



**SHORT ANSWER
QUESTION
(SAQ)**

UPDATED FOR 2018 ADMINISTRATION

WHAT IS THE SAQ?

The **Short Answer Questions**, or *SAQs*, are questions meant to check your analytical skills (your ability to pick out meaning and explain it).

You will be assessed on analysis of historical sources using the following skills:

- Argumentation (identifying and analyzing argument, bias)
- Causation (cause/effect)
- Comparison (similarities and differences)

The response to each question is no more than three to four sentences (hence, the **SHORT** description).

This portion of the exam is *20% of your overall exam score*.

HOW DOES IT WORK...?

- College Board will require you to answer THREE of four SAQs on your APUSH exam
 - 40 minutes for this part of the test (about 13 minutes per each question)
- The first two questions give you a “**stimulus**” (a document, image or other source) you must analyze.
- The choice questions do not have a stimulus—you must respond to the question using your background knowledge.
- You are required to answer the first and second questions and then answer either the third *or* the fourth question:
 - Question 1 (required)
 - Question 2 (required)
 - Question 3 or 4 (your choice)

SKILLS ASSESSED

**Short-Answer
Questions**

Primary Practice or Skill Assessed

Source Type

**Periods
Assessed**

Students are required to answer short-answer question 1 AND short-answer question 2

1	Analyzing Secondary Sources	Secondary source	Periods 3–8
2	Comparison or Causation	Primary source text or visual source	Periods 3–8

Students select short-answer question 3 OR short-answer question 4

3	Comparison or Causation	No stimulus	Period 1–5
4	(Different skill from short-answer question 2)		Periods 6–9

QUESTION BASICS

Each question contains three parts: A, B, and C. (so, 1a, 1b, 1c)

For each part:

1. You MUST directly answer the question
2. Label each part
 - 1(A) – Your Response (claim)
 - 1(B) – Your Response (claim)
 - 1(C) – Your Response (claim)
3. You MUST include SPECIFIC FACTUAL INFORMATION (a relevant historical term, event or detail) to support your response (claim). This is also referred to as your historical evidence.
4. You MUST explain your answer.

DO NOT:

- Write a paragraph (3 sentences can OFTEN get the job done)
- Write a thesis statement
- Use bullet points
- Quote from the excerpt provided—your job is analysis, not summary

THE ACE STRATEGY

The ACE strategy is a way to make sure you fully answer each part of every question.

For each part a, b, c, you'll want to use ACE.

A

Answer the prompt! (Make a claim)

What does the question ask you to do? What skill must you demonstrate?

- Argument interpretation? (Is it asking you to explain points of view of different people?)
- Causation? (Is it asking you to explain causes and/or effects of a certain event?)
- Comparison? (Is it asking you to compare/contrast or explain similarities/differences?)

Strategy: use the prompt to develop your answer; create a beginning sentence using the question itself, then add in your claim as the answer.

If the prompt has a vague description (something referred to as like “an issue” or “the problem”) you MUST identify it as well.

THE ACE STRATEGY

C

Cite evidence (to support your claim)

- *Use SFI (key terms, specific items from image/doc) without quoting sources.*
- **Strategy:** use one of the following stems to make sure you include specific examples as support
 - For example, _____, which (did/supports) _____.
 - One example of this was _____, which/this led to _____.

E

Explain the connection/finish answering the prompt

How or why does your evidence support your claim? What is the overall answer?

- **Strategy:** use one of the following stems to make sure you include a strong explanation (analysis) point
- As a result, _____ (answer the prompt)
- This suggests that _____ (answer the prompt)

SAQ QUESTION 1: ARGUMENTATION

- The first question tests your ability to analyze *secondary sources*—respond in writing to a historian’s (or historians) **argument(s)** about people or events.
- This question addresses content from Time Periods (Units) 3–8 of the course (1754-1980)

Skills tested/question stems:

Secondary Sources

- ♦ Describe the claim or argument of a secondary source, as well as the evidence used.
- ♦ Describe a pattern or trend in quantitative data in non-text-based sources.
- ♦ Explain how a historian’s claim or argument is supported with evidence.
- ♦ Explain how a historian’s context influences the claim or argument.
- ♦ Analyze patterns and trends in quantitative data in non-text-based sources.
- ♦ Evaluate the effectiveness of a historical claim or argument.

SAMPLE PROMPTS

“[W]e have in [United States history] a recurrence of the process of evolution in each western area reached in the process of expansion. Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West. . . . In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization.”

Frederick Jackson Turner, historian, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 1893

“[T]he history of the West is a study of a place undergoing conquest and never fully escaping its consequences. . . . Deemphasize the frontier and its supposed end, conceive of the West as a place and not a process, and Western American history has a new look. First, the American West was an important meeting ground, the point where Indian America, Latin America, Anglo-America, Afro-America, and Asia intersected. . . . Second, the workings of conquest tied these diverse groups into the same story. Happily or not, minorities and majorities occupied a common ground. Conquest basically involved the drawing of lines on a map, the definition and allocation of ownership (personal, tribal, corporate, state, federal, and international), and the evolution of land from matter to property.”

Patricia Nelson Limerick, historian, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, 1987

1. Using the excerpts above, answer (a), (b), and (c).

(A) Briefly describe ONE major difference between Turner’s and Limerick’s historical interpretations of the West.

(B) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development during the period 1865 to 1898 that is not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Turner’s interpretation.

(C) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development during the period 1865 to 1898 that is not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Limerick’s interpretation.

♦ Describe the claim or argument of a secondary source, as well as the evidence used.

♦ Explain how a historian’s claim or argument is supported with evidence.

♦ Explain how a historian’s context influences the claim or argument.

SAQ QUESTION 2

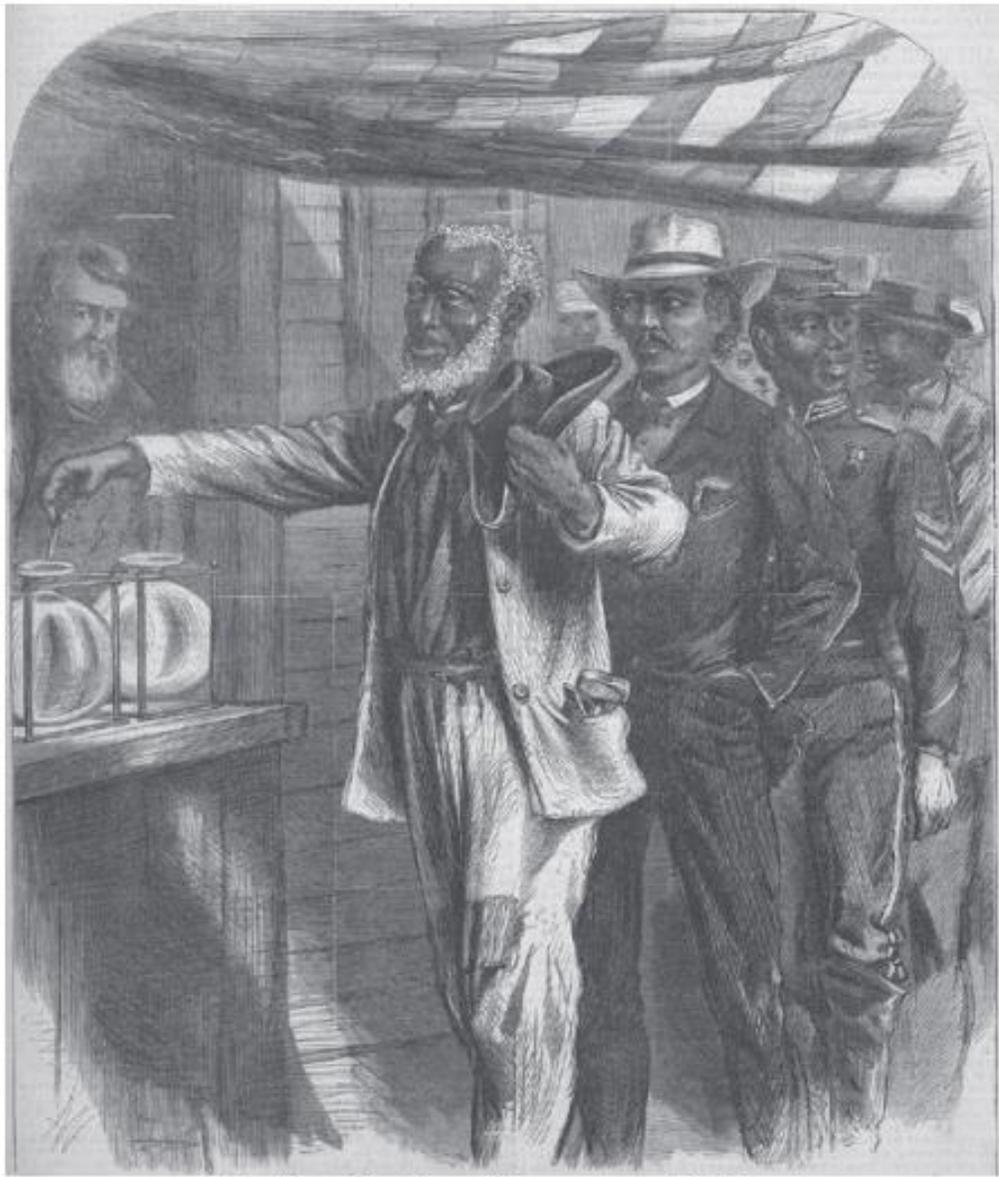
- The second question tests either the skill of **causation** or **comparison**, and asks you to respond in writing to a primary source (written text) or to visual sources such as images, charts, or maps.
- This question also addresses content from Time Periods 3–8 of the course (1754-1980)

Skills tested/question stems:

Primary Sources

- ♦ Describe historically relevant information and/or arguments within a source.
- ♦ Explain how a source provides information about the broader historical setting within which it was created.
- ♦ Explain how a source's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience might affect a source's meaning.
- ♦ Explain the relative historical significance of a source's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience.
- ♦ Evaluate a source's credibility and/or limitations.

SAMPLE PROMPTS



“The First Vote” — Drawn by A. R. Waud

2. Using the post-Civil War image above, answer (a), (b), and (c).

(A) Briefly describe ONE perspective about citizenship expressed in the image.

(B) Briefly explain ONE specific historical development that led to the change depicted in the image.

(C) Briefly explain ONE way in which the historical change depicted in the image was challenged in the period 1866 to 1896.

♦ Describe historically relevant information and/or arguments within a source.

♦ Explain the relative historical significance of a source’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience.

♦ Explain how a source provides information about the broader historical setting within which it was created.

SAQ QUESTION 3

- You choose to answer either the third OR the fourth SAQ:
 - Question 3 (Units 1–5) (1491-1877)
 - Question 4 (Units 6–9) (1865-present)
- These questions ask you about general ideas about U.S. history, and they primarily test the same skill, either causation or comparison.
 - However, neither of them will assess the same skill as SAQ Question 2

Skills tested/question stems: your SPECIFIC background knowledge (context) about one of these historical periods.

Generally, you'll be asked to explain similarities/differences between people or events, usually over time, or causes/effects of these people or events.

SAMPLE PROMPTS

3. Answer (a), (b), and (c).

(A) Briefly describe ONE specific historical difference between the antislavery movement in the period 1780–1810 and in the period 1830–1859.

(B) Briefly describe ONE specific historical similarity between the antislavery movement in the period 1780–1810 and in the period 1830–1859.

(C) Briefly explain ONE specific historical effect of the antislavery movement in either the period 1780–1810 or the period 1830–1859.

Units 1-5

Units 6-9

4. Answer (a), (b), and (c).

(A) Briefly describe ONE specific historical similarity between mass media in the 1920s and in the 1950s.

(B) Briefly describe ONE specific historical difference between mass media in the 1920s and in the 1950s.

(C) Briefly explain ONE specific historical effect of mass media in either the 1920s or the 1950s.

SCORING

Scoring the Response

For a short-answer question, a good response should:

- accomplish all three tasks set by the question. It should answer each task with complete sentences and must show some specific knowledge of history to receive credit.

Depending on the question, a good response should:

- explain a historical interpretation, compare two interpretations, and/or explain how evidence relates to an interpretation.
- go beyond simply quoting or paraphrasing primary or secondary sources in explaining their meaning or significance.
- address causes and effects, similarities and differences, or continuities and changes over time for different historical issues, and provide specific evidence in relation to the prompt.

THE ACE STRATEGY: SAMPLE

Let's approach Q2a: Briefly describe ONE perspective about citizenship expressed in the image.

A: answer the prompt—in this case, this is a question about an argument within the source. Create a beginning sentence using the question itself, then add in your claim as the answer.

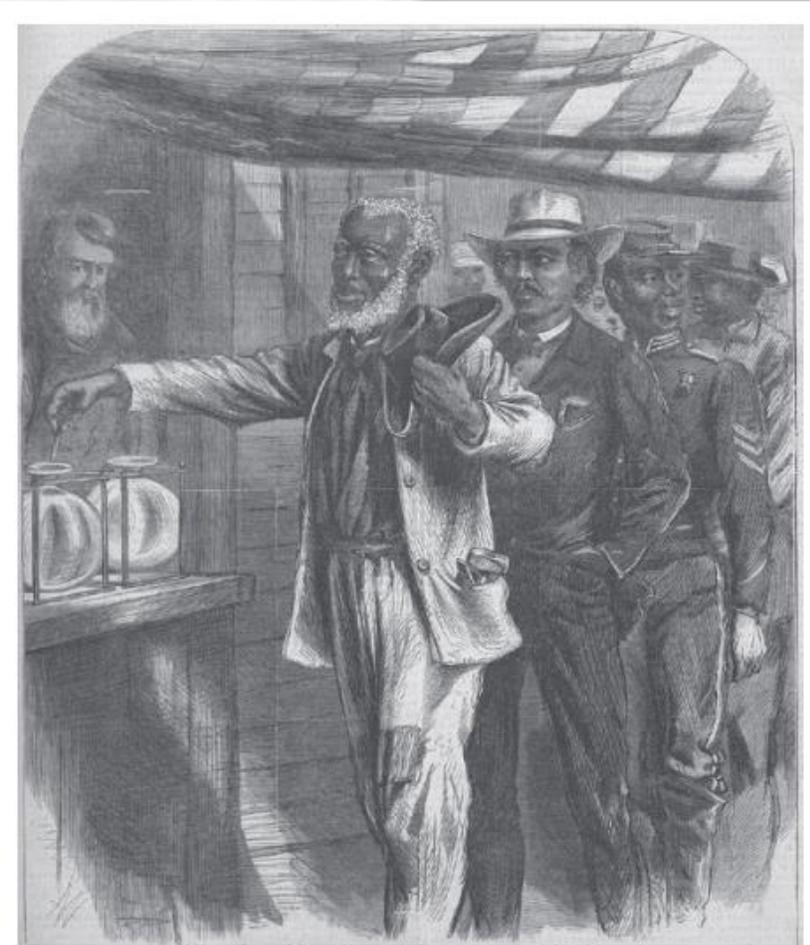
One perspective about citizenship in this image is that giving freedmen (black males) the right to vote allowed them to become full citizens of the U.S. following the Civil War.

C: cite evidence—use specifics.

One example to support this perspective is that in the image, freedmen of all backgrounds, given the rights and protections of citizenship (14) and suffrage (15) in the 14th and 15th Amendments, were eager to vote for the first time.

E: explain the connection

This image suggests that the right to vote is one of the most revered civic duties, as it gives citizens representation in the republic that is America.



"The First Vote" — Drawn by A. R. Waud

Optional SAQ Practice Prompt:

Q: Explain role of the environment on the colonies

Answer (a), (b), and (c).

- a. Briefly explain how ONE specific environmental or geographical feature of the New England colonies contributed to the region's unique development before 1754.
- b. Briefly explain how ONE specific environmental or geographical feature of the middle colonies contributed to the region's unique development before 1754.
- c. Briefly explain how ONE specific environmental or geographical feature of the southern colonies contributed to the region's unique development before 1754.