

Ten Types of AP History Essay Questions

- 1. Change Over Time** – *“The Period from 1783 to 1815 was a period of evolution to economic maturity for the infant US. Assess the validity of this view.”*
 - a. It asks you to measure the degree of change over time.
 - b. First, ascertain what you are assessing.
 - c. Identify key words.
 - d. Did other major events occur during this time? If so what effect did they have?
 - e. Analyze the dates. Do these dates mark beginnings, ends, turning points, dramatic shifts or a convenient time period?
 - f. Cover the entire period of the question; do not concentrate on only one period within the time frame.
 - g. It is possible that some ideas or policies did not change.
- 2. Cause & Effect** – *“Why did the US enter the First World War?”*
 - a. Be sure to balance immediate and long range causes
 - b. How are the causes related?
 - c. Can they be grouped under broad ideas?
 - d. Don't go too far back
 - i. Ex: if you blame the Civil War on the introduction of African slaves to America in 1619, then you are responsible for filling in the years between 1619 and 1861.
 - e. Nothing only has one cause
 - f. Always answer with multiple causation
 - g. Rank the causes and explain why
 - h. Include consequences of ideas, actions and events to emphasize effect
- 3. Compare & Contrast** – *“Compare and contrast three colonies – Virginia, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.”*
 - a. Contrast: compare with respect to differences
 - b. Compare: emphasis is on likenesses
 - c. Must include similarities & differences
 - d. What is comparable among the choices given?
 - e. Create a list of comparisons, decide importance and defend them.
 - f. How to Organize? Describe each separately or link both for each concept?
- 4. Define & Identify** – *“Discuss Jacksonian Democracy.”*
 - a. Define and identify and rank the traits, leaders, characteristics, origins, results or issues involved?
 - b. Can easily degenerate into a narrative – avoid this
 - c. Ex: Jackson's attack on the Bank can be a symbol of JD or aberration.
 - i. Why did he attack the Bank?
 - ii. What did he and/or supporters gain?
 - iii. What beliefs did the attack illustrate?
- 5. Statement, React to It** – *“Presidents are rarely successful in both foreign and domestic policy. Assess the validity of this statement.”*
 - a. Usually statement followed by “explain” or “assess the validity.”
 - b. Statement is either valid, invalid or partially valid.
 - c. The best answer selects one of the above, answers with strong support and addresses the opposite position.

6. **Evaluation** – “Chose three of the following and evaluate their effectiveness as political leaders.”

G. Washington	J.C. Calhoun	T. Jefferson
H. Clay	J.Q. Adams	D. Webster

or “Was colonial society democratic?”

- a. Question contains wording “evaluate,” “assess the significance” or “assess the validity.”
- b. Demands evaluation, not an evasion.
- c. Identify & define key words
 - i. Ex: “effective political leader”
 - ii. Ex: “democratic”

7. **A Statement from a Particular Viewpoint** – “Defend British policies during the period from 1763 to 1776.” or “According to a radical historian, what have been the foreign policy objectives of the US in the 20th Century.”

- a. You must clearly understand the view stated.
- b. You must be able to defend or refute it, regardless of your personal beliefs
- c. Keep your opinions to yourself
- d. May be initially confusing

8. **Given Framework** – “The powers of the President grew because of war and foreign crises. Evaluate this statement.”

- a. Limits response by forcing you to write within defined framework.
- b. Not as easy as it seems – very tricky.
- c. You must deal with foreign crises & war.
- d. You can disagree with the statement, but that places burden of showing that war & foreign crises did not cause growth of powers on you.
- e. You cannot answer stating the opposite, that domestic issues caused it, because that fails to address the question.

9. **Problem-Solution** – “The Progressive movement solved the problems that rose from industrialization. Discuss this statement.”

- a. Defined problem leads to a proposed solution that:
 - i. resolves problem
 - ii. generates new problems
 - iii. or both
- b. Must accurately identify the relationship between the problem & solution
- c. Must judge if the solution resolved the issue.
- d. Must evaluate the solutions & identify those that are successful and those that led to new problems

10. **Answer & Include** – “Identify and analyze the issues separating the US and the USSR during the Cold War as illustrated by three of the following.”

NATO & the Warsaw Pact	The Berlin Wall
The Korean War	The Nuclear Arms Race

- a. Really one of the first 9 types of questions.
- b. Additional provision that you must include certain events or ideas.