

AP[®] EUROPEAN HISTORY
2008 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 5

Analyze the reasons for the decline of the Holy Roman Empire as a force in European politics in the period 1517 to 1648.

9–8 Points

- Thesis is clearly stated and addresses the question.
- Organization is clear, consistently followed, and effective in support of the argument.
- Essay covers the entire chronological period, treating events in BOTH centuries.
- Essay presents at least three reasons for the decline of the Holy Roman Empire, supported by specific historical examples.
- May contain minor errors that do not detract from the argument (for example, a discussion of Spain and/or the Hapsburg Empire, if not off task, is an irrelevancy, but not an egregious error).

7–6 Points

- Thesis is clearly stated and addresses the question.
- Organization is clear and effective in support of the argument, but not consistently followed.
- Essay is balanced overall; covers events in BOTH centuries.
- Essay presents at least two reasons for the decline of the Holy Roman Empire, supported by specific historical examples.
- May contain a major error or several minor errors that detract from the argument.

5–4 Points

- Thesis is clearly stated, but may not address the entire historical period.
- Organization is clear and effective in support of the argument, but not consistently followed.
- Essay shows imbalance; it might analyze just the events of the sixteenth century and ignore much of the seventeenth century, or vice versa.
- Essay presents at least one reason for the decline of the Holy Roman Empire, supported by at least one historical example.
- May analyze the disintegration of Germany OR purely internal Imperial politics, but be generalized about the causes.
- May contain a few major errors that detract from the argument.

3–2 Points

- Thesis is not clearly stated or simply restates the question.
- Organization is unclear and ineffective.
- Essay shows serious imbalance in the discussion of chronology and factors.
- May give little detail about the decline of the Holy Roman Empire.
- May just describe the Protestant Reformation and/or the Thirty Years' War with inadequate and/or erroneous analysis.
- Only one or two major assertions are supported by relevant evidence.
- May contain several major errors that detract from the argument.

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Question 5 (continued)

1–0 Points

- No discernable attempt at a thesis.
- No discernable organization.
- One or none of the major topics suggested by the prompt is mentioned.
- Little or no supporting evidence is used.
- May contain numerous errors that detract from the argument.

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Question 5 Historical Background

This question asks students to recall information about the Reformation, the Peasants' War, and especially the Thirty Years' War, and to organize those facts into a cause-and-effect structure. "Analysis" in this question means that students must present their knowledge into a comparison of the role of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe during the period and to some extent after the Thirty Years' War. Students may concentrate on the ending period and discuss only the consequences of the Protestant Reformation and the Thirty Years' War, and if this is done well, it is a partial answer to the question. The strongest essays must also discuss the Holy Roman Empire in relation to the rest of Europe.

Textbook Material

Merriman, *Modern Europe from the Renaissance to the Present* (2nd edition, 2004)

Noble et al., *Western Civilization: Beyond Boundaries* (4th edition, 2007)

Palmer et al., *A History of the Modern World* (12th edition, 2007)

Spielvogel, *Western Civilization Since 1300* (6th edition, 2006)

Ideally, students should remember that the Holy Roman Empire was ruled by an emperor chosen by electors (seven in 1517 and eight in 1648). This may be mentioned as an aspect of the issue of decline. According to Merriman, the Holy Roman Empire was dysfunctional after the Protestant Reformation. Economically, there were tolls among the many small German states; politically, many states held noncontiguous territory, and the seven electors were usually unable to agree on foreign policy, except to oppose the Turks. As a result of the Protestant Reformation and the Peasants' War, the German states were independent as to religion and secularized after the Peace of Augsburg (1555). The Peace of Westphalia (1648) emphasized the autonomy of the German states. Furthermore, the territorial devastation after the Thirty Years' War left few resources and little interest for European involvement. Noble emphasizes Turkish pressure and the Lutheran rebellion as reasons for ineffectiveness. Spielvogel identifies the religious divisiveness as one key element in the irrelevance of the Holy Roman Empire during this period and after the Thirty Years' War. Dynastic power politics, both the rivalries within the Holy Roman Empire and those of European powers outside the Holy Roman Empire, contributed to its decline. After Westphalia the German states were virtually independent. Palmer devotes a section of his book to "The Thirty Years' War and the Disintegration of Germany." He describes the Holy Roman Empire as united by language but almost evenly divided religiously. German universities were in decline because of dogmatic controversies, commerce was decaying, there was little capital, the Rhine mouth was controlled by the Dutch, and banking was in decline. The Thirty Years' War was a civil war with religious entities, small states, and nobles fighting one another as well as the emperor and centralization. The war resulted in the loss of territories by both the Dutch and the Swiss, and Alsace-Lorraine came under French control. After the Peace of Westphalia, the German states were virtually sovereign, except for foreign policy that required unanimous agreement of all electors. This resulted, according to Palmer, in feudal chaos.

Key Dates for the Decline of the Holy Roman Empire

1500: Charles V comes to the throne.

1515: Beginning of pressure and rivalry from Valois France (Francis I).

1517: Luther's 95 Theses.

1524: Peasants' War.

1526: Turkish Wars begin (end in 1566).

1546: Schmalkaldic War begins (ends in 1547).

1555: Peace of Augsburg; Charles V resigns and splits the Hapsburg lands in two.

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Question 5 Historical Background (continued)

1618: Thirty Years' War begins (ends in 1648).

1648: Peace of Westphalia.

- Loss of Alsace
- Loss of Holland from Spanish Hapsburgs
- Loss of Lorraine
- Loss of Pomerania
- Loss of Switzerland

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

Part C5

The Holy Roman Empire faced many challenges in the period between ~~1517~~ 1517 and 1648. The obstacles it faced ~~caused~~ ~~the~~ resulted in the fragmentation of the empire and thus its ~~destruction~~ ^{downfall}. The Holy Roman Empire went into decline as result of the ^{challenges that arose because of the} protestant Reformation, the Schmalkaldic Wars, and the Thirty Years War.

When Martin Luther hung his 95 Theses in 1517, the world was forever changed. This marked a shift in the religious thought to society. The protestant reformation made people question the existing authority: the church. ~~Showing~~ ^{Exposing} the weakness of the church greatly diminished its role as a unifying force in the Holy Roman Empire. It ultimately created conflict by dividing the religious world ^{in the HRE} into those that were protestant ^(North) and those that were catholic (south). This change created conflict and thus further divided up the empire.

The Schmalkaldic Wars and the

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resulting Peace of Augsburg in 1555 divided up the HRE even more. The Schmalkaldic league of German princes fought for Lutheranism. France, although Catholic, joined ~~the~~ in the war to defend protestant rights because they wanted to weaken their enemy. The peace of Augsburg which signaled the end to all the fighting was a victory for protestantism and state's rights. States were given the choice of being Catholic or protestant - it was up to them to decide. Now that ~~protestantism was accepted~~ it was possible to be ~~either~~ either one, the division of the empire only grew.

The Thirty Years War and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 mark a significant time for the Holy Roman Empire. The War was the empires final attempt to unify and strengthen as on. The war fought between the HRE and Spain against England, France, and the Netherlands didn't go favorably for the HRE or Spain. Both were weakened as result of the war while France, England, and the

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Netherlands became significant powers in Europe. The Peace of Westphalia solidified this change. The balance of power ^{in Europe} shifted. As a result of the peace, many little states were created in Germany. Some of them were ~~so~~ really small. With the creation of around 300 ~~states~~ divisions within the empire, dreams of unification were delayed about two centuries. It was only later during the empire of Napoleon when the number of states were reduced was unification possible.

All in all, the Holy Roman Empire, despite ~~many~~ attempts to unify, became more fragmented ~~in~~ between 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses and 1648 during the Peace of Westphalia. ~~In~~ In the end, it was events like the Protestant Reformation, the Schmalkaldic wars and finally the Thirty Years War ~~that~~ ^{that} undermined the HRE and ~~set~~ set the stage for its downfall.

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2 5.

The decline of Holy Roman Empire as a force in European politics was due to Luther's defiance of Catholic Church, Schmaldic League, and the constant fight of wars. Charles V was the emperor who acquired a lot of the territories and power within the empire. However, the empire was too large, so he couldn't help or improve every problem.

Luther rejected the Catholic Church because it was corrupted. The Catholic Church excommunicated him, because Luther refused to go to the meeting at the Council of Constance. Charles V was enraged, so he was also exiled. A prince of Saxony, however, rescued him and hid Luther in his castle, where he wrote the Babylonian Captivity. His ideas were spread to more people and accepted by peasants, aristocracy, and bourgeoisies. Most of them converted Protestants and defied the emperors.

German princes formed the Schmaldic League against Charles V. The princes supported Luther because title wasn't required, and Luther demonstrated that the emperor can be challenged. Schmaldic League thus forced the emperor to give up and if he captured Luther, they would attack. Charles V was in a bad situation, so he signed the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 with

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the Schmalkdic league. It stated that only the prince or ruler in a region can decide whether its religion is Catholicism or Lutheran.

Charles V's hated enemy was Francis I so he was either at war with him or out conquering territories. Since Charles V is often busy with his foreign affairs and religious uprisings in German states, the aristocracy had the chance to control. When an uprising revolted, the nobles would quickly put down the revolt before Charles V's return. Thus the bourgeoisie were more concerned with the aristocracy, and the emperor doesn't really know about the problems.

The Reformation and constant wars of invasion resulted to the fall of Holy Roman Empire. Luther's challenge to the emperor proved that it is possible to defy the authority. The princes saw that Charles V couldn't do anything to stop the spread of Lutheran ideas, so they formed Schmalkdic League against him to sign the Peace of Augsburg. Charles V couldn't manage his internal problems well because he was often out to solve other problems, since the empire was too large.

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The Holy Roman Empire experienced hundreds of years of prosperity and fortune. However around the time of 1517, the Holy Roman Empire slowly became less and less of a political force in Europe. This decline in political power came about with the death of Charles V. With Charles death, the Holy Roman Empire lacked a powerful king. Also, before Charles V died he divided his land between his brother and son, giving them different parts of the Empire. With the empire divided in half, the Germans under one central, and Spain, the Netherlands, and the New World under another central, the mightiness and power of Empire was split in half. With neither of the new persons in power, having any of the greatness of Charles V, holding the parts of the empire together turned out to be a difficult task. Neither king ^{was capable of holding any} ~~held any~~ real power which allowed the political prestige of the Holy Roman Empire to dwindle. With all the little Germans picking and fighting, other European powers saw the Holy Roman Empire as a dwindling and ^{of an empire} worthless power to be reckoned with. With the death of Charles V and the split of the Holy Roman Empire, the Empire was not able to maintain its place as a political force in Europe during its decline in 1517 to 1648.

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2008 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)

Question 5

Sample: 5A

Score: 8

This essay gives three reasons for the decline of the Holy Roman Empire: the Protestant Reformation; the resulting Schmalkaldic Wars, which were ended by the Peace of Augsburg; and the Thirty Years' War. It is a bit confused on the Thirty Years' War, apparently conflating this period of warfare with the religious wars in the Netherlands in the late sixteenth century, which were finally ended by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It was this weakness that kept the essay from earning the top score. (Dating the 95 Theses to 1917 is clearly a slip of the pen, and the student was not penalized for this.) This response merited a score of 8 because it provides fairly substantial information on the two sixteenth-century events, even linking them together and then showing how they impacted the Holy Roman Empire.

Sample: 5B

Score: 5

This essay discusses in detail the events of 1517-55 but fails to consider the seventeenth century. It received a score of 5 because there is a great deal of information about the three reasons presented, but it did not earn a score of 6 because the discussion is limited to the sixteenth century.

Sample: 5C

Score: 2

This essay attributes the decline of the Holy Roman Empire to the decisions and then death of Charles V, giving it a focus even more limited than a discussion of either the just the Reformation or the Thirty Years' War. This barred it from receiving a score of 3; it was given a 2 rather than a 1 because there is supporting evidence for the thesis.