

APUSH History paper
20% of final grade 100 points
Time constraints 1975-2000

Task: Answer a historical research question of your choice between 1975-2000.
Your topic must directly address one of the seven historical themes:

- 5/14 Historical Research Question due by the end of class (5 points)
- 5/19 5 sources for Bibliography found by the end of class (10 points)
- 5/22 outline due at the end of class (15 points)
- 5/26 Draft Due for Peer Review
- 5/28 Final Paper due at the end of class (70 points)

Requirements:

- High Quality work
- Use of class time effectively. I will warn you once per class period. After that you will lose 1% point each time I have to redirect
- MLA Format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- 7 paragraphs and 1000 words. **If you do not meet the minimum requirement your grade is 0%. I will not read it.**
- Bibliography with at least 5 sources
- 12 parenthetical citations with at least two per body paragraph
- 1 map, chart, graph, image, that supports your thesis

Where can I find good research?

- Your Textbook
- Google Scholar
- Anything with .gov or .edu
- .org or .com is NOT acceptable unless I approve it
- <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/>
- <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/>
- <http://www.archives.gov/>
- <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/category/american-history/?r=0>
- <http://www.pbs.org/>
- <http://collections.si.edu/search/>
- Major Newspapers: New York Times, Wall Street Journal, NPR

Guidelines for Forming Historical Questions

Many students make the mistake of thinking that history is nothing more than memorizing names, dates, facts and events. Though knowing this material is helpful, the best historians are those that ask good historical questions, that uncover the central issues and motives that shaped events, ideas, and peoples' actions. An analytic approach looks at causes and effects rather than just narrative. *How* and *Why* become the focus rather than *Who*, *What*, *Where*, and *When*.

- Bad Questions: *Who were the Maya? When did the Maya collapse?*
- Better Question: *Why did the Maya civilization collapse?*

Good historical questions should do the following:

- Address causes or effects
- Be open-ended (not having a yes or no answer)
- Be argumentative (can be legitimately answered in multiple ways)
- Be specific

Here are a few examples of solid open-ended questions that have multiple possible answers:

- *What impacts did the Tokugawa Shogunate's policy of isolation have upon Japan during the 1600s and 1700s?*
- *How was Napoleon Bonaparte able to gain power in France?*
- *What impacts did westward expansion have upon the southern United States during the first half of the 1800s?*

Always remember that your entire paper is an elaborate answer to your question, so it is very important that you form a question you can live with!

How To Write an A.P. U.S. History Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is the position a student is going to take, the argument that is going to be made. It is therefore the answer to the question being asked. As such, the thesis statement is not a fact; it is an informed interpretation of the facts. Neither is the thesis statement just an opinion. Rather the thesis is the reasoned judgment of the student. Most good questions allow for a range of possible answers. In other words, a continuum exists and students can generally feel free to choose a response along that continuum. However, students should avoid crafting an extreme response at either end of the continuum. Most questions require a response that is not black or white but instead some shade of gray. That does not mean, however, that students should attempt to respond in the middle of the continuum. Such an attempt usually results in a failure to articulate a clear position. Students should also beware of the fallacy of "positive response bias." Unfortunately, many students are inclined to answer a question in the affirmative. Students always need to carefully weigh all of the historical evidence and then craft a response that best articulates their understanding of the historical record. In other words, students should not feel free to argue any side simply because they can believe they can support it. Instead, they should feel compelled to support the side with the most evidence behind it.

Examples of thesis statements:

Bad: *George Washington set many important precedents as president.* This is a fact not a position.

Good: *The precedents that Washington set as America's first president greatly benefited the American political system.* This is a clear position that can be supported or opposed.

Weak: *The Revolutionary War brought about change in American society.* This is, technically, a position. But, it is vague and not really debatable.

Strong: *The Revolutionary War ushered in a slew of wide-ranging and permanent social changes in American society.* This is a clear, strong, and debatable thesis.

Sample Prompt:

Jacksonian Democrats viewed themselves as the guardians of the United States Constitution, political democracy, individual liberty, and equality of economic opportunity. In light of your knowledge of the following documents and your knowledge of the 1820's and 1830's, to what extent do you agree with the Jacksonians' view of themselves?

Types of Thesis Statements:

1. Direct: This is a straightforward statement that clearly and directly answers the question.

To a remarkable degree Jacksonian democrats succeeded in implementing their vision of American society.

2. Compound: Use this approach when trying to prove two main points. Use the word “and.”

Jacksonian democrats successfully portrayed themselves as guardians of American ideals and did indeed achieve a remarkable degree of success in protecting those ideals.

3. Split: This approach splits the thesis into several categories. In essence it combines the thesis statement with the plan of attack/themes of the essay. This works best when the prompt itself provides the essay categories.

To a large extent Jacksonian democrats were not effective guardians of the United States Constitution, political democracy, individual liberty, and equality of economic opportunity.

4. Complex-Direct: This type of thesis statement acknowledges that contrary evidence exists and addresses the complexity inherent in most essays prompts. A well executed complex thesis offers students the best opportunity to earn a high score. Key words such as “although” are helpful in constructing this type of thesis.

Although Jacksonian Democrats truly believed that they were the guardians of American ideals, their actions betrayed other priorities and rarely lived up to either their rhetoric or intentions.

5. Complex-Split: This approach splits the thesis into several categories, acknowledges that contrary evidence exists and tackles the complexity inherent in most APUSH essays.

Even though Jacksonian Democrats failed in their self-appointed roles as the guardians of the United States Constitution and individual liberty, they achieved great success in strengthening political democracy and the equality of economic opportunity.

OR

Despite a few notable lapses, in general, Jacksonian Democrats were good stewards of the United States Constitution, and oversaw an expansion of individual liberty, political democracy, and economic opportunity.

GENERAL 5-PARAGRAPH ESSAY OUTLINE

I. Introduction

- a. Attention-getter (anecdotes, facts, statistics, rhetorical questions, description, etc.) _____

- b. Background information (narrow down central idea) _____

- c. Thesis statement (a claim/assertion that includes a developmental plan outlining your intended argument; list your three main points) _____

II. Body Paragraph #1

- a. Topic Sentence (major assertion/point) _____

- b. Supporting details (quotes, description, paraphrasing, explanation, etc.) _____

III. Body Paragraph #2

- a. Topic Sentence (major assertion/point) _____

- b. Supporting details (quotes, description, paraphrasing, explanation, etc.) _____

IV. Body Paragraph #3

- a. Topic Sentence (major assertion/point) _____

- b. Supporting details (quotes, description, paraphrasing, explanation, etc.) _____

V. Conclusion

- a. Restate thesis (rephrase main idea) _____

- b. Closing thoughts (So what? summary of main points, call to action, quotation, question, reference back to introduction, future) _____
