

Stimulus Based Multiple Choice Questions— Revised AP US History Exam

The AP US History Exam places less emphasis on the memorization of historical facts, and more emphasis upon the utilization of historical thinking skills. The College Board’s stated goal is to encourage students to “think like historians.”

The new multiple-choice section will contain a number of “sets” of questions, with between two and five questions per set. Each set of questions will ask students to respond to stimulus material — a primary or secondary source, including texts, images, charts, graphs, maps, etc. This stimulus material will reflect the types of evidence that historians use in their research on the past. Each multiple-choice question within the set will now have four possible answers, not five.

Stimulus-based multiple-choice questions will assess a student’s close reading skills and will frequently address causes and effects related to a particular stimulus. Students will often be challenged to recognize similarities and differences between the primary or secondary source materials offered and other ideas, individuals, or events in American History. Students may be asked to display what they know about a particular time period i.e. to make inferences from history. Moreover, while a set of questions may focus on one particular period of U.S. history, the individual questions within that set may ask students to make connections to thematically linked developments in earlier or later time periods.

Sample Stimulus Based Multiple Choice Questions

Questions 1-4 refer to the following passages:

“And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in and wonderfully to work among us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons who were to all appearance savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner . . . God made it, I suppose, the greatest occasion of awakening to others . . . Those who were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those who had been disposed to think and speak lightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings.”

--Jonathan Edwards, *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England*, 1740

"God helps those who help themselves"

--Benjamin Franklin, *Proverbs from Poor Richard’s Almanac*, c. 1740

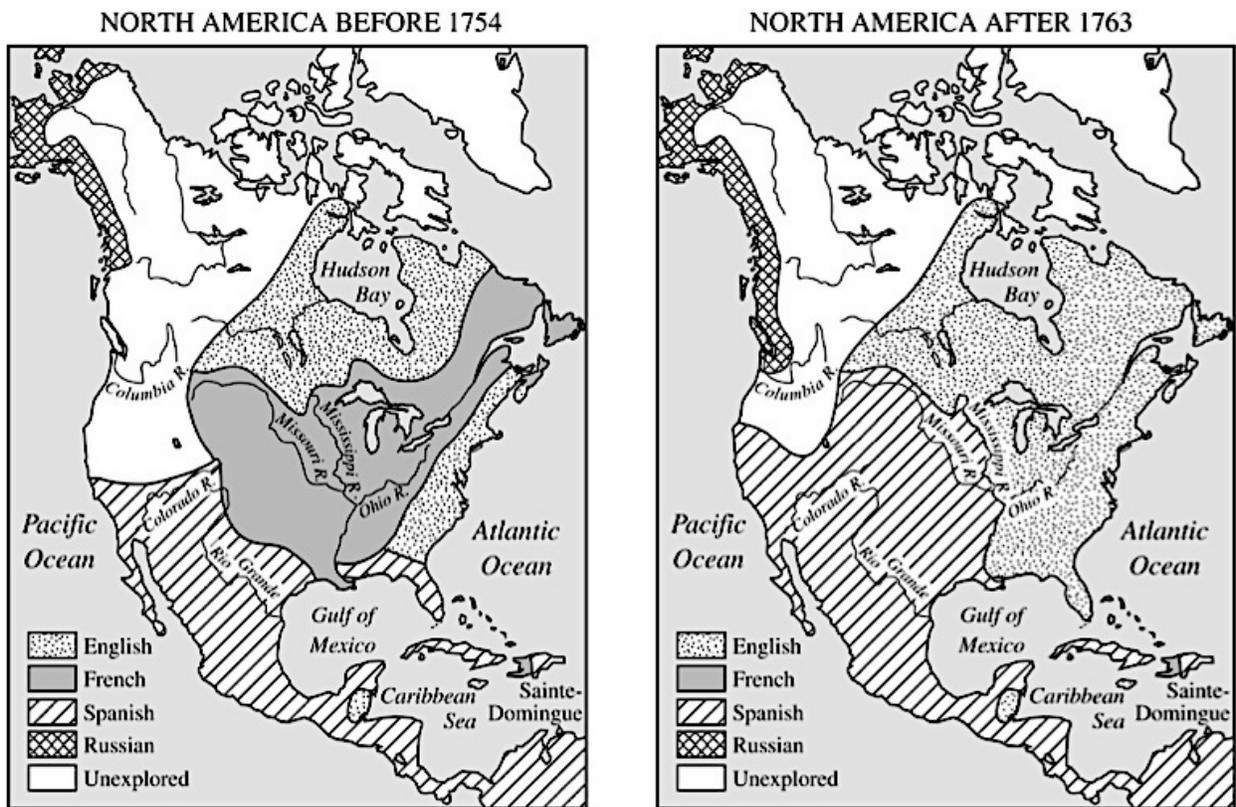
1. Which of the following statements correctly describes the phenomena discussed by Edwards?
 - A. The “great awakenings” described by Edwards were fostered by a mix of rational science and religion.
 - B. The “great awakenings” were largely promoted by established churches, such as the Anglicans.
 - C. The “great awakenings” can accurately be depicted as an attempt to convert the largely Catholic population of the British colonies to Protestantism.
 - D. The “great awakenings” increased religious pluralism in the thirteen colonies.

2. The phenomena described by Jonathan Edwards is fundamentally different from the Enlightenment sentiments expressed by Benjamin Franklin in that:
 - A. Edwards saw humanity, not God, as the primary actor in the Great Awakening
 - B. Unlike Enlightenment deists, Edwards questioned the existence of God
 - C. Edwards attributed the widespread religious conversions of his day to supernatural influence more than human effort
 - D. the “awakenings” contributed nothing to the educational advancement of the thirteen colonies

3. The “awakenings” described by Edwards:
 - A. primarily impacted America’s educated elite
 - B. were almost exclusively confined to New England
 - C. were closely associated with an outpouring of religious emotion
 - D. had little impact in helping to set the stage for the American Revolution

4. Like many Enlightenment thinkers, Franklin attributed human progress to:
 - A. divine intervention in worldly affairs
 - B. reason, science, and hard work
 - C. the Puritan worldview
 - D. the economic and cultural influence of England

Questions 5–7 refer to the map below depicting the French and Indian (aka Seven Years) War.



5. One can infer from information contained on the maps above that the French and Indian War:
 - A. created a power vacuum in which the French reasserted their dominance in North America.
 - B. threatened French-Indian trade networks and American Indian autonomy.
 - C. had little impact on Spanish and Russian colonial empires in North America.
 - D. basically ended European power struggles in North America.

6. One significant cause of the French and Indian War was:
 - A. frequent French and Indian raids upon the thirteen American colonies.
 - B. Britain's weakening economic and geopolitical influence in the mid-1700s.
 - C. the French presence in the Ohio Valley, which hindered the expansion of the British colonies.
 - D. Britain's friendly alliances with American Indians, who were typically anti-French.

7. Which of the following was **NOT** a significant consequence of the French and Indian War?
 - A. Britain encouraged its American colonists to expand westward in order to capitalize on the profitable resources found in the continental interior.
 - B. The war paved the way for significant Native American defeats in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
 - C. The British crown began to more rigorously enforce imperial policies and taxes in an attempt to address the debts and responsibilities they incurred as a result of the War.
 - D. Britain's post War policies generated colonial opposition, which led to a colonial independence movement and Revolutionary War.

APUSH MULTIPLE CHOICE STRATEGIES

1. Don't think too hard. Don't suspect that everything is a trick question. When you come across an easy question, it probably is. Also, don't assume that you are using one letter choice too much or too little and then overcompensate just to get an equal mix of letter choice answers.
2. Read the stem of the question carefully to determine quickly its content area. Careful reading is especially important in **EXCEPT** questions.
3. Read all four choices before selecting the correct answer. Do not jump at the first answer that seems correct. You are looking for the **BEST** answer, and there may be a better answer later.
4. When you read through the test, pick out questions that you find "easy" (i.e. you are sure of the answer.) Answer those first, skipping the other items momentarily. This strategy helps you build confidence and assures that you will get credit for what you know if you run low on time. Be sure to return to each question that you've skipped.
5. Don't be afraid to use the test as a source of information. Sometimes, another question will jog your memory or help you answer the one you are stuck on.
6. Don't guess randomly. Get rid of the options that cannot be right, and then work with the ones that are left. Always start by eliminating wrong choices and then selecting from the remaining choices. Select one "pet letter" that you will always use when the stem is totally unknown and you are completely shooting in the dark.

7. **ELIMINATING ANSWERS:** Eliminate choices that are outside the chronological period, wrong under any and all circumstances, or obviously unrelated to the question topic. Also, eliminate choices that do not link grammatically to the stem of the question. (Some tests may not phrase the incorrect answers as carefully as the correct one. If a choice is added to complete the stem and the result is an awkward or ungrammatical construction, it is most likely not the correct answer. Once you have eliminated some alternatives, make an educated **GUESS** from the remaining options.
8. Longest multiple-choice answers are sometimes good guesses. Sometimes, test designers will add qualifying or clarifying terms or expressions to the right answer on multiple-choice items. The result is often longer, more detailed “best” answers. If two out of the four are almost identical, pick the longer of the two.
9. "Decoys" on a multiple-choice test questions may not be worded as carefully: they may sound a little too absolute or too "pat." With the qualifiers missing, the validity of the statement is highly suspect. Be especially cautious of items that contain absolute terms—words like always, never, invariably, none, all, every, and must.
10. When two of the four choices are opposites, pick one of those two as the best answer. When researchers analyzed a wide range of multiple choice tests, they found that the correct answer is often one of the phrases that has a parallel or "echoed" decoy item.
11. B and C answers are often the best in four answer (A-D) multiple-choice questions.
12. Non-answers, such as none of the above, are usually poor guesses.
13. All of the above is usually a good guess. If you can find at least **TWO** true, go with it.
14. Remember a scanner reads machine scored exams. Try not to make your marks so dark that they are difficult to erase.
15. **NO TRIVIAL PURSUIT**—The College Board does not ask obscure questions based on rote memorization. Specific dates are far less important than the general sequence of events. Causes and effects or broad historical trends are far more significant than minute historical details.
16. If there is time, go over your test when you are finished. Make sure you've read the question correctly and you answered what was asked. You should only change answers to questions if you originally misread them or if you have encountered information elsewhere in the test that indicates with certainty that your first choice is incorrect.
17. **LEAVE NO QUESTIONS BLANK!** Total scores on the multiple-choice section will be based on the number of questions answered correctly. Answers left blank will be counted as wrong.

IMPORTANT FINAL NOTE: Although the AP US History Exam will only include stimulus-based multiple-choice questions, virtually all chapter tests, mid-terms and semester exams in AP American Studies will include both stimulus-based multiple-choice questions and traditional multiple-choice questions intended to assess reading comprehension.