

AP US History: DBQs 1973 Through 2009

For your benefit, I have tried to organize past DBQs chronologically by topic (date of question is in parentheses). There are 43 questions here covering 36 years of the exam – you will note that some of the years have two exams listed. As we proceed through our exploration of the American past, notice the types of questions that have been asked about the various periods we study. Also, take note of the emphasis in questions within the last 10 years.

EARLY PERIOD TO 1800

1. Although New England and the Chesapeake region were both settled largely by people of English origin, by 1700 the regions had evolved into two distinct societies. Why did this difference in development occur? Use the documents AND your knowledge of the colonial period up to 1700 to develop your answer. (1993)
2. In what ways did the French and Indian War (1754-63) alter the political, economic, and ideological relations between Britain and its American colonies? Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1740-1766 in constructing your response. (2004)
3. To what extent had the colonists developed a sense of their own identity and unity as Americans by the eve of the Revolution? Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1750 to 1776 to answer the question. (1999)
4. To what extent did the American Revolution fundamentally change American society? In your answer, be sure to address the political, social, and economic effects of the Revolution in the period 1775 to 1800. (2005)
5. Was American society, as evidenced by Wethersfield, Connecticut, becoming more “democratic” in the period from the 1750’s to the 1780’s? Discuss with reference to property distribution, social structure, politics, and religion. (1976 – old-style DBQ answered primarily from the documents given rather than from documentary and outside evidence)
6. How and why did the lives and status of middle-class women change between 1776 and 1876? (1981)
7. Discuss the changing ideals of American womanhood between the American Revolution (1770’s) and the outbreak of the Civil War. What factors fostered the emergence of “republican motherhood” and the “cult of domesticity”? Assess the extent to which these ideals influenced the lives of women during this period. In your answer, be sure to consider the issues of race and class. Use the documents and your knowledge of the time period in constructing your response. (2006)
8. From 1781 to 1789, the Articles of Confederation provided the United States with an effective government. Evaluate the validity of this statement. (1985)
9. The debate over the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 revealed bitter controversies on a number of issues. Discuss the issues involved and explain why these controversies

developed. (1977 – an old-style DBQ answered primarily from the documents given rather than from documentary and outside evidence)

10. From 1775 to 1830, many African Americans gained freedom from slavery, yet during the same period the institution of slavery expanded. Explain why BOTH of those changes took place. Analyze the ways that BOTH free African Americans and enslaved African Americans responded to the challenges confronting them. (2009)

1800-1850

1. With respect to the federal Constitution, the Jeffersonian Republicans are usually characterized as strict constructionists who were opposed to the broad constructionism of the Federalists. To what extent was this characterization of the two parties accurate during the presidencies of Jefferson and Madison? In writing your answer, use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1801-1817. (1998)
2. Historians have traditionally labeled the period after the War of 1812 the “Era of Good Feelings.” Evaluate the accuracy of this label, considering the emergence of nationalism and sectionalism. Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1815-1825 to construct your answer. (2002, form B)
3. Jacksonian Democrats viewed themselves as the guardians of the United States Constitution, political democracy, individual liberty, and equality of economic opportunity. In light of the following documents and your knowledge of the 1820s and 1830s, to what extent do you agree with the Jacksonians’ view of themselves? (1990)
4. The decision of the Jackson administration to remove the Cherokee Indians to lands west of the Mississippi River in the 1830s was more a reformulation of the national policy that had been in effect since the 1790s than a change in that policy. Assess the validity of this generalization with reference to the moral, political, constitutional, and practical concerns that shaped national Indian policy between 1789 and the mid-1830s. (1980)
5. Reform movements in the United States sought to expand democratic ideals. Assess the validity of this statement with specific reference to the years 1825-1850. Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1825-1850 in constructing your response. (2002)

1850-1900

1. To what extent did natural environment shape the development of the West beyond the Mississippi and the lives of those who lived and settled there? How important were other factors? Use BOTH evidence from the documents AND your knowledge of the period from the 1840s through the 1890s to compose your answer. (1992)
2. By the 1850s, the Constitution, originally framed as an instrument of national unity, had become a source of sectional discord and tension and ultimately contributed to the failure of the union it had created. Using BOTH the documents AND your knowledge of the period 1850-1861, assess the validity of this statement. (1987)

3. In the early nineteenth century, Americans sought to resolve their political disputes through compromise, yet by 1860 this no longer seemed possible. Analyze the reasons for this change. Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1820-1860 in constructing your response. (2005 form B)
4. John Brown's raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in October 1859, involved only a handful of abolitionists, freed no slaves, and was over in two days. Although many Northerners condemned the raid, by 1863 John Brown had become a hero and a martyr in the North. To what extent and in what ways do the views about John Brown expressed in the documents illustrate changing North-South relations between 1859 and 1863? (1982)
5. To what extent was President-elect Abraham Lincoln responsible for the defeat of the Crittenden proposal on the territorial expansion of slavery? (1974. Old-style DBQ)
6. In what ways and to what extent did constitutional and social developments between 1860 and 1877 amount to a revolution? Use BOTH the documents AND your knowledge of the period from 1860 to 1877 to answer the question. (1996)
7. To what extent and for what reasons did the policies of the federal government from 1865 to 1900 violate the principles of laissez-faire, which advocated minimal governmental intervention in the economy? Consider with specific reference to the following three areas of policy: railroad land grants, control of interstate commerce, and antitrust activities. (1979. Old-style DBQ)
8. Analyze the ways in which technology, government policy, and economic conditions changed American agriculture in the period 1865-1900. In your answer be sure to evaluate farmers' responses to these changes. (2007)
9. Documents A-H reveal some of the problems that many farmers in the late nineteenth century (1880-1900) saw as threats to their way of life. Using the documents and your knowledge of the period, (a) explain the reasons for agrarian discontent AND (b) evaluate the validity of the farmers' complaints. (1983)
10. How successful was organized labor in improving the position of workers in the period from 1875 to 1900? Analyze the factors that contributed to the level of success achieved. Use the documents and your knowledge of the period from 1875 to 1900 to construct your response. (2000)
11. Analyze the factors that influenced the Senate in ratifying the Treaty of Paris in 1899 and assess their relative significance. You may refer to historical facts and developments not mentioned in the documents and assess the reliability of the documents as historical sources where relevant to your answer. (1975. Old-style DBQ)

1900-1950

1. To what extent was late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century United States expansionism a continuation of past United States expansionism and to what extent was it a departure? Use the documents and your knowledge of United States history to 1914 to construct your answer. (1994)
2. To what extent did economic and political developments as well as assumptions about the nature of women affect the position of American women during the period 1890-1925? Use the documents and your knowledge of the history of the years 1890-1925 to construct your response. (1997)
3. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois offered different strategies for dealing with the problems of poverty and discrimination faced by Black Americans at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Using the documents and your knowledge of the period 1877-1915, assess the appropriateness of each of these strategies in the historical context in which each was developed. (1989)
4. It was the strength of the opposition forces, both liberal and conservative, rather than the ineptitude and stubbornness of President Wilson that led to the senate defeat of the Treaty of Versailles. Assess the validity of this statement. Using the documents and your knowledge of the period 1917-1921, assess the validity of this statement. (1991)
5. In the 20th century, prohibition spread by states passing local option laws, which permitted a unit of local government, such as a county, to prohibit the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages. After an intensive campaign by the Anti-Saloon League and other prohibitionist organizations and reforms groups, national prohibition was achieved by the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution in 1919. What accounts for the success of the prohibition movement in the U.S. during the era of progressive reform, 1900-1919? Consider the social composition of the prohibitionists, their motives, strategy and pressure-group tactics, and the relationship of prohibitionism to progressive reform. (1978. Old-style DBQ)
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Progressive Era reformers and the federal government in bringing about reform at the national level. In your answer be sure to analyze the successes and limitations of these efforts in the period 1900-1920. (2003, form B)
7. The 1920s were a period of tension between new and changing attitudes on the one hand and traditional values and nostalgia on the other. What led to the tension between old and new AND in what ways was the tension manifested? (1986)
8. How and for what reasons did United States foreign policy change between 1920 and 1941? Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1920-1941 to construct your response. (2004, form B)
9. Relying on a critical evaluation of the accompanying documents, analyze the factors that probably influenced Congress to pass the Immigration Act of 1924. (1973. Old-style DBQ)

10. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is commonly thought of as a liberal and President Herbert C. Hoover as a conservative. To what extent are these characterizations valid? (1984)
11. Analyze the responses of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration to the problems of the Great Depression. How effective were these responses? How did they change the role of the federal government? Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1929-1941 to construct your essay. (2003)
12. The United States's decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima was a diplomatic measure calculated to intimidate the Soviet Union in the post-Second-World-War era rather than a strictly military measure designed to force Japan's unconditional surrender. Evaluate this statement using the documents and your knowledge of the military and diplomatic history of the years 1939 through 1947. (1988)
13. Analyze developments from 1941 to 1949 that increased suspicion and tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. Use the documents and your knowledge of the period 1941-1949 to construct your response. (2006, Form B)
14. For the years 1880-1925, analyze both the tensions surrounding the issue of immigration and the United States government response to these tensions. Use the following documents and your knowledge of the period from 1880 to 1925 to construct your answer. (2008, Form B)

1950-2000

1. What were the Cold War fears of the American people in the aftermath of the Second World War? How successfully did the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower address these fears? Use the documents and your knowledge of the years 1948-1961 to construct your response. (2001)
2. Analyze the changes that occurred during the 1960's in the goals, strategies, and support of the movement for African American rights. Use the documents and your knowledge of the history of the 1960s to construct your response. (1995)
3. Analyze the ways in which the Vietnam War heightened social, political, and economic tensions in the United States. Focus your answer on the period 1964-1975. (2008)