Advanced Placement
United States History


Note: You may use either the 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th editions. If you use a later edition, you will have to search for answers in various chapters from your text. Otherwise, all questions will be taken from the following chapters with the 3-6 editions.

The format is as follows:

Typed: single/spaced
Write the question followed by your essay answer. Your essay answers should be at least 1 page in length.

Chapter 2: Europeans and Africans Reach the Americas

Essays: 10 pts. each

1. Within a single generation of Columbus’s death, Spanish conquistadores explored, claimed, and conquered a vast American empire. How was this possible?

2. “Spanish conquest of major areas of the Americas set in motion two of the most far-reaching processes in modern history. One involved microbes, the other precious metals. Defend this statement with a discussion of both.

3. Why was England so slow to engage in exploration and colonization? Analyze the conditions that prompted her to begin both in the late sixteenth century.

4. English settlers had ambivalent images and feelings about the natives of North America. Analyze why this was so and what images/feelings seemed to prevail.

Chapter 3: Colonizing the Continent in the Seventeenth Century

Essays: 10 pts. each

1. Analyze the backgrounds, ideologies, goals, and modes of settlement among European immigrants to North America that produced distinctly different societies along the Atlantic seaboard in the seventeenth century.

2. Why did early years of the Jamestown colony prove to be a “starving time”? Could such a result have been avoided?

3. Did tobacco provide the “salvation” for the Virginia colony or merely set the stage for future problems? Explain.
4. Explain the pragmatic as well as the psychological reasons that led white American colonists of the seventeenth century to transform the black servant from a human being to a piece of chattel property.

5. Why were the colonists of the Chesapeake slower than those of New England to build private and comfortable homes? What conclusions might future historians draw about current housing patterns and developments in the United States?

6. What was the puritan “errand into the wilderness”? Analyze the ways in which this errand failed or proved successful.

7. Compare Spanish experiences in their frontier outposts of Florida and New Mexico in the late 1600s and early 1700s.

Chapter 4: The Maturing of Colonial Society

Essays: 10 pts. each

1. Discuss the factors that contributed to a population explosion in North America from 1680 to 1750. How and why did immigrants of the eighteenth century differ from those of the previous century? Did America prove to be their land of opportunity?

2. Analyze the ways in which contact with the French, Spanish, and English transformed life for Native Americans during the first half of the eighteenth century.

3. Compare the development of agriculture in the New England, mid-Atlantic, and southern colonies. How did different types of farming contribute to the formation of different types of societies in the three regions?

4. Compare the roles and rights of women in seventeenth-century Europe with those of their counterparts on the American colonial frontier. Explain how conditions improved or worsened for American women during the eighteenth century.

5. What changes transformed life in the southern colonies from 1680 to 1750? What similarities or differences existed between the tobacco coast, the rice coast, and the backcountry?

6. Analyze the causes and consequences of the Great Awakening. Was the Great Awakening a “conservative” or a “liberal” movement?

7. During the eighteenth century, how did colonial Americans begin to diverge from Englishmen on questions regarding the proper extent and division of political power?
Chapter 5: The Strains of Empire

Essays: 10 pts. each

1. How did Britain attempt to restructure its colonial empire from 1688 to 1763? Were the years of the early eighteenth century a period of “salutary neglect”?

2. Discuss the causes and important developments of the Seven Years’ War in North America. Analyze the consequences of the war for the various “winners” and “losers.”

3. Discuss the proposed program of George Grenville in 1764-1765 to raise revenue to reduce England’s debts. How and why did the Stamp Act politicize American colonists as never before?

4. The Tea Act was passed in 1773 by Parliament to save the British East India Company from Bankruptcy. How and why did it precipitate the final plunge into revolution for the American colonies?

5. What made republicanism a revolutionary ideology in the eighteenth century? What criticisms did revolutionary Americans level against the British monarchy?

6. How did the growing revolutionary sentiment from 1764 to 1776 impact urban artisans, women, and backcountry farmers in America?