

Section I

Studying for the Exam

CHAPTER 1

The Structure of the AP Exam

OVERVIEW OF THE TEST STRUCTURE

Each year's exam is designed by the AP European History Test Development Committee and covers the period from 1450 to the recent past. Because the exam is created several years before actual testing, it is unlikely that any recent events (i.e., within the past 5–10 years) will appear on the exam. However, increased attention has been given to the period following World War II; in fact, there is typically a free-response question (FRQ) focused on this period.

The exam consists of three parts. In Section I there are 80 multiple-choice questions. Once you complete Section I, you will not be able to return to it. Students are provided 55 minutes to complete this multiple-choice section. Section II is divided between the document-based question (DBQ—60 minutes) and two free-response questions (70 minutes). Thus, the total time you will have to work on Section II is 130 minutes. Of this time, 15 minutes are designated as a reading period in which you can look over the DBQ documents, select your FRQs, and outline your responses. However, you may not write anything scoreable in your pink booklets during this time. Overall, then, you will have no more than 3 hours, 5 minutes to complete the exam.

For many students, AP European history will be their first exam. If so, you will find it to be not only an intellectual test, but a physical and psychological one. It is important, therefore, to pace yourself and come to the exam well prepared.

Section	Number of Questions	Time
I	80 multiple-choice questions	55 minutes
Scheduled break of 5–10 minutes		
II	3 essay questions, including one document-based question	130 minutes 60 minutes recommended (includes 15-minute reading period)
	two free-response questions	70 minutes recommended
Total		3 hours, 5 minutes

Part I: Multiple-Choice

The multiple-choice portion of the test counts as 50 percent of your composite score on the AP Exam. It is difficult to score well overall if you do poorly on this portion of the exam. Though this may give you pause if you tend to struggle with objective assessments, it is possible to improve your score with practice and the appropriate strategies. More will be said about this in Chapter 2.

There are 80 questions on the multiple-choice section of the exam, covering the period from 1450 to the recent past. “Recent past” generally means events prior to about 5 to 10 years before administration of the exam. Half of the questions cover the chronological period before 1815 and half after 1815. In addition, several cross-chronological questions may appear. Regarding topics, the exam is divided roughly into thirds: one-third of the questions on cultural/ intellectual themes, one-third on social/economic themes, and one-third on political/diplomatic themes. Questions can be of different types, such as identification of an important personality, event, or written work; interpretation of a visual stimulus (e.g., chart, map, art); or analysis of the effects of an historical event. Strategies for approaching these questions are covered in Chapter 2.

All questions will have a similar format—a “stem” that introduces the topic of the question and five answer choices, four of which will be “distracters” and one of which will be the “key,” or correct answer. It is rare for “none of the above” or “all of the above” to appear as choices. Students must remember to read all the choices carefully and choose the *best* answer in response to the stem. Oftentimes, there will be two or three appealing choices, which you will become more skilled at narrowing down once you practice effective strategies. Do not be concerned if you find some of the questions highly difficult or topics unfamiliar. Few students will achieve a perfect score, and the questions are designed to range in difficulty from about 15 to 90 percent of students choosing the correct answer.

Part II: Essays

The written portion of the exam is composed of a document-based question, or DBQ, which is worth 45 percent of Part II (or 22.5 percent overall), and two free-response questions (FRQs), which are worth 55 percent of Part II (or 27.5 percent overall, 13.75 percent for each question). Part II counts as 50 percent of your total score.

The Document-Based Question (DBQ)

If this is your first Advanced Placement history class, you may be unfamiliar with the concept of a document-based question. Not to worry, as this portion of the exam requires no outside knowledge of the topic, simply a set of skills in historical interpretation learned primarily through practice and repetition.

Unlike the FRQs, there are no choices for the DBQ. All students will answer the same prompt. The topic is often specific and unfamiliar to most students. However, all the information you need to respond to the prompt is given in 10 to 12 accompanying documents. As you will see in Chapter 2, most DBQs first provide a brief historical background of no longer than a paragraph. Following this paragraph are the primary sources you will use to answer the question. These sources vary and may include a diary entry, speech, selection from a book, memoirs, chart, or political cartoon. Your task is to find patterns among the documents, group them logically, apply them to a thesis, and analyze them for bias and point of view. There is a specific rubric used to score the DBQ, much like a checklist, so your familiarity with the scoring system will help you address all the required tasks of the DBQ exercise (see p. 5).

As noted, the first 15 minutes of Part II is designated as a reading period. During this time, students will be reading through the DBQ documents, selecting their FRQs, and outlining their responses. However, you may not write anything in your booklet for a score. There are different ways to use this 15 minutes, one of which I recommend in Chapter 2. It is suggested that students take 60 minutes for the DBQ (which includes the time to read the documents and write the essay), though certainly if you finish early you may move on to the free-response questions.

Free-Response Questions (FRQs)

Free-response questions are designed to gauge your understanding of major developments, events, and trends in European history. Though some may be more specific than others, they are intended to assess your grasp of the “big picture” through the use of well-chosen examples. There are two sections (B and C) of three choices each. The Test Development Committee employs different approaches to the grouping of the essays, but in general you will find that the questions break down either chronologically (three pre-1800 and three post-1800) or topically (e.g., three social-cultural-intellectual and three political-economic-diplomatic).

At this point in the exam, it is easy to fall behind and find yourself short of time for these questions. Try to allow at least 30 to 35 minutes for each question, which includes 5 or so minutes to plan out your response, including your thesis and supporting evidence. AP Exam graders (known as “readers”) will find a shorter, focused response preferable to a longer, rambling one.

HOW THE EXAM IS SCORED

All AP exams employ the same overall scoring system:

- 5 Extremely well qualified
- 4 Well qualified
- 3 Qualified
- 2 Possibly qualified
- 1 No recommendation

To calculate your overall total, a complex formula converts the raw score of each section of the exam. There are 180 possible points, 90 for each section. However, one should not think in terms of the standard 90-80-70-60 percent scale. “Break points” between each of the overall scores are determined after the test is administered based on historical standards and how well students performed that particular year on the exam.

Scoring of the Multiple-Choice Section

For the multiple choice section, keep in mind that the exam penalizes you for guessing. I often have students ask, “How did they know I was guessing?” The answer is simple: “If you got it wrong, you must have guessed.” Each incorrect response will result in 1.25 points being taken off, compared with 1 point for a question left blank. As we will see in the strategies section, it will invariably be in your best interest to guess if you can eliminate even one of the choices. Let’s say a student answered 52 of the multiple-choice questions correctly, left 8 blank, and thus marked 20 of them incorrectly ($52 + 8 + 20 = 80$). The student’s raw score on this section of the exam would be $52 - (1.25 \times 20 = 5) = 47$.

Scoring of the Essays

The essays on the AP Exam are scored using a specific rubric, which for European History differs between the DBQ and the FRQs. For the DBQ, readers will apply a “core scoring” rubric centered on six analytical tasks. If you complete these six tasks on at least a basic level, you can earn additional points in the “expanded core.” However, should you miss any one of the six tasks, you cannot earn a score higher than a 5, regardless of your proficiency overall on the essay. Therefore, your familiarity with this rubric is vital to your success on the DBQ. Though rubrics are tailored to specific questions, the generic standards are as follows.

The Document-Based Question

Generic Core-Scoring Rubric	Points
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Basic Core</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thesis is explicitly stated and addresses all parts of the question. Does NOT simply restate the question. 1 2. The essay uses something specific from a <u>majority</u> of the documents. 1 3. Student understands the documents by using a <u>majority</u> appropriately (one major misinterpretation allowed). 1 4. Thesis is appropriately supported with a <u>majority</u> of documents; student does not simply summarize the documents. 1 5. Essay analyzes point of view or bias in at least THREE documents. 1 6. Documents are analyzed by placing them in at least THREE appropriate groups. 1 <hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> <p style="text-align: right;">6</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Expanded Core</u></p> <p>Essays may receive 0-3 additional points for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a strong, analytical thesis • Using all or almost all of the documents • Addressing all parts of the question thoroughly • Using documents effectively as evidence • Showing an understanding of complexities in the documents • Analyzing bias or point of view in at least FOUR documents cited in the essay • Analyzing the documents in additional ways, e.g., additional groupings • Bringing in relevant historical context <hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> <p style="text-align: right;">9</p>	0-3

For the European History DBQ, all that you will need to answer the question is directly in front of you—the documents, historical background, and instructions. If you can provide more powerful analysis or meaningful context to a document by referring to material outside what is contained in the document, then by all means bring your knowledge to bear on the response. If, however, you find that you are simply “name-dropping” and drifting from the documents, then this is unlikely to improve your score and may even detract from the primary task of the DBQ—analyzing historical evidence. First and foremost, your response should be driven by the material provided in the documents. Chapter 2 offers more detail on strategies for tackling the DBQ.

The Free-Response Questions

Free-response essays are scored “holistically,” which means that readers will look at the essay “as a whole,” unlike the checklist system employed in scoring the DBQ. Before assigning any score, a reader will read the entire essay, looking for features that tend to characterize an effective response. These indicators tend to be similar regardless of the question. Here is an example of a generic free-response rubric:

Stronger Essays 9-8-7-6

- Offers a clear, well-developed thesis in response to all parts of the question.
- Thesis is supported with relevant and substantial evidence.
- Essay is well-balanced in its treatment of the required tasks.
- May contain minor errors of fact or interpretation.

Mixed Essays 5-4

- Thesis attempted but may be incomplete, unfocused, or vague.
- At least some specific evidence provided in support of the thesis.
- Essay may be unbalanced or partially off-base in its treatment of required tasks.
- May contain some major and minor errors of fact or interpretation.

Weaker Essays 3-2-1-0

- Thesis is confused, misconstrues the question, or is absent.
- Little if any specific factual support, or if support is given, it is not explained.
- Essay may ignore one or more parts of the prompt or be primarily off-task.
- Contains major and minor errors of fact and interpretation.

As the rubric indicates, “job one” for you in receiving a high mark on your essay is to focus on addressing the question asked. Even if you find that time is running out, it may be possible for you to write a brief yet focused response that will earn a solid mark that adds to a high composite score.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

For most students, registering for the exam is fairly easy. It is generally handled by your school’s AP coordinator, often someone in your guidance department. If you are unsure how to register and have not received any information by late winter, you may wish to ask your teacher or an administrator at your school. Should your school not administer the exam, contact AP Services at the College Board for a list of schools in your area that do. The current fee for taking the exam is \$82, but if you have financial need, a \$22 reduction is available. For more information about financial aid, contact your AP coordinator.

For more information on anything related to the AP program, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com or write to AP Services:

AP Services

P.O. Box 6671

Princeton, NJ 08541-6671

Phone: (609) 771-7300 or (888) 225-5427 (toll-free in the United States and Canada)

E-mail: apexams@info.collegeboard.org

WHAT TO BRING TO THE EXAM

To reduce any anxiety, it is important that you come prepared on the day of the exam. Here is a list of items you will need:

- Several sharpened No. 2 pencils with erasers, along with a separate eraser. To remove marks on scan sheets, white erasers often work most effectively.
- Several black or dark-blue ballpoint ink pens. Erasable ink or liquid ink can smudge and make it difficult to read your essays.
- Your school code.
- A watch (that makes no noise) to allow you to keep track of your time.
- Your social security number for identification purposes.
- A photo ID.

These items are prohibited or are best left at home:

- Books, dictionaries, or notes
- Highlighters or correction fluid
- Scratch paper
- Computers (unless you are a student with a disability who has prearranged for their use)
- Watches or other items that beep or have alarms
- Portable listening devices, such as iPods, MP3 players, CD players, and radios
- Cameras, beepers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), or cell phones
- Clothing with subject-related information

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PREPARE

Using Your Textbook Effectively

For almost all students, the primary source of information is their textbook. Textbooks convey material in a standard manner, though they often differ in their areas of emphasis as well as the features they offer. Many texts now come standard with access to a Web site where you can get chapter summaries, take quizzes, find links to other useful resources, and even obtain feedback on practice essays that you write. In addition, your teacher may have had you purchase or may have provided a study guide that accompanies the text. These can often vary in quality, but you may find it useful to follow along with the text reading by consulting your study guide.

Just because a textbook is your main resource shouldn't prevent you from employing other useful resources, such as reference works, additional readings, periodicals, online materials, or even literature. Certainly, it is possible for you to succeed on the exam simply by making the most effective use of your textbook, but if you find other sources enlightening, convenient, or interesting, your teacher will probably not discourage and is likely to positively encourage them as a way to get a better feel for what you are learning.

AP Central

Your contact point for the latest information regarding the AP program is the official site of the College Board: apcentral.collegeboard.com. Any basic questions you have related to the administration of the exam, its scoring, policies, and others can be found at this Web site. In addition, you can purchase products that may help you in your review, such as free-response questions, sample essays, and a helpful CD-ROM for multiple-choice review. If you are a senior or would simply like to know policies of particular universities related to AP credit, the site features links to hundreds of colleges that can guide your decision making.

Section I: Studying for the Exam

To get started, after you've accessed the site, simply create a user profile and password. You will also have to provide some basic information about yourself. If there are changes in the exam, you should be notified via e-mail. This Web site is a good way to keep up-to-date on anything AP related.

Internet Resources

Many students find that they are savvier Internet users than their teachers. Certainly, the Internet has opened new sources of information, particularly related to history, unknown to historians and students of history in years past. However, the Internet is a tool like any other and should be used judiciously to meet the appropriate need. Before you rely too heavily on any specific site—say one that you found using one of the major search engines like Google or Yahoo—you should ensure that the site is reliable and authoritative. Those sites affiliated with a known college or university, or perhaps sponsored by a teacher of the course, may prove useful to your studying. With that in mind, I have listed some Web sites that have been helpful to me and my students in the past. Keep in mind that your textbook publisher may also provide a Web site keyed to your textbook. This address is probably listed somewhere in the introductory materials for your text.

historyteacher.net/APEuroHomePage.htm—This site is one of the best by a teacher of the course—Susan Pojer, from Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, New York—and contains extensive review materials, practice DBQs, and links to other sources.

library.byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs/—This site offers a thorough collection of primary sources organized by nation, and also includes a section titled “Europe as a Supranational Region.”

www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html—Perhaps the best resource for primary sources related to European history. You will find the site more user-friendly than the one above and the chronological organization easier to follow. The site carries classics, like Luther's “Ninety-Five Theses,” but also interesting nuggets you're unlikely to find elsewhere.

www.historyguide.org/intellect/intellect.html—A scholarly yet accessible collection of college lectures on broad topics related to European intellectual and cultural history. Students may find it a welcome change of pace from their other materials.

bedfordstmartins.com/mapcentral/—This site offers historical maps that are keyed to some of the major textbooks in the field (try the maps accompanying Lynn Hunt et al., *The Making of the West*, 3rd edition). Maps like these will help you review the changing political landscape of Europe and assess shifts in the balance of power.

www.wga.hu/index.html—Regardless of whether art is one of your favorite areas, you will find this easily searchable site a treasure of visual images. You can search chronologically or alphabetically by artist for paintings, sculpture, or architecture. It is especially handy as you review the images that you wish to connect with particular historical eras.

Of course, this list is only a small sampling of sites available. As you read through the content review in Section 2, you will find additional suggestions for resources. With modern search engines at your fingertips, many more sites are waiting to be discovered for the motivated. Though these sites can be fun and useful, keep in mind that the rules of citation and rendering proper credit still apply. If you use one of these sites for research, make sure that you supply a bibliography and give proper credit—advice that applies to all of your studies and academic work. Help in formatting bibliographies can be found at **easybib.com**.