

SAMPLE APUSH ESSAY TOPICS

Colonial & Revolutionary Periods

- 1) Analyze the cultural and economic responses of TWO of the following groups to the Indians of North America before 1750.
 - British
 - French
 - Spanish
- 2) “Geography was the primary factor in shaping the development of the British colonies in North America.” Assess the validity of this statement for the 1600s.
- 3) Early encounters between American Indians and European colonists led to a variety of relationships among the different cultures. Analyze how the actions taken by BOTH American Indians and European colonists shaped those relationships in TWO of the following regions. Confine your answer to the 1600’s.
 - New England
 - Chesapeake
 - Spanish Southwest
 - New York and New France
- 4) Analyze the differences between the Spanish settlements in the Southwest and the English colonies in New England in the seventeenth century in terms of TWO of the following:
 - Politics
 - Religion
 - Economic development
- 5) Analyze the origins and development of slavery in Britain’s North American colonies in the period 1607-to 1776.
- 6) Analyze the extent to which the American Revolution represented a radical alteration in American political ideas and institutions. Confine your answer to the period 1775 to 1800.
- 7) Analyze the impact of the American Revolution on both slavery and the status of women in the period from 1775-1800.
- 8) Analyze the political, diplomatic, and military reasons for the United States victory in the Revolutionary War. Confine your answer to the period 1775–1783.

The Critical Period

- 9) Evaluate the extent to which the Articles of Confederation were effective in solving the problems that confronted the new nation.
- 10) To what extent was the election of 1800 aptly named the “Revolution of 1800?” Respond with reference to TWO of the following areas:
 - Economics
 - Foreign Policy
 - Judiciary
 - Politics
- 11) To what extent was the American Constitution a radical departure from the Articles of Confederation?

- 12) “The United States Constitution of 1787 represented an economic and ideological victory for the traditional American political elite.” Assess the validity of that statement for the period 1781 to 1789.

The Early Republic

- 13) “Although historically represented as distinct political parties, the Federalists and the Whigs in fact shared a common political ideology, represented many of the same interest groups, and proposed similar programs and policies.” Assess the validity of the statement.
- 14) To what extent did political parties contribute to the development of national unity in the United States between 1790-and 1840?
- 15) Analyze the extent to which TWO of the following influenced the development of democracy between 1820 and 1840.
- Jacksonian economic policy
 - Changes in electoral politics
 - Second Great Awakening
 - Westward movement
- 16) How did TWO of the following contribute to the reemergence of a two party system in the period 1820 to 1840?
- Major political personalities
 - States’ rights
 - Economic issues
- 17) The Jacksonian Period (1824-1848) has been celebrated as the era of the “common man.” To what extent did the period live up to its characterization? Consider TWO of the following in your response.
- Economic development
 - Politics
 - Reform Movements

Antebellum America

- 18) In what ways did developments in transportation bring about economic and social change in the U.S. from 1820-1860?
- 19) To what extent and in what ways did the roles of women change in American society between 1790-1860? Respond with reference to TWO of the following areas:
- Domestic
 - Economic
 - Political
 - Social
- 20) In what ways did the Second Great Awakening in the North influence TWO of the following?
- Abolitionism
 - Temperance
 - The cult of domesticity
 - Utopian communities
- 21) In what ways and to what extent was industrial development from 1800 to 1860 a factor in the relationship between northern and southern states?

- 22) Assess the moral arguments and political actions of those opposed to the spread of slavery in the context of TWO of the following.
- Missouri Compromise
 - Mexican War
 - Compromise of 1850
 - Kansas-Nebraska Act
- 23) Analyze the ways in which controversy over the extension of slavery into western territories contributed to the coming of the Civil War. Confine your answer to the period 1845–1861.
- 24) Analyze the impact of the market revolution (1815-1860) on the economies of TWO of the following regions.
- The Northeast
 - The Midwest
 - The South

Civil War & Reconstruction

- 25) How do you account for the failure of Reconstruction (1865-1877) to bring social and economic equality of opportunity to the former slaves?
- 26) Discuss the political, economic and social reforms introduced in the South between 1864 and 1877. To what extent did these reforms survive the Compromise of 1877?
- 27) Analyze the consequences of the Civil War with respect to any TWO of the following in the United States between 1865 and 1880.
- Agriculture
 - Labor
 - Industrialization
 - Transportation
- 28) Evaluate the impact of the Civil War on political and economic development in TWO of the following regions. Focus your answer on the time period between 1865-1900.
- The South
 - The North
 - The West
- 29) Explain why and how the role of the federal government changed as a result of the Civil War with respect to TWO of the following during the period 1861-1877:
- Race relations
 - Economic development
 - Westward expansion

General Post-Civil War America/Gilded Age

- 30) How were the lives of the Plains Indians in the second half of the nineteenth century affected by technological developments and governmental actions?

- 31) Analyze the impact of any TWO of the following on the American industrial worker between 1865 and 1900.
- Government actions
 - Immigration
 - Labor unions
 - Technological changes
- 32) How and why did transportation developments spark economic growth during the period from 1860 to 1900 in the United States?
- 33) For whom and to what extent was the American West a land of opportunity from 1865 to 1890?
- 34) Compare and contrast the attitudes of THREE of the following toward the wealth that was created in the United States during the late nineteenth century.
- Andrew Carnegie
 - Eugene V. Debs
 - Horatio Alger
 - Booker T. Washington
 - Ida M. Tarbell
- 35) Analyze and evaluate Booker T. Washington's program for American blacks and W.E.B. Du Bois's challenge to that program.
- 36) "From the 1840s through the 1890s, women's activities in the intellectual, social, economic, and political spheres effectively challenged traditional attitudes about women's place in society." Assess the validity of this statement.
- 37) Analyze the reasons for the emergence of the Populist movement in the late nineteenth century.

Early 20th Century

- 38) How successful were Progressive reforms during the period 1890 to 1915 with respect to TWO of the following?
- Industrial Conditions
 - Urban life
 - Politics
- 39) Historians have argued that Progressive reform lost momentum in the 1920's. Evaluate this statement with respect to TWO of the following:
- Regulation of business
 - Labor
 - Immigrants
- 40) Analyze the roles that women played in Progressive Era reforms from the 1880s through 1920. Focus your essay on TWO of the following.
- Politics
 - Social conditions
 - Labor and working conditions

- 41) To what extent did the role of the federal government change under President Theodore Roosevelt in regard to TWO of the following:
- Labor
 - Trusts
 - Conservation
 - World Affairs
- 42) Compare and contrast the programs and policies designed by reformers of the Progressive era to those designed by reformers of the New Deal period. Confine your answer to programs and policies that addressed the needs of those living in poverty.

General 20th Century & Comparison Topics

- 43) Describe the patterns of immigration in TWO of the periods listed below. Compare and contrast the responses of Americans to immigrants in these time periods.
- 1820-1860
 - 1880-1924
 - 1965-present
- 44) Compare and contrast U.S. society in the 1920's and the 1950's with respect to TWO of the following:
- race relations
 - role of women
 - consumerism
- 45) Assess the success of the United States policy of containment in Asia between 1945 and 1975.
- 46) Analyze the successes and failures of the United States Cold War policy of containment as it is developed in TWO of the following regions of the world during the period 1945-1975.
- East and Southeast Asia
 - Europe
 - Latin America
 - Middle East
- 47) While the United States to be dominated by consensus and conformity in the 1950s, some American reacted against the status quo. Analyze the critiques of United States society made by TWO of the following.
- Youth
 - Civil Rights Activists
 - Intellectuals
- 48) To what extent did the decade of the 1950s deserve its reputation as an age of political, social and cultural conformity?
- 49) How do you account for the appeal of McCarthyism in the United States in the era following the Second World War?
- 50) While the United States appeared to be dominated by consensus and conformity in the 1950's, some Americans reacted against the status quo. Analyze the critiques of United States society made by TWO of the following:
- Youth
 - Civil Rights Activists
 - Intellectuals

- 51) Explain the causes and consequences of TWO of the following population movements in the United States during the period 1945–1985.
- Suburbanization
 - The growth of the Sun Belt
 - Immigration to the United States
- 52) Analyze the extent to which TWO of the following transformed American society in the period of the 1960s and 1970s.
- The Civil Rights movement
 - The antiwar movement
 - The women’s rights movement
- 53) “Between 1960 and 1975, there was great progress in the struggle for political and social equality.” Assess the validity of this statement with respect to TWO of the following groups of people during that period.
- African Americans
 - Asian Americans
 - Latinos
 - Native Americans
 - Women
- 54) Discuss, with respect to TWO of the following, the view that the 1960’s represented a period of profound cultural change.
- Education
 - Gender Roles
 - Music
 - Race Relations
- 55) “Landslide presidential victories do not ensure continued political effectiveness of legislative success.” Assess the validity of this statement by comparing TWO of the following presidential administrations.
- Franklin Roosevelt (1936)
 - Lyndon Johnson (1964)
 - Richard Nixon (1972)
 - Ronald Reagan (1984)