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Setting a Policy for AP[®] World History

The purpose of this guide is to provide college faculty and administrators with research data, participation and performance data of AP[®] World History students, curricular content, and sample exam questions to facilitate the establishment of appropriate credit and placement policies for AP World History.

The Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP) provides motivated students with the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school. Students demonstrate their mastery of the curriculum by taking AP Exams—35 exams are available in 20 subject areas. In 2005, more than 1.2 million students took AP Exams worldwide. Of the 2.1 million AP Exams taken in 2005, almost 65,000 were in World History. More than 3,000 colleges and universities, including many international institutions, accept qualifying AP Exam scores for credit, placement, or both.

Throughout its 50-year history, the AP Program has maintained high standards of rigor in its courses and exams. Since its inception, AP has been a respected force in American education due to the critical involvement of college and university faculty members.

World History Faculty Involvement in AP

College and university faculty members play a vital role in every stage of development and scoring of an AP course and exam, helping to ensure their high quality. Each AP discipline has its own Development Committee—composed of college and university professors and experienced AP teachers—that is responsible for creating the course guidelines and exam questions. College and university faculty members also serve as the Chief Readers, responsible for establishing the exam-scoring guidelines and overseeing the annual AP Reading of the free-response section for their academic discipline.

“I’ve been involved in the Advanced Placement Program twice, in the 1980s with the AP European History, and now for some years with World History. AP involvement has provided me with real insights into history teaching and into the achievements of many high school teachers. The results help me think about history learning in general, and about appropriate college programs in particular. It’s simply a very stimulating engagement.

To me, the two most exciting things about AP World History are first, the number of students and teachers the program is reaching and the enthusiasm it often generates, and second, the extent to which the program sets standards that, appropriately debated, will influence world history teaching more widely, at both secondary and college levels.”

—Peter Stearns, AP World History Development Committee Chair
George Mason University

The College Board publication *AP and Higher Education* discusses the following topics at greater length: how to set an AP policy, AP research studies, the development of AP courses and exams, and the AP Exam scoring. For more information or to request a copy of this publication, please go to apcentral.collegeboard.com/highered.

How to Set an AP Policy

The College Board encourages higher education institutions to base their AP policy decisions on data and research, and recognizes that different institutions and departments will set different policies, based upon factors unique to their institution, student body, and academic discipline. The best way for colleges and universities to determine their AP credit and placement policies is to conduct their own research on the performance of AP and non-AP students at their own institution and in their own department.

Research on AP Student Performance

Research studies show that students who do well on an AP Exam are academically prepared to place out of a corresponding college course and move on to the next higher-level course in the discipline.

Taking the AP course and exam stimulates further interest in the subject area and encourages deeper disciplinary knowledge.

Research studies show that students who take the AP Exams are significantly more likely to take further course work in the same subject area than students who do not take the AP Exam. Higher scores on the AP Exam makes this trend even more pronounced, with a greater likelihood of majoring or minoring in the discipline.

PDF copies of research studies on AP student performance can be found at apcentral.collegeboard.com/colleges/research.

In addition to research studies on AP student performance, the College Board conducts college comparability studies to measure the degree to which the AP courses and exams are equivalent in content and difficulty to corresponding college courses. The AP Exam scoring rubric is established so that the lowest composite score that earns an AP grade of 5 is equivalent to the average score earned by college students who received grades of A in a comparable course. The lowest score that earns an AP grade of 4 is equivalent to the average B, and the lowest score that earns an AP grade of 3 is equivalent to the average C.

The research that the College Board conducts is intended to help institutions and academic departments as they establish appropriate AP policies. AP Central® (apcentral.collegeboard.com), the College Board's online home for AP professionals, contains other resources that may assist in this process, including the Course Description, released exam questions, and sample student responses at different levels of ability.

For more information go to:
apcentral.collegeboard.com/world/exam

AP World History Students, Course, and Exam

Participation and Performance Data for AP World History Students in 2005

Total Number of Schools Offering AP World History: 2,380

Table 1: AP World History Exam Score Distribution, 2005

EXAM GRADE	NUMBER OF EXAMINEES	% AT
Score of 5	6,577	10.2%
Score of 4	10,957	17.1%
Score of 3	16,212	25.2%
Score of 2	15,021	23.4%
Score of 1	15,440	24.0%
	64,207	100.0%

Figure 1: AP World History Examinees by Gender, 2005

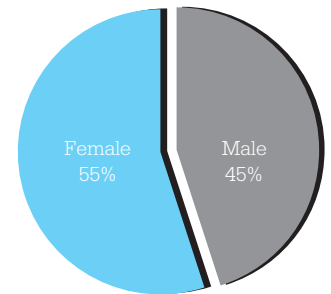
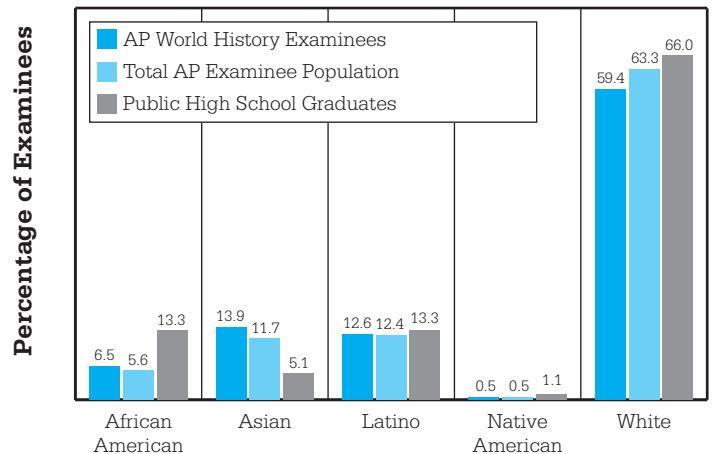


Figure 2: AP World History Examinees by Race and Ethnicity, 2005



AP Credit Policy Info on the Web

Information about AP credit and placement policies at more than 1,000 colleges and universities is available on the College Board's Web site at www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy.

The AP World History Course

The AP World History course is designed to provide students with a learning experience equivalent to that of an introductory college course in world history. The purpose of the course is to develop a greater understanding of the evolution of global processes and contacts in different types of human societies. This understanding is advanced through a combination of selective factual knowledge and appropriate analytical skills. The course highlights the nature of changes in global frameworks and their causes and consequences, as well as comparisons among major societies. It emphasizes relevant factual knowledge, leading interpretive issues, and skills in analyzing types of historical evidence. Periodization, explicitly discussed, forms an organizing principle for dealing with change and continuity throughout the course. Specific themes provide further organization to the course, along with consistent attention to contacts among societies that form the core of world history as a field of study.

Chronological Boundaries

The course has as its chronological frame the period from approximately 8000 B.C.E. to the present, with the period 8000 B.C.E. to 600 C.E. serving as the foundation for the balance of the course. An outline of the periodization with associated percentages for suggested course content is as follows:

Foundations: circa 8000 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.	19–20%
600 C.E. to 1450	22%
1450 to 1750	19–20%
1750 to 1914	19–20%
1914 to the present	19–20%

Themes

AP World History highlights six overarching themes that should receive approximately equal attention throughout the course:

1. The dynamics of change and continuity across the world history periods covered in this course, and the causes and processes involved in major changes of these dynamics
2. Patterns and effects of interaction among societies and regions: trade, war, diplomacy, and international organizations
3. The effects of technology, economics, and demography on people and the environment (population growth and decline, disease, labor systems, manufacturing, migrations, agriculture, weaponry)
4. Systems of social structure and gender structure (comparing major features within and among societies, and assessing change and continuity)
5. Cultural, intellectual, and religious developments, including interactions among and within societies
6. Changes in functions and structures of states and in attitudes toward states and political identities (political culture), including the emergence of the nation-state (types of political organization)

The themes serve throughout the course as unifying threads, helping students to put what is particular about each period or society into a larger framework. The themes also provide ways to make comparisons over time. The interaction of themes and periodization encourage cross-period questions such as “To what extent have civilizations maintained their cultural and political distinctiveness over the time periods the course covers?”; “Compare the justification of social inequality in 1450 with that at the end of the twentieth century”; or “Discuss the changes in international trading systems between 1300 and 1600.”

“AP World History provides students with the broad-based content and skills of historical analysis they need to be successful in college history courses, as well as courses in other fields in which critical reading and the ability to synthesize information are important.”

—Merry Wiesner-Hanks
AP World History Development Committee Chief Reader Designate
University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

Habits of Mind or Skills

The AP World History course addresses habits of mind or skills in two categories: (1) those addressed by any rigorous history course, and (2) those addressed by a world history course.

Four habits of mind are in the first category:

- Constructing and evaluating arguments: using evidence to make plausible arguments
- Using documents and other primary data: developing the skills necessary to analyze point of view, context, and bias, and to understand and interpret information
- Assessing issues of change and continuity over time, including the capacity to deal with change as a process and with questions of causation
- Understanding diversity of interpretations through analysis of context, point of view, and frame of reference

Three habits of mind are in the second category:

- Seeing global patterns and processes over time and space while also connecting local developments to global ones and moving through levels of generalizations from the global to the particular
- Comparing within and among societies, including comparing societies’ reactions to global processes
- Being aware of human commonalities and differences while assessing claims of universal standards, and understanding culturally diverse ideas and values in historical context

Every part of the AP World History Exam assesses habits of mind as well as content. For example, in the multiple-choice section, maps, graphs, artwork, and quotations are used to judge students' ability to assess primary data, while other questions focus on evaluating arguments, handling diversity of interpretation, making comparisons among societies, drawing generalizations, and understanding historical context. In Part A of the essay section of the exam, the document-based question (DBQ) focuses on assessing students' ability to construct arguments, use primary documents, analyze point of view and context, and understand the global context.

The remaining essay questions in Parts B and C focus on global patterns over time and space with emphasis on processes of change and continuity (Part B) and on comparisons within and among societies (Part C).

The Development Committee creates the guidelines for the AP World History course and designs the AP Exam. Periodically the Development Committee conducts curriculum surveys, sent to professors who teach the comparable college-level course, that help ensure that the AP World History course remains current with concepts and themes as taught in college and university classrooms.

Beginning in fall 2006, AP World History teachers and principals of schools where AP World History is taught must certify that their 2007-08 courses follow all the requirements stipulated by the Development Committee, including using a college-level textbook, in order to ensure that the AP course reflects college-level standards. By completing this AP Course Audit, high schools will receive individual licenses to label their world history courses "AP." In fall 2007, colleges and universities will receive a list of all high schools authorized to use the "AP" designation for their world history courses.

The AP World History Exam

The AP World History Exam lasts just over three hours and includes two equally weighted sections: multiple choice and free response. The multiple-choice section, lasting 55 minutes, consists of 70 questions designed to measure the students' knowledge of world history from the Foundations period to the present, including cross-chronological questions. The free-response section, lasting 130 minutes, includes three essays, each to be completed in 40 minutes, with a 10-minute reading period.

The first essay is a document-based question (DBQ), the primary purpose of which is to evaluate students' ability to formulate and support an answer from documentary evidence. Documents are chosen on the basis of both the information they convey about the topic and the perspective that they offer on other documents used in the exercise.

The second essay deals specifically with change over time (covering at least one of the periods in the course outline) and the analysis of the dynamics of change and continuity concerning large global issues such as technology, trade, culture, migrations, and environmental developments.

The third essay is comparative over a wide set of issues, and focuses on developments in at least two societies and/or regions, relating to major themes such as culture, trade, migrations and/or interactions between or among societies.

AP World History free-response questions from recent exam years are listed below.

Question 1 (DBQ)

Based on the following documents, analyze the responses to the spread of Buddhism in China. What additional kind of document(s) would you need to evaluate the extent of Buddhism's appeal in China?

Historical Background: Buddhism, founded in India in the sixth century B.C.E., was brought to China by the first century C.E., gradually winning converts following the collapse of the Han dynasty in 220 C.E. Buddhist influence continued to expand for several centuries. Between 220 C.E. and 570 C.E., China experienced a period of political instability and disunity. After 570 C.E., the imperial structure was restored.

Document 1

Source: According to Buddhist tradition, "The Four Noble Truths," the first sermon preached by the Buddha (563 B.C.E.-483 B.C.E.), India, fifth century B.C.E.

The First Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of Sorrow. Birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, disease is sorrow, death is sorrow, contact with the unpleasant is sorrow, separation from the pleasant is sorrow, every wish unfulfilled is sorrow.

The Second Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Sorrow; it arises from craving, which leads to rebirth, which brings delight and passion, and seeks pleasure—the craving for sensual pleasure, the craving for continued life, and the craving for power.

The Third Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of the Stopping of Sorrow. It is the complete stopping of that craving, so that no passion remains, leaving it, being emancipated from it, being released from it, giving no place to it.

The Fourth Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of the Way that Leads to the Stopping of Sorrow.

Document 2

Source: Zhi Dun, Chinese scholar, author, and confidant of Chinese aristocrats and high officials during the period when northern China was invaded by central Asian steppe nomads, circa 350 C.E.

Whosoever in China, in this era of sensual pleasures, serves the Buddha and correctly observes the commandments, who recites the Buddhist Scriptures, and who furthermore makes a vow to be reborn without ever abandoning his sincere intention, will at the end of his life, when his soul passes away, be miraculously transported thither. He will behold the Buddha and be enlightened in his spirit, and then he will enter Nirvana. *

*Nirvana: the extinction of desire and individual consciousness

Document 3

Source: Anonymous Chinese scholar, "The Disposition of Error," China, circa 500 C.E.

Question: If Buddhism is the greatest and most venerable of ways, why did the great sages of the past and Confucius not practice it? In the Confucian Classics no one mentions it. Why, then, do you love the Way of the Buddha and rejoice in outlandish arts? Can the writings of the Buddha exceed the Classics and commentaries and beautify the accomplishments of the sages?

Answer: All written works need not necessarily be the words of Confucius. To compare the sages to the Buddha would be like comparing a white deer to a unicorn, or a swallow to a phoenix. The records and teachings of the Confucian classics do not contain everything. Even if the Buddha is not mentioned in them, what occasion is there for suspicion?

Question: Now of happiness there is none greater than the continuation of one's line, of unfilial conduct there is none worse than childlessness. The monks forsake wives and children, reject property and wealth. Some do not marry all their lives.

Answer: Wives, children, and property are the luxuries of the world, but simple living and inaction are the wonders of the Way. The monk practices the Way and substitutes that for worldly pleasures. He accumulates goodness and wisdom in exchange for the joys of having a wife and children.

Document 4

Source: Han Yu, leading Confucian scholar and official at the Tang imperial court, "Memorial on Buddhism," 819 C.E.

Your servant begs leave to say that Buddhism is no more than a cult of the barbarian peoples spread to China. It did not exist here in ancient times.

Now I hear that Your Majesty has ordered the community of monks to go to greet the finger bone of the Buddha [a relic brought to China from India], and that Your Majesty will ascend a tower to watch the procession as this relic is brought into the palace. If these practices are not stopped, and this relic of the Buddha is allowed to be carried from one temple to another, there will be those in the crowd who will cut off their arms and mutilate their flesh in offering to the Buddha.

Now the Buddha was a man of the barbarians who did not speak Chinese and who wore clothes of a different fashion. The Buddha's sayings contain nothing about our ancient kings and the Buddha's manner of dress did not conform to our laws; he understood neither the duties that bind sovereign and subject, nor the affections of father and son. If the Buddha were still alive today and came to our court, Your Majesty might condescend to receive him, but he would then be escorted to the borders of the nation, dismissed, and not allowed to delude the masses. How then, when he has long been dead, could the Buddha's rotten bones, the foul and unlucky remains of his body, be rightly admitted to the palace? Confucius said: "Respect ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance!" Your servant is deeply ashamed and begs that this bone from the Buddha be given to the proper authorities to be cast into fire and water, that this evil be rooted out, and later generations spared this delusion.

Document 5

Source: Zong Mi, a leading Buddhist scholar, favored by the Tang imperial household, essay, "On the Nature of Man," early ninth century C.E.

Confucius, Laozi and the Buddha were perfect sages. They established their teachings according to the demands of the age and the needs of various beings. They differ in their approaches in that they encourage the perfection of good deeds, punish wicked ones, and reward good ones; all three teachings lead to the creation of an orderly society and for this they must be observed with respect.

Document 6

Source: Tang Emperor Wu, Edict on Buddhism, 845 C.E.

We have heard that the Buddha was never spoken of before the Han dynasty; from then on the religion of idols gradually came to prominence. So in this latter age Buddhism has transmitted its strange ways and has spread like a luxuriant vine until it has poisoned the customs of our nation. Buddhism has spread to all the nine provinces of China; each day finds its monks and followers growing more numerous and its temples more lofty. Buddhism wears out the people's strength, pilfers their wealth, causes people to abandon their lords and parents for the company of teachers, and severs man and wife with its monastic decrees. In destroying law and injuring humankind indeed nothing surpasses this doctrine!

Now if even one man fails to work the fields, someone must go hungry; if one woman does not tend her silkworms, someone will go cold. At present there are an inestimable number of monks and nuns in the empire, all of them waiting for the farmers to feed them and the silkworms to clothe them while the Buddhist public temples and private chapels have reached boundless numbers, sufficient to outshine the imperial palace itself.

Having thoroughly examined all earlier reports and consulted public opinion on all sides, there no longer remains the slightest doubt in Our mind that this evil should be eradicated.

Question 2 (Change-over-time essay)

Pick **one** of the following regions and discuss the changes and continuities in the world trading systems from 1450 to the present. Be sure to explain how alterations in the framework of international trade interacted with regional factors to produce the changes and continuities throughout the period.

China

Latin America

Sub-Saharan Africa

Middle East

Question 3 (Change-over-time essay)

Analyze the social and economic transformations that occurred in the Atlantic world as a result of new contacts among Western Europe, Africa, and the Americas from 1492 to 1750.

Question 4 (Comparison essay)

Compare and contrast the roles of women in TWO of the following regions during the period from 1750 to 1914.

East Asia

Sub-Saharan Africa

Latin America

Western Europe

Question 5 (Comparison essay)

Compare and contrast the political and economic effects of Mongol rule on TWO of the following regions:

China

Middle East

Russia

“The value of the AP course is in seeing students better prepared for college-level work. Those who have done well possess the critical thinking skills required to analyze documents, make judgments, and offer up explanatory paragraphs without too much struggle. In short, they have learned—or the best ones have—how to think. We have no more important job as educators. The other significant benefit of the exam in world history is that we are shaping a field, both in terms of teaching and research. Many historians are impressed by the curricular changes that the AP Program has been able to bring about as a result of the exam in world history. It’s exciting to be a part of that process.”

—Alan Karras, AP World History Development Committee
University of California, Berkeley

How to Get Involved

There are many ways college and university faculty members can help maintain the high standards of the AP Program:

- Participate in a college comparability study
- Be an AP Reader
- Contribute multiple-choice test items for the AP Exam
- Become an AP Faculty Consultant

For more information, please go to: apcentral.collegeboard.com/highered/getinvolved

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The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.