.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

Most responses attempted to write a thesis in the introduction or conclusion, and most were successful at providing a historically defensible claim with a line of reasoning that took a stand about the French government's stance on maintaining the ideals of the French Revolution from 1789 to 1794. Occasionally, the thesis in the conclusion was better than the thesis in the introduction. Often, the thesis was contained either at the beginning or the end of a long contextualization paragraph in the introduction. In some instances, the responses merely restated the prompt or did not provide a line of reasoning; in fewer instances, responses included a historically indefensible thesis. Occasionally, responses that did not earn a point for a viable thesis were still able to develop an argument or line of reasoning over the course of their document analysis and earn both evidence points for the use of four documents in support of an argument or arguments.

Over half of the responses successfully described a context relevant to the background or results of the French Revolution. The most common types of contextualization situated the French Revolution in the context of Enlightenment ideas about natural rights or linked the start of the French Revolution to Third Estate discontent with the monarchy or France's Old Regime. Although context can be located anywhere within the response, it was more commonly found in the introductory paragraph.

Most of the responses were successful at describing the content of at least three documents relevant to the prompt. Over half of the responses successfully used the content of at least four documents to support an argument or arguments in response to the prompt. Almost half of the responses successfully linked specific evidence beyond the documents to an argument in response to the prompt. Most evidence beyond the documents was linked to Enlightenment thinkers, changes from the liberal to the radical phase of the revolution, or the Haitian Revolution. Because responses were only required to use four documents in support of arguments related to the prompt, argument development was more extensive.

Fewer responses were awarded points for document sourcing and demonstrating complex understanding. Although the language associated with sourcing often appears, responses frequently substituted document summary and source attribution for document analysis in terms of historical situation, intended audience, purpose, and point of view. Successful sourcing most often occurred with document 2 (for audience or purpose) or document 4 (for historical situation or POV). Only a very small number of responses earned the point for sourcing four documents correctly. A small percentage of responses qualified or modified the original argument with a sustained discussion of the way that the revolutionary government upheld the ideals of the French Revolution in the moderate or liberal phase of the revolution but abandoned those ideals in the radical phase of the French Revolution. Most responses earning the point for complex understanding did this by effectively using all seven documents in support of arguments related to the prompt.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

Students did not demonstrate many misconceptions about this DBQ. While the number of errors was smaller than in past years, students occasionally were not awarded points for context or evidence beyond the documents. Unacceptable context was often too far in the past, too general, or just a passing phrase or reference. Unacceptable evidence beyond the documents was primarily out of the time period of the question or not adequately related to an argument linked to the prompt. Most documents were accessible to the students. Document 2 was sometimes misinterpreted by students who thought that women had gained rights by 1791; some students also found Document 7 confusing and tried to link it to an argument about women’s rights rather than to an argument about abolition.

There were various ways to relate the prompt to evidence beyond the documents. Successful use of evidence beyond the documents often linked the arguments concerning the French government and the ideals of the French Revolution to the actions of the Committee of Public Safety during the Reign of Terror, to the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers that were upheld or ignored by the French revolutionary government, or to specific actions of revolutionary leaders. However, other attempts at this point failed to provide specific historical details relevant to the topic or argument, repurposed passages from the documents, or used evidence beyond the documents that was unacceptable because it was out of the time period of the prompt or was irrelevant. The sourcing point continues to be challenging for students, and a significant portion of the responses did not earn this point. In addition, students often used the language associated with sourcing by referencing a document’s point of view, audience, or purpose but then merely summarized the content of the document, discussed the tone of a document, or provided attribution without explaining how the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience was relevant to an argument.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students think that using the words associated with sourcing (e.g. point of view, audience, purpose, or historical situations) is all that is required to get credit for sourcing.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“So, when in document 6 it is claimed that the French government (run by the Jacobins at this point) is putting the wants of the people in government before what is best for France, this shows that the French government is not upholding General Will, one of the core ideals of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution. (ANALYSIS) Document 6 was written by Charlotte Corday, a political activist who was extremely anti-Jacobin. The intended audience of document 6 was the people of France who were not Jacobins, who were being persecuted and lived in fear of the Jacobins deeming them 'enemies of the Revolution'. Its purpose was to call those people to not stand for this oppression and fear, and rather to do something about the radicals' takeover of the French government.”  <i>(The discussion of document 6 provides a sufficient explanation of the intended audience and purpose of the source to count toward the sourcing point.)</i></li></ul>

- In what may be suggestive of a knowledge gap, students were less likely to show how the government response to ideals of the revolution shifted over time. Most students instead focused on one stance and defended that with evidence from documents. More sophisticated responses were able to explain the changing government policies concerning the ideals of the revolution.
- “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen is an example of Enlightenment ideals in the revolution. This is the continuation of John Locke’s ideas of natural rights and right of private property. As the revolution was started as a rebellion against the Old Regime, a system of nobles, kings, and their special benefits, the stance this document takes against social distinctions also makes sense. The French Constitution was the Declaration but taken a step further. Its defense of the right to practice any religion makes sense from the point of view of an Enlightened document as Enlightenment thinkers advocated for religious toleration, witnessing the horrors of the Wars of Religion. These two documents both make clear that there were no special benefits to being a noble or clergy, a clear step away from the Old Regime, and that no one was above the law.  
  
The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen did not however apply to women. As a first wave feminist, de Gouges had to argue against the ideas of separate spheres, an idea by Rousseau, an Enlightenment thinker. Although the Enlightenment was based on reason and logic, its philosophy did not extend to women and although de Gouges used the same reasoning as the French National Assembly, she was not widely successful. With the French National Assembly firmly in power, two distinct factions formed, the Jacobins and Girondists. Vergniaud’s warning, from the point of view of a less radical revolutionary, makes sense as the gradual radical takeover of the French government ensues. This hostile view of the Jacobins is also present in Corday’s manifesto. Her references to Robespierre and the “bloody throne” refers to the Reign of Terror. The breakdown of Enlightenment ideals is evident during this period with the establishment of the Department of Public Affairs and public executions happening without trial.”

*(The response quoted above earned 1 point for demonstrating complex understanding for a sustained argument that contrasts the French government's early upholding of its ideals with the absence of rights for women and the eventual dissolution of the government into factions.)*

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Teachers should instruct students to write a thesis that makes a claim directly related to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning. Teachers should remind students that the thesis needs to be discrete, appearing in the introduction or the conclusion and that it should be responding to the question with not only a claim or argument but also a line of reasoning that will then be used to support that argument. In addition, as a step toward demonstrating complex understanding, a thesis that presents two sides of an argument often helps guide the response toward a greater level of sophistication. Reinforcing these skills through the use of practice DBQs in class is generally an excellent teaching tool.

Teachers should instruct students to provide historical contextualization in the first paragraph and/or in the conclusion. Many successful responses included contextualization in the opening paragraph prior to the thesis. Stronger responses had contextualization in both the first and the last paragraphs.

Although contextualization must rise above the level of a passing phrase or reference, students must be careful not to include all outside evidence in an introductory paragraph or in any paragraph which is not linked to the development of an argument. This evidence will be counted as contextualization only and cannot later be counted as EBD if it is restated in body paragraphs linked to argument development.

Teachers should continue to instruct students to accurately use at least four of the seven documents to support an argument in the body of the essay. It is helpful to the reader if the student identifies which document they are referencing either through attribution of the source or in a parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence, or both. Supporting an argument ideally involves placing similar documents in a body paragraph that follows a topic sentence that states an argument. Teachers can again practice this throughout the year by adding to practice DBQ exercises, asking students to demonstrate which documents they would use to illustrate which argument in their thesis. Students should also be taught to paraphrase rather than quote documents, so that is obvious that the response is demonstrating understanding and document use rather than merely quoting.

In guiding students on sourcing, teachers should remind students to identify and explain the motivations of particular authors, the purpose of the document, the audience the document might be addressing, and the historical situation or context of the document. This can be achieved by doing regular primary source exercises throughout the academic year. Practice DBQs can be used exclusively for sourcing. After a DBQ has been graded, teacher feedback in class and individually can involve asking students to find as many of the four types of sourcing for each document as possible.

Within the first quarter of school, teachers should use the DBQ rubric to introduce the new paths to earning the point for complex understanding. Once greater familiarity with paths to complex understanding is established, students can work with partners and then alone practicing writing geared to earning the point for complex understanding beginning with the easier paths such as using all seven documents in support of an argument and progressing to more difficult paths involving the development of a nuanced argument.

***What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?***

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Units 4 and 5, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of the French Revolution as well as with the skills students need to successfully respond to a DBQ.
- In particular, topics related to the Enlightenment and French Revolution would provide useful starting points.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this DBQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units' Personal Progress Checks.
- Unit 4 and 5 PCs and Topic questions offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of the French Revolution.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about the French Revolution.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of a DBQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

## Long Essay Question 2

**Task:** Long Essay Question

**Topic:** The Protestant Reformation in England and in France

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Thesis</b>	1	0.67
<b>Contextualization</b>	1	0.80
<b>Evidence</b>	2	1.39
<b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>	2	0.96
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	3.71	

### *What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?*

The Long Essay Question (LEQ) asks students to formulate a thesis/argument in response to a prompt about a particular historical development or episode in European history. In 2025, each LEQ asked students to evaluate the most significant difference between two events or processes in European history. LEQs require students to address historical context, formulate arguments, utilize evidence, and display an ability to employ historical reasoning skills.

In the case of LEQ 2, responses were expected to evaluate the most significant difference between the Protestant Reformation in England and in France. Responses needed to state a thesis that made a claim about the most significant difference between the Reformation in these two countries and also establish a clear line of reasoning for evaluating this claim. In addition, responses were expected to situate the topic of the prompt in a broader historical context, namely by describing a meaningful connection between historical events, developments, or processes that occurred before, during, or after the Reformation Era. Responses also needed to demonstrate specific knowledge of content addressed above all in Unit 2 (Reformation), but also in Unit 1 (topic 1.5, the New Monarchies) and Unit 3 (topic 3.2, English Civil War and Glorious Revolution, topic 3.7, Absolutist Approaches to Power). Responses were expected both to provide examples of specific evidence of events or developments marking the Reformation in England and France and use this evidence to support arguments related to the Reformation in England and France.

Responses were expected to use historical reasoning to structure an argument that addressed the prompt. Although this particular prompt encouraged students to frame their responses in terms of a comparison (England vs. France), the responses could also have been organized in terms of other forms of historical reasoning (e.g., change over time or causation). Finally, responses were expected to demonstrate a more complex understanding of differences between the Reformation in England and in France. This demonstration could take multiple forms. Responses could have evaluated more than one type of significant difference, for instance, differences in Protestant religious life but also in the nature of Protestant church-state relations. Responses could have expanded the argument by examining similarities with respect to the Reformation in England and France. Another approach would have been to effectively use four or more specific pieces of relevant evidence to support and develop a more sophisticated argument. Finally, responses could add nuance and complexity by extending the arguments in response to the prompt by connecting them to developments in other geographical eras or periods, for example, by explaining how the Reformation in England and France differed from the Reformation in the German lands or by discussing how acceptance of religious pluralism gained ground in Europe after 1700. To measure the responses' ability to demonstrate each of these key understandings and skills, each response was assessed in terms of four categories: thesis, contextualization, evidence, and analysis and reasoning.

**How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?**

Most responses to this LEQ demonstrated some ability to assert and then evaluate a significant difference between the Reformation in England and in France. They also successfully situated the topic of the prompt in a broader historical context, most commonly by discussing Martin Luther’s launching of the Protestant Reformation with the publication of his 95 Theses and the heightened diffusion of new religious ideas and texts thanks to the printing press.

Most responses demonstrated an ability to discuss the Reformation in England and France with some detail. Many responses explained that whereas under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I England made a form of Protestantism (Anglicanism) the state religion, the French state resisted the Reformation, to the point of subjecting French Protestants (Huguenots/Calvinists) to persecution and even death, most notably during the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre. Other responses distinguished between the Reformation’s impact on religious life in England and France or asserted a difference in the levels of violence accompanying the spread of Protestantism in the two countries. Still other responses noted how England evolved towards a policy of limited religious tolerance (culminating with the Glorious Revolution), whereas under Louis XIV toleration of Protestantism in France (established with the Edict of Nantes) became a victim of absolutist rule. Given this general depth of content knowledge, it was not surprising that many responses showed an ability to develop their arguments about the Reformation in the two countries with the support of specific, relevant evidence. Most responses demonstrated an ability to frame an argument using historical reasoning by organizing the argument in terms of a comparison between developments in England and in France.

Many responses also successfully demonstrated a more complex understanding of the prompt. Most frequently, they did this by using multiple pieces of evidence to add depth and/or nuance to the discussion of the Reformation in England, in France, or in both countries. But responses also demonstrated this complexity by considering different angles of the tensions between Protestants and Catholics in the two countries and by expanding the scope of their argument to include not just the sixteenth but also the seventeenth centuries. Other responses sought to underscore sovereigns’ efforts during the Reformation to steer a political course that was less dependent on religious concerns (e.g., the *politique* policies of Elizabeth I and Henri IV).

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some responses made a claim in the thesis but did not establish a line of reasoning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Although the protestant reformations in france and england were similar becuase they were both rejected by the catholic church, the difference between the protestent Reformation in England versus in France was that the protestents in France were a minority versus the national religion in England.”  <i>(The second part of the sentence asserts a valid claim that establishes a line of reasoning: it specifically states what was different in England and France.)</i></li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses did not describe a historical context that was clearly relevant to the prompt. Either they overlooked this expectation entirely, or they described a historical development that was potentially relevant (for example, the colonization of the Americas), but without making clear why the development was relevant to understanding the Reformation in England and/or France.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Protestantism, beginning in 1517 when Martin Luther posted the Ninety Five Theses, is a branch of Christianity. The Protestant Reformation was a separation from the Catholic Church, who had begun to sell indulgences as a way to avoid purgatory, and had much corruption. Martin Luther criticised these things, and the Christians who broke away from the Catholic Church were known as Protestants. It originally began in Germany, but spread to Switzerland, creating Calvinism with Zwingli and Calvin, the Anabaptists, Huguenots, and Anglican church, in addition to countless other groups.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response describes how Luther’s Ninety-Five theses effectively launched the Reformation, which then spread to many other areas of Europe in a variety of forms.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although some responses indicated a solid understanding of the beginnings of the Reformation, they had difficulty identifying evidence that was specific to the English and the French cases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Henry created the Church of England, declared Anglicanism as the official religion of England, and made himself the head of the church. Henry outlined this in the Acts of Supremacy in 1534.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response correctly identifies Henry VIII’s role in establishing a form of Protestantism, namely Anglicanism, as the state Church of England.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The growth of Calvinism in France was a bit of a sore spot for the strongly Catholic monarchy, and their existence was not received well, to say the least. With the result of the War of Three Henrys, Henry IV permitted Calvinist religion as long as it was outside Paris.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response correctly observes that Calvinism was the main form of Protestantism that prevailed in France and that Henry IV, via the Edict of Nantes, permitted Calvinist practice outside of Paris.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses struggled to use historical reasoning (even comparison) to structure the argument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The most significant difference between the Protestant Reformation in England and France were the intent behind them ... [introduction]</li> </ul>

	<p>The Protestant reformation in England was largely just a tool for Henry VIII Tudor to secure his successor ... [beginning of 2nd paragraph].</p> <p>France's Protestant reformation on the other hand, was a much different story. It was most definitely religiously motivated, and was much, much bloodier" [beginning of the 3rd paragraph].</p> <p><i>(The first lines of these three paragraphs create a structure that leads to the statement of the thesis in the introduction and then the development of two paragraphs that explicitly compare aspects of the Reformation in England and in France.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many responses had difficulty demonstrating an ability to develop an argument relevant to the prompt with nuance, complexity, or sophistication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Also during this time, the Holy Roman Empire had dealt with the Protestant Reformation with a compromise in the Treaty of Augsburg, and later Treaty of Westphalia, by letting the two official religions being Lutheranism, and Roman Catholicism, later added Calvinism after Westphalia. Which was different from both France's embracement of Catholicism, and England's of Anglicanism, with the Holy Roman Empire taking a compromise solution, being in the middle of the spectrum."</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response adds nuance to the understanding of the impact of the Reformation in England and in France by connecting these developments to the experiences of the territories of the Holy Roman Empire with the Reformation.)</i></p>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

After discussing what a thesis statement is, teachers should have students practice writing thesis statements that both make a specific claim in response to a prompt and establish a line of reasoning. Peer-review of these thesis statements provides a good way for students to understand better how to satisfy both expectations of a valid thesis. Teachers should also encourage students to write a conclusion for every essay, since this provides a valuable opportunity to rearticulate the essay's thesis.

Have students practice the LEQ by writing only an outline of the essay. This will help them to focus on structuring their essay to develop an argument based on a specific type of historical reasoning (comparison, causation, change over time, etc.)

***What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?***

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Units 1, 2, and 3 might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of the Reformation well as with the skills students need to successfully respond to an LEQ.
- In particular, topics related to the Reformation, New Monarchies, and the spread of technology such as the printing press would provide useful starting points.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this LEQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units' Personal Progress Checks (PCs).
- Unit 1, 2, and 3 PCs and Topic questions offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of the Reformation.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about the Reformation.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to the Reformation can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an LEQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

### Long Essay Question 3

**Task:** Long Essay Question

**Topic:** Differences between Approaches to the Arts in the Period from 1750 to 1850 and in the Period from 1850 to 1950

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Thesis</b>	1	0.51
<b>Contextualization</b>	1	0.60
<b>Evidence</b>	2	0.86
<b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>	2	0.69
<b>Overall Mean Score:</b>	2.65	

#### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

The Long Essay Question (LEQ) asks students to formulate a thesis/claim in response to a prompt about a particular historical development or episode in European history. LEQs require students to formulate arguments, utilize evidence, address historical context, and display an ability to employ historical reasoning skills. In 2025, each LEQ asked students to determine the most significant difference between two events or processes in European history. In the 2025 LEQ, the question asked students to evaluate the most significant difference in approaches to the arts in Europe during the periods 1750 to 1850 and 1850 to 1950.

Responses were expected to formulate arguments, utilize evidence, address historical context, and display an ability to employ historical reasoning skills. In the case of LEQ 3, responses were expected to demonstrate historical reasoning, particularly comparison, specifically analyzing the most significant difference in approaches to the arts in Europe during the periods 1750 to 1850 and 1850 to 1950. Responses were expected to make a historically defensible claim and provide a valid line of reasoning. Responses were expected to relate the topic of the prompt to the broader historical events, developments, or processes that occurred before, during, or continue after the time frame specified in the prompt. Responses were expected to provide specific examples of evidence relevant to the most significant difference in approaches to the arts in Europe during the periods 1750 to 1850 and 1850 to 1950 and to use this specific evidence to support an argument related to the approach to the arts in these two time periods.

Responses were expected to demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument that addressed the prompt, and although the prompt directed students toward the historical reasoning process of comparison, many responses framed their arguments using change over time between the two periods. Responses were also expected to demonstrate a complex understanding of the prompt, which could be achieved in multiple ways. Responses could explain multiple differences by analyzing how, in the earlier period, Enlightenment or Romantic art developed a focus on individualism, new techniques like perspective, and neoclassical themes, and contrast that with developments in Modernist or Abstract art. They could also focus on the differences in political, social, or economic influences and themes, noting a focus on the power and majesty of centralizing monarchs and nationalism, reactions to the Age of Anxiety and political propaganda, or shifts from realist to surrealist approaches to the arts. Another approach would have been to effectively use four or more specific pieces of relevant evidence to support and develop a more sophisticated argument. Responses were assessed on the extent to which they performed in the following four categories: thesis, contextualization, evidence, and analysis and reasoning.

**How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?**

Most responses to this question demonstrated some ability to identify and evaluate a significant difference in approaches to the arts in Europe between the periods 1750 to 1850 and 1850 to 1950. Most responses discussed the importance of relevant European art movements, such as Realism, Rococo, Baroque, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, etc., that were different from art styles and movements after 1850 such as academic painting, Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, Dadaism, and Futurism. They were also able to name specific new techniques (perspective, intense detail, focus on anatomy, shading), artists (Monet, Van Gogh, Picasso), artworks (portraits of Napoleon, *Water Lilies*, *Guernica*), as well as music (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi), and government propaganda (political cartoons, recruitment posters). Some responses were more nuanced than others, by addressing multiple differences and ranking them according to significance, or by including a counterargument which also explained similarities. Other responses attempted to qualify their argument by mentioning similarities as well as differences, suggesting that art continued to represent nationalist sentiments or celebrate political leaders. Some responses also used the historical reasoning skill of causality as well as similarities and differences, noting, for instance, that the French Revolution inspired nationalist approaches to the arts or that World War I contributed to nihilistic or abstract approaches to the arts. These responses frequently had multiple pieces of evidence supporting multiple arguments.

A smaller group of responses exhibited a lack of chronological understanding, discussing movements outside the time period, in particular approaches to the arts in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, or later twentieth century. Some responses also mislabeled movements (e.g., using the term “Renaissance” for the Enlightenment) or artists/artworks (e.g., Monet for Van Gogh). Other responses spoke about art in general or failed to provide specific examples of evidence in support of their claims about a significant difference in approaches to the arts over time in Europe during the period. There were also American examples (Pollock and Warhol) that were not sufficiently connected back to approaches to the arts in Europe.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some responses described art movements and paintings that predated the specified time periods of the prompt, or inaccurately attributed later paintings to periods within the specified time periods.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“From 1850-1950, Art was becoming more modern and less literal. What that means is styles like Dadaism were able to move into popularity and bring about mystery through the art and what it represented. However, art also had a completely different meaning in countries because in the midst of the World Wars, top fascist leaders built their regimes off the ability to please their people and stand as a symbol of strength. This would make artists approach their art with underlying political tones. This is mostly seen through propaganda.”</li></ul> <p><i>(The response correctly identifies Dadaism and political propaganda as examples of</i></p>

	<p><i>approaches to the arts in the twentieth century. Both examples are connected to the time period in a way that demonstrates a difference from the previous era.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses often narrated a series of events and linked them together with cause-and-effect language; however, they did not support an argument and instead told the story of how approaches to art developed across the time periods. Others were merely descriptive but did not frame or support an argument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Arts during Enlightenment shows the everyday life of common people instead of religious themes in the Medieval and Renaissance arts.</li> <li>• “Romanticism was a reaction of the Enlightenment and Industrialization. Romanticism focused more on the beauty of the nature instead of people nor religion. Romanticism arts focused on the nature such as sunsets, mountains, and rivers instead of humans being the main theme of the art during the Enlightenment.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response explicitly connects evidence of Romanticism as an approach to the arts as a reaction to the Enlightenment thus connecting this example to the argument.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “From 1850-1950 a new styles hit the art scene as conflict brewed and bubbled over. Surrealism was one of these movemnts. A turn away from reality is evident. The ideas of individuals such as Sigmund Freud was also an inspiration to crucial artists in this period such as Salvador Dalli. He would paint nonscenical dream scapes. He wanted to portray the real in a way that is unreal. His paintings woud make commentray on the passage of time and the new realties of life.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response explicitly connects Surrealism and Salvador Dali to the argument that approaches to the arts were different in this period as they represented a new style.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some responses used earlier art movements (Renaissance) incorrectly to describe Enlightenment or Romantic styles and themes or ascribing Enlightenment and Rococo to the twentieth century.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “From 1750-1850, Europe is exiting a stage of rebirth and chaos in the midst of trying to build values of different countries and battles about religion and beliefs. Artist would approach art realisitcally with each peace almost like a puzzle piece to the puzzle of all of history. Artists wanted their</li> </ul>

art to be more detailed and secular. They had a focus on drama and a lighter feel. For example in Rocco art, there were light colors and scenes made the viewer feel happier.”

*(The response explicitly distinguishes between approaches to the arts from the Renaissance as different from approaches to the arts during the Enlightenment by describing the desire to be more secular.)*

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Teachers should provide students with clear timelines for when specific art movements and related philosophical movements (e.g., the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernism) occurred. This will help them use art pieces, themes, movements, and style correctly for the time periods indicated by the prompts.

Teachers should instruct students to write their responses in an essay format, with a clear introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion, rather than one body of text.

Teachers should instruct students to write a thesis that makes a claim directly related to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning (e.g., “The most significant difference in approaches to the arts in Europe during these periods was the shift from detail realism to Modernist abstraction”). Teachers should also remind students to write a conclusion, which might contain a clearer thesis than the one that they wrote in the introduction.

Teachers should instruct students to organize evidence into categories using clear topic sentences that address the prompt. This will help them earn the first point for analysis and reasoning.

Teachers should remind students that while contextualization does not need to be particularly lengthy or specific, it must include historically relevant information rather than broad generalizations that could be true in many time periods. In the case of identifying differences across time periods, context may often be a narrative of events or processes that occurred between the events or processes that they are being asked to contrast.

Teachers should instruct students to use historical reasoning to construct an argument in response to the prompt. In the case of a question asking about differences, responses must develop a historically significant distinction across the time periods to frame an argument that goes beyond their thesis.

Teachers should understand that the second analysis and reasoning point (complex understanding) is attainable and accessible for students through the adoption of one of the approaches contained in the rubric. They should provide students with examples of various successful demonstrations of complex understanding throughout the year and create exercises that encourage them to corroborate, qualify, or modify historical arguments. If a prompt asks students to identify the most significant difference, for example, the student could rank the effects in terms of significance and provide an explanation for the reasoning behind their ranking. Students should also be encouraged to support their arguments with at least four pieces of specific evidence, as this is another route to the complex understanding point, but the evidence must be connected to an argument and not merely a list.

Teachers should instruct students to better differentiate between contextualization, evidence, and argument. Merely repeating the same information will not earn points in multiple categories.

***What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?***

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on Units 4–9, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topic of European art in the period 1750 to 1950 as well as with the skills students need to successfully respond to an LEQ. In particular, topics related to the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernism, and Abstract Art, nationalism, and eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century culture and arts would provide useful starting points.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this LEQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units' Personal Progress Checks (PCs).
- Units 4–9 PCs and Topic questions offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of changes in European art from 1750 to 1950.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about European art from 1750 to 1950.
- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to European art from 1750 to 1950—these questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an LEQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource, as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.

## Long Essay Question 4

**Task:** Long Essay Question

**Topic:** Nazi Regime in Germany and the Communist Regime in the Soviet Union

	<b>Max Points:</b>	<b>Mean Score:</b>
<b>Thesis</b>	1	0.75
<b>Contextualization</b>	1	0.63
<b>Evidence</b>	2	1.43
<b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>	2	0.99
<b>Overall Mean Score: 3.80</b>		

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

The Long Essay Question (LEQ) asks students to formulate a thesis/argument in response to a prompt about a particular historical development or episode in European history. In 2025, each LEQ asked students to determine the most significant difference between two events or processes in European history. LEQs require students to formulate arguments, utilize evidence, address historical context, and display an ability to employ historical reasoning skills.

In the case of LEQ 4, responses were expected to evaluate the most significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union. Responses were expected to relate the topic of the prompt to the broader historical events, developments, or processes that occurred before, during, or after the time frame specified in the prompt. Responses were expected to provide specific examples of evidence relevant to the most significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union, and to use this specific evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.

Responses were expected to demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument that addressed the prompt, and although the prompt directed students toward the historical reasoning process of comparison, responses could also frame their arguments around other types of historical reasoning (continuity, causation, and change over time). Responses were expected to demonstrate a complex understanding of the most significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union. This demonstration of understanding could be achieved in various ways. Responses could explain multiple differences by analyzing, for example, several differences between the two political systems or differing motivations behind the campaigns of violence in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Responses could also evaluate both similarity and difference, for example explaining how both regimes perpetrated violence in addition to explaining their economic differences. Responses could also earn this point through effective use of evidence by providing four pieces of evidence that support an argument related to the prompt. Responses were assessed on the extent to which they performed in the following four categories: thesis and/or claim, contextualization, evidence, and analysis and reasoning.

**How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**

Most responses to this question demonstrated some ability to assert and then evaluate a significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union. They also successfully situated the topic of the prompt in a broader historical context, most commonly discussing the opposing ideologies of fascism and communism that emerged in Europe after World War I through the end of World War II. Many other responses discussed the racist policies and genocidal violence the Nazis unleashed against Jewish populations and other targeted communities in Europe before and during World War II. Others also discussed the overtly political and non-racial focus of Soviet violence, specifically against so-called class enemies and czarists, before World War II and during the Cold War.

Some responses were more nuanced than others, with many responses setting up a comparative argument that contrasted the short-term existence of Nazi Germany (1933–1945) with the longer Soviet Union (1917–1991). Other responses attempted to qualify their argument by mentioning similarities as well as differences between both regimes during the twentieth century. Some responses also used the historical thinking skill of causation, noting how the Nazis’ antisemitism and racial violence brought about the Holocaust during World War II. Similarly, some responses noted how the Soviets’ desire to seize private property led the regime to establish collective farms and to start major state-oriented industrialization efforts. A small group of responses exhibited a lack of chronological understanding, discussing, for example, the emergence of Nazism during World War I or the construction of the Berlin Wall during World War II.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some responses conflated Nazism and communism together as common ideologies instead of emphasizing the differences in the orientation of each political philosophy.</li></ul>	<p>“The Nazi regime in Germany differed from the communist regime in the Soviet Union on the basis of radical social policies, perspectives of foreign affairs, and most importantly, economic systems. Despite both regimes implementing extremist ideologies in their respective regimes, a clear difference on the sides of the spectrum resulted in the most significant difference between the two.”</p> <p><i>(The response describes how supporters of Nazism and communism subscribed to different views on issues of social policies, foreign affairs, and economic systems, while also acknowledging the extremist ideologies of both authoritarian countries.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Despite many similarities that are very pale through both regimes, we often forget to tell the stark contrasts of each one. The most significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist</li></ul>

	<p>regime of Russia was that the Nazis were more focused on the racial aspect of their people.”</p> <p><i>(The response describes how the Nazis’ focus on the racial orientation of their people distinguished them apart from the Soviets, even though both regimes had many similarities.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses used overly generalized phrases and historical markers to contextualize the period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“World War I created heightened tensions amongst European nations as well as internal conflicts within Russia and Germany. Russia’s continuation as a power in World War I created a Russian civil war internally and caused a push toward communism from Lenin as workers and peasants weren’t getting enough money or food. After World War I came to a ceasefire and the Treaty of Versailles was signed, which placed heavy reparations payments on Germany, inflation occurred and made money worthless. This left room for the Nazi party to rise up with Hitler as the leader with a promise to make Germany strong again and help citizens.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response details how the impact of World War I in both Russia and Germany led to the rise of the Soviet communists and the Nazis.)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses used inaccurate time periods or factors to discuss Nazi and Soviet violence in Europe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The most significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union was the Nazis were focused on world domination and creating the ultimate race of people while the Soviets mostly focused on control of their own people economically.”</li> </ul> <p><i>(The response details how Nazi violence focused on domination, territorial expansion, and racial discrimination, while Soviet violence focused on economic and ideological factors.)</i></p>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Teachers should instruct students to write a thesis that makes a claim directly related to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning (e.g., “The most significant difference between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union was the Nazis were focused on world domination and creating the ultimate race of people while the Soviets mostly focused on control of their own people.”). Teachers should also remind students to write a conclusion, which might contain a clearer thesis than the one that they wrote in the introduction.

Teachers should remind students that while contextualization does not need to be particularly lengthy, it must include historically relevant information. In the case of a comparison question, context may often be a narrative of events or processes that occurred before just one of the two things being compared, but students should try to contextualize both.

Teachers should instruct students to bring specific historical evidence into a response about the differences between the two regimes to support a sound historical argument. Several well-developed pieces of evidence work better than an accumulation of off-topic or vague references.

Teachers should instruct students to organize evidence into categories using clear topic sentences that address the prompt. This will help them earn the first point for analysis and reasoning, as many students simply narrated facts about both regimes instead of framing their argument in terms of differences. Students simply listing facts about the Nazis and the Soviets often failed to earn the point for analysis and reasoning, as no actual comparison was made.

Teachers should understand that the second analysis and reasoning point (complex understanding) is attainable and accessible for students through the adoption of one of the approaches contained in the rubric. They should provide students with examples of various successful demonstrations of complexity throughout the course. If a prompt asks students to identify the most significant difference, for example, the student could rank the differences in terms of significance and provide an explanation for the reasoning behind their ranking.

Teachers should instruct students to better differentiate between contextualization, evidence, and argument. Merely repeating the same information will not earn points in multiple categories.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Resources available in AP Classroom, especially those focused on 9, might be useful instructional support for teachers in working with students on the topics of Nazi Germany and the Soviet communism.
- The above topics have associated resources that could be useful instructional support for teaching the topic and skill involved in this LEQ. These include the AP Daily Videos, Topic Questions, and the Units’ Personal Progress Checks (PCs).
- Unit 9 PCs and Topic questions offer many opportunities, through MCQs and FRQs, to check for student understanding of differences between the Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the Soviet Union.
- AP Daily Videos also provide a helpful resource to support student learning about Nazism and Soviet communism.

- AP Classroom is directly linked to the AP European History Question Bank, where examples of AP Exam questions on the topic of historical developments, events, and processes related to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union can be found. These questions may be either MCQs or FRQs and could be used in a variety of different ways to assess student understanding or to practice skills necessary for successful completion of an LEQ.
- The Online Teaching Community (OTC) for AP European History is another great resource, as it includes materials and resources posted not only by College Board but also by other teachers.