

Get the facts about the Advanced Placement U.S. History redesign.

The new AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework and Exam (APUSH) encourage deep engagement with our nation’s founding documents and the inspiring primary sources of American history, and provide teachers with greater flexibility to focus their class time on state and local priorities. The best way to understand the changes is by taking a closer look at the exam, before and after the redesign, as it directly impacts how teachers and students focus their study of U.S. history.

- APUSH is an advanced, college-level course — not an introductory U.S. history course — therefore, many elements will have been covered for students previously.
- The APUSH course framework is just that — a framework — not a comprehensive curriculum. The College Board respects the rights and role of teachers to select historical elements on which to focus.
- The new APUSH framework was designed by, and has the overwhelming support of APUSH teachers and college-level U.S. history professors.
- By request, the College Board will provide resources to help teachers use the flexible APUSH framework to fulfill a state’s standards and priorities.

FACT #1 More Focus on the Founding Documents**AP U.S. History Before:**

AP Exam questions asked about various documents from U.S. history, but they did not require teachers and students to read and examine those documents in depth. In fact, landmark documents like the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Emancipation Proclamation were not even mentioned in the prior AP U.S. History framework.

Sample Exam Question:

66. The Northwest Ordinances did which of the following?

- (A) Provided for the annexation of the Oregon Territory
- (B) Established reservations for Native Americans
- (C) Granted settlers a free homestead of 160 acres
- (D) Established the terms for settlement and admission of the new states
- (E) Banned slavery north of the 36° 30' line

AP U.S. History After:

Every multiple-choice exam question now requires students to demonstrate their understanding of America's founding documents and the great conversations they have inspired throughout American history. Accordingly, each question includes a primary or secondary source, emphasizing the importance of students carefully reading and understanding historical documents in the U.S. history classroom.

Sample Exam Question:

"[H]istory and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government... Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other... The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is in extending our commercial relations to have them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the cause of which are essentially foreign to our concerns."

– *George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796*

30. The concerns expressed by Washington were a response to the:

- (A) Debate over the proper treatment of American Indian tribes in the trans-Appalachian West
- (B) Dispute over the possibility of annexing Canada from Great Britain
- (C) Controversy regarding support for the revolutionary government of France
- (D) Conflict with Great Britain over the treatment of American loyalists

31. The ideas expressed in Washington's address most strongly influenced which United States foreign policy decision in the twentieth century?

- (A) The establishment of the United Nations in 1945
- (B) The formation of the NATO alliance between the United States and Western Europe in 1949
- (C) The refusal to join the League of Nations in 1919
- (D) The oil embargo against Japan in 1941

FACT #2 More Transparent

AP U.S. History Before:

The AP U.S. History Exam was released only once every 5–8 years for teachers to use in their classroom preparation, making it very difficult for teachers and the public at large to examine what the exam required students to know and be able to do.

AP U.S. History After:

Moving forward, the AP U.S. History Exam will be released every summer to AP teachers. In addition, in summer 2015 we will post for public review and comment the May 2015 AP U.S. History Exam. The AP Program shares the same goal as the public: to ensure that AP Exams are balanced in their coverage of important topics.

FACT #3 **More Flexible****AP U.S. History Before:**

In the past, there were no constraints on what could appear on an AP exam, so teachers felt they had to skim material superficially, occasionally sacrificing state and local priorities in the rush to cover anything that could appear on an AP U.S. History Exam.

Sample Exam Question:

28. The National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded in 1966 in order to:

- (A) Encourage women to believe in the “feminine mystique”
- (B) Challenge sex discrimination in the workplace
- (C) Oppose the proposed Equal Rights Amendment
- (D) Advocate restrictions on access to abortion
- (E) Advocate equal access for women to athletic facilities

AP U.S. History After:

Teachers now build their own curriculum using just seven pages of required “Learning Objectives,” each of which supports teachers’ use of state standards and local priorities to select which historical figures and events to focus on in depth. The AP Exam questions are written in ways that support this flexibility.

Sample Exam Question:

1. Using your knowledge of United States history, answer parts a and b.

- a) Briefly explain why ONE of the following periods best represents the beginning of a democracy in the United States. Provide at least ONE piece of evidence from the period to support your explanation.
 - Rise of political parties in the 1790s
 - Development of voluntary organizations to promote social reforms between the 1820s and the 1840s
 - Emergence of the Democrats and the Whigs as political parties in the 1830s
- b) Briefly explain why ONE of the other options is not as persuasive as the one you chose.

FACT #4 **More Balanced**

AP U.S. History Before:

Some questions required students to focus only on isolated incidents with negative implications.

Sample Exam Question:

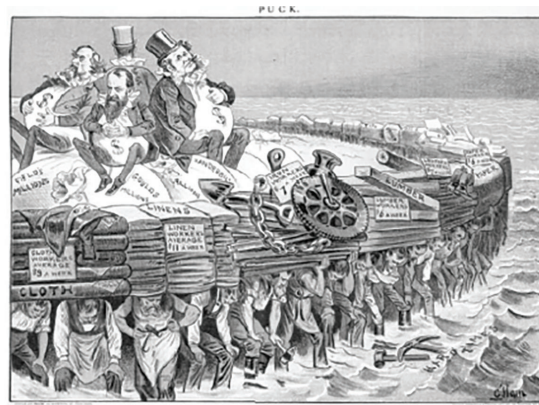
27. The 1979 incident at Three Mile Island had which of the following effects?

- (A) It intensified criticism of the Supreme Court
- (B) It intensified American Indian political activism
- (C) It forced the United States to reconsider the policy of “massive retaliation”
- (D) It increased public pressure to free the United States from dependence on foreign energy sources
- (E) It increased support for the movement against nuclear power

AP U.S. History After:

Questions now require teachers and students to look at multiple sides of an issue.

Sample Exam Question:



Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-3108

3. Using the 1883 image above, answer a, b, and c.

- (A) Briefly explain the point of view about the economy expressed by the artist.
- (B) Briefly explain ONE development in the period 1865 to 1910 that could be used to support the point of view expressed by the artist.
- (C) Briefly explain ONE development in the period 1865 to 1910 that could be used to challenge the point of view expressed by the artist.

FACT #5 More Local**AP U.S. History Before:**

Because any event, individual, or fact in U.S. History was considered fair ground for an AP Exam question, more than 70% of AP teachers felt the AP Program forced them to cover too many topics in not enough depth. By rushing to cover everything that could show up on the AP Exam, teachers often had to skim their state standards or shoehorn local priorities into their AP courses.

Sample Exam Question:

27. Which of the following colonies required each community of 50 or more families to provide a teacher of reading and writing?

- (A) Pennsylvania
- (B) Massachusetts
- (C) Virginia
- (D) Maryland
- (E) Rhode Island

AP U.S. History After:

The new flexible framework affords schools the opportunity to ensure that AP courses in their state are aligned to their state standards and local history. Exam questions give students the opportunity to write about the historical examples required by their state standards.

Note: There are no Common Core State Standards for history or social studies — so it is not possible for the AP U.S. History Framework or Exam to be aligned to the Common Core.

Sample Exam Question:

1. Answer a, b, and c.

- a) Briefly explain ONE example of how contact between Native Americans and Europeans brought changes to Native American societies in the period 1492 to 1700.
- b) Briefly explain a SECOND example of how contact between Native Americans and Europeans brought changes to Native American societies in the same period.
- c) Briefly explain ONE example of how Native American societies resisted change brought by contact with Europeans in the same period.

