

2023

AP<sup>®</sup>



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# AP<sup>®</sup> European History

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### Set 1

#### **Inside:**

##### Long Essay Question 2

- Scoring Guidelines
- Student Samples
- Scoring Commentary

## Question 2: Long Essay Question, Reformation Change

6 points

### General Scoring Notes

- Except where otherwise noted, each point of these rubrics is earned independently; for example, a student could earn a point for evidence without earning a point for thesis/claim.
- **Accuracy:** The components of these rubrics require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam essays should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.

Evaluate the most significant political or social change during the Reformation period (1517–1650).

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p><b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis/Claim</b>  <b>(0-1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</p>		
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are not historically defensible.</li> <li>• Only restate or rephrase the prompt.</li> <li>• Do not respond to the prompt.</li> <li>• Do not establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>• Are overgeneralized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Do not focus on the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant change in the Reformation era was the expansion of trade with Asia and the Americas.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Do not provide a historically defensible claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant change in the Reformation was the belief in the supreme authority of the Pope in political matters.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Reformation marked a major change in the political and social structure of European society.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Restate the prompt or are overgeneralized</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Reformation was a time of significant continuity, as much remained the same in spite of significant change.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The continuities in the Reformation are more significant than the changes.”</i></li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b> Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the most significant political or social change in the Reformation. The thesis must suggest at least one main line of argument development or establish the analytic categories of the argument.</p> <p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant political change in the Reformation was that rulers attempted to use Protestantism as a means of gaining or keeping political power.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant social and political change in the Reformation was the challenging of traditional hierarchies, as peasants and other marginalized people used Protestant challenges to papal authority as a reason to challenge political and social authority.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant change in the Reformation was the pope’s loss of political authority.”</i> (Minimally acceptable thesis/claim)</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are not historically defensible.</li> <li>• Only restate or rephrase the prompt.</li> <li>• Do not respond to the prompt.</li> <li>• Do not establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>• Are overgeneralized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Do not focus on the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant change in the Reformation era was the expansion of trade with Asia and the Americas.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Do not provide a historically defensible claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The most significant change in the Reformation was the belief in the supreme authority of the Pope in political matters.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Reformation marked a major change in the political and social structure of European society.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Restate the prompt or are overgeneralized</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Reformation was a time of significant continuity, as much remained the same in spite of significant change.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The continuities in the Reformation are more significant than the changes.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b> Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the most significant political or social change in the Reformation. 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<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The thesis or claim must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion (which may not be limited to the first or last paragraphs).</li> <li>• The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period.</li> </ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p><b>Row B</b> <b>Contextualization</b></p> <p><b>(0-1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.</p>		
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
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<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question.</li> <li>• To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria					
<p><b>Row C Evidence</b> <b>(0-2 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the <b>topic</b> of the prompt.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> Supports an <b>argument</b> in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.</p>			
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>						
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However, Luther himself condemned the German peasant rebellions, and did not wish to see the social order overturned in the way the peasant rebels wished.”</i> (Provides two specific pieces of historical evidence relevant to the prompt—Luther’s challenge to Church authority <i>and</i> condemnation of the peasants’ revolt)</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <p><u>Use at least two specific historical examples</u> to support an argument regarding the most significant political or social change in the Reformation.</p> <p><b>Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The Church recognized the need to respond to Luther and the rise of Protestantism, and it did so in two ways: reforming itself through the Council of Trent, and encouraging Catholic Kings and princes to violently suppress Protestantism, helping fuel the Wars of Religion that went on through the 1500s and only ended in 1648.”</i> (Functions as part of an argument that Catholic reforms were a change during the Reformation period)</li> <li><i>“Many political authorities saw the Reformation and the weakening of papal authority as a chance to expand their own authority. 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	<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization.</li> <li>If a response has a multipart argument, then it can meet the threshold of two pieces of evidence by giving one example for one part of the argument and another example for a different part of the argument, but the total number of examples must still be at least two.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Scoring Criteria</b>		
<b>Row D Analysis and Reasoning (0-2 points)</b>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Uses historical reasoning (e.g., comparison, causation, continuity, and change) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.</p>
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument.</li> <li>May assert the use of historical reasoning but do not use it to frame or structure an argument.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b> Must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument for the most significant political or social continuity in the Reformation, although the reasoning may be uneven, limited, or imbalanced.</p>	<p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b> May demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining the nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables.</li> <li>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects.</li> <li>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods.</li> <li>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes.</li> <li>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Examples that do not earn points:</b></p> <p><b>Provide evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Jesuit order was established to counter the Protestants and spread Catholicism abroad.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Henri IV was willing to revert to Catholicism to bring an end to the French civil wars.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Using a historical thinking skill to frame or structure an argument could include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using continuity and change over time reasoning to explain the most significant political or social change in the Reformation</li> <li>• Structuring an argument thematically to highlight changes in different geographical areas of Europe, such as the lack of Protestant success in southern Europe compared to northern Europe.</li> <li>• Arranging an argument to recount developments over the course of the period showing change over time across Europe.</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of acceptable use of historical reasoning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Eventually, Europeans were permitted to practice their faith privately which is a major social change from before the reformation when Europeans were mandated to go to Church, support a certain religion, and obey the religious ideals of their absolutist leader.”</i> (Structure of response demonstrates change over time)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Demonstrating complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining differences in the changes in the Reformation era in different areas of Europe. (Provides insightful connections within and across periods)</li> <li>• Explaining the interactions between continuities and changes during the Reformation era. (Explains nuance, multiple variables.)</li> <li>• Evaluating whether the continuities in the Reformation were more significant than the changes. (Qualifies or modifies an argument)</li> <li>• Considering both political and social changes during the Reformation. (Confirms the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b> This demonstration of complex understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</p>		

Aided by the invention of the printing press in 1453, Martin Luther initiated the Protestant Reformation in 1517 through his posting of the 95 Theses, criticizing the use of indulgences and abuses of the clergy. The spread of vernacular languages increased literacy among Europeans, developing new religious movements such as Calvinism that focused on the true word of God, transitioning away from the importance of the Church. Exploration during this time period also greatly increased, aiding in the growth of new monarchies and spread of the Jesuit faith. The most significant political change that resulted from the Protestant and Catholic Reformation was increased centralization of power and politque behavior as seemingly religious conflicts developed into conflicts over personal motivations of involved countries. For many countries, this contributed to the decline of Church authority on political decisions, however, religious groups such as the Jesuits continued to subjugate colonies to their faith as missionaries.

The Church began to lose power over European countries due to monarchies, who throughout the Reformation period, demonstrated tendencies of new monarchs. They centralized their power and reformed their tax systems as means to increase the superiority of their leadership. This is best exemplified in the rule of Henry VIII. Disagreements between the Church and Henry VIII's request for a nullified marriage between him and his wife increased animosity between the two powers. In 1534, he approved the Act of Supremacy, which subsequently assigned him as head of the Anglican Church. He also dissolved many of the lands of the Church, demonstrating the decline in power of the Church over political affairs. Families such as the Medici family also replaced the Church as the sole patron of the arts and loans, gaining extensive political power over European states due to their immense wealth, displacing the reliance on Church support. Copernicus' introduction of the helio-centric theory in 1543, denounced the traditional beliefs of the Church, further discrediting their authority.

Throughout the Reformation period, political leaders began to emphasize politque values. Politque behavior, which can be defined as a leader that puts the stability of their country over their own personal beliefs and concerns, can be synthesized in a single ruler, Henry de Navarre. During the French wars of religion, beginning as a conflict between the two families of Bourbon and Valois descendancy, culminated in the War of the Three Henries. Henry de Navarre was considered victorious. Previously Protestant, he converted to Catholicism, stating that "Paris is worth a mass," and creating the Edict of Nantes in 1598 that granted religious toleration to Huguenots in some areas of France. Elizabeth I also demonstrated these beliefs as factions of Protestant and Catholicism grew during her reign through her development of the Book of Common Prayer that remained vague enough that it could be applied to multiple religions, and general application of religious toleration. The Thirty Years War can also be applied to a war that began as a religious conflict, however, shifted into a conflict that prioritized the personal motivations of involved states. Beginning with the Defenstration of Prague that symbolized Bohemian discontent with Catholic Ferdinand II, who betrayed his promise to the Bohemian nobles of religious tolerance, the war began as a religious conflict. However, over the course of the war, involved states chased their personal goals. In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia ended the religious wars, dissolving the power of the Holy Roman Empire, and ending political conflicts over the basis of disagreements of religion.

The Reformation period saw an increase in rulers who utilized their centralized power to assert stability within their country, oftentimes neglecting the opinion and authority of the Church. In an attempt to reestablish some sort of credibility following the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Reformation created the Council of Trent that reformed the clergy and formed new religious orders such as the Jesuits to increase believers in foreign lands. The Church continued to play a large role in the artwork of this time period as they often patronized artists such as Carvaggio, stimulating the development of Baroque art. Additionally, the social development of the "Protestant work ethic," emphasizing delayed gratification and hard work will later play a role in the development of capitalism.



Before the Reformation, people relied heavily on the Church not only for religious reasons, but also for political reasons. The Church played a significant role in the daily lives of the people, and over time, noticing their influence, they began to abuse that power. The reformation occurred when people like Martin Luther began to notice the abuse of power. The most significant political change of this time was therefore the decrease in power of church authority.

Before the Reformation occurred the church had begun to sell indulgences for people to buy so that they could be saved, or even to save family members who had already died. Lets keep in mind that at this time only the highest members of the Church were able to read and interpret the Bible, so their control over the common people was very great. Being scared that they would go to purgatory if they did not buy these indulgences, the common people gave a lot of their money to the church, easily falling in their captivating hands. But some people were able to notice what the church was doing, including Martin Luther. Due to the newly invented printing press Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the Church door calling for Reformation. From here, things took a turn.

In thanks to the printing press, Bibles were beginning to be printed and became accessible to the common people. This lead to a change in the way people practiced religion. Turning away from the church, many people began to practice their religion from the comfort of their own homes. In addition, because of Luther's call for Reformation, people began to turn away from the church and their previous beliefs. Many people began to turn towards a newly found Protestantism. Protestants did not believe that you could buy your way to salvation, but rather you had to get there on your own through acts of service and good deeds.

The change in attitude towards the Church caused a decrease in the power and authority of the Church. Which changed the way things were run, and a new government was formed.

The Reformation was a time where ideas regarding religion would differ from the original, traditional teachings of the Church. The spread of new ideas would cause conflict among the people. During this time, people were very passionate about their religious beliefs, for many years Christianity was not just a faith but a moral way of life. The discovery of new religions would create significant political and social changes that would affect the world to this day. The start of the Reformation would be when a new branch of Christianity was discovered, Protestantism. A well known Protestant figure would be Martin Luther. Martin Luther had a huge impact on the Reformation. He originally was apart of the Church, he was one of the first to openly speak out about his new religious ideas, however, he was then kicked out of the church for sharing said beliefs that went against the Church teachings. Martin Luther decided to write a document called The 95 Thesis in which he shared his ideas and criticized the teachings of the church. He decided to then post The 95 thesis on the doors of the church for the public to see, further spreading the ideas of Protestants. He would inspire others with his own teachings, allowing more people to follow the Protestant faith. During this time period, The Church had a huge effect on life politically, this would cause major conflict as now that the people were going against the Church there would also be forceful changes made to politics during this time. The usefulness of the printing press would also have a huge impact on the Reformation, now individuals were able to share their ideas further throughout Europe, allowing the Reformation to grow and have a bigger impact on European life, changing life socially. New branches would then stem off of Protestantism, such as Calvinism, created by the religious figure Calvin. Although, the ideas of Protestantism and Calvinism were similar, both Martin Luther and Calvin disagreed with one another. Although new religious ideas would continue to come about, this did not stop religious conflict, in fact, The Thirty Years war would come out of this. This was a gruesome war between Protestants and Catholics fighting for their religious power. It is also argued that this was a war over political power, more so than religious power. Individuals like Martin Luther and Calvin would gain "followers" who believed in the religion they taught, allowing them to have some type of power due to their following. This would effect political and social life greatly. Today, there are many different religions, the creation and spread of a lot of religious ideas were a significant outcome of the Reformation. Therefore, The Reformation period would create social and political changes that would continue to be significant to this day.

## Long Essay Question 2

**Note:** Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

### Overview

The Long Essay Question (LEQ) asks students to formulate a thesis/argument in response to a prompt about a particular historical development or episode in European history. In 2023 each LEQ asked students to evaluate the most significant change during a specified era in European history. LEQs require students to formulate arguments, utilize evidence, address historical context, and display an ability to employ historical reasoning skills. In the case of LEQ 2, responses were expected to demonstrate historical reasoning, specifically analyzing the most significant political or social change during the Reformation period (1517-1650). Responses were expected to relate the topic of the prompt to the broader historical events, developments, or processes that occurred before, during, or after the time frame specified in the prompt. Responses were expected to provide specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of political or social change that occurred during the Reformation and to use this evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.

Responses were expected to provide a thesis that identified the most significant political or social change during the Reformation and then establish a clear line of reasoning that explained how or why that change was the most significant, delineated analytic categories from which to evaluate that change, or provided explanation of how the change manifested itself across place and time.

Responses were expected to situate the argument within a specific historical context; this could be earned by highlighting how events or developments prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century influenced the changes during the period in question by explaining the connection to broader historical developments of processes that occurred during the period, or by demonstrating that the change in question continued into subsequent eras.

Responses were to identify two specific pieces of concrete evidence from the Reformation period relevant to the claim of the most significant political or social change during the period and then use those pieces of evidence to support an argument that explains why the particular change was the most significant. Responses subsequently were expected to use change over time reasoning to demonstrate how the change evolved, to structure an argument to demonstrate how the change impacted two or more different geographical areas, or to consider both the political and social aspects of the change, explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across time periods. Responses also were expected to demonstrate complex understanding of the historical development of the Reformation and the political and social changes it occasioned.

## Long Essay Question 2 (continued)

**Sample: 2A**

**Score: 6**

**Thesis: 1**

**Contextualization: 1**

**Evidence: 2**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 2**

### **A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for thesis in the first paragraph by identifying the “centralization of power and politique behavior” as the most significant political change resulting from the Reformation.

### **B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for contextualization in the first paragraph by citing the invention of the printing press, the spread of vernacular languages, and the increase in literacy as conditions for the loss of Catholic Church authority and the rise of new monarchical power.

### **C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2**

#### **Providing Specific Examples of Evidence**

The response earned 1 point for using multiple pieces of specific and relevant evidence throughout the second (Henry VIII and Act of Supremacy) and third (Henry of Navarre, Edict of Nantes, Huguenots, et al.) paragraphs.

#### **Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument**

The response earned 1 point for using evidence in support of an argument by providing evidence in every paragraph to support arguments about the decline in Church authority over political affairs.

### **D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 2**

#### **Using Historical Reasoning**

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to establish a causal argument linking Luther’s religious challenge to Catholic Church authority to the challenges that were increasingly political in nature.

#### **Demonstrating Complex Understanding**

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating understanding because it successfully draws parallels across multiple nations in Europe (England, France, and Holy Roman Empire) and the ways in which political considerations increasingly complicated ostensibly religious conflicts. The response also confirms the validity of the argument by citing examples from other themes (Copernicus and the heliocentric theory, the Protestant work ethic and the subsequent development of capitalism, and the connection between Baroque Art and the Catholic Reformation).

## Long Essay Question 2 (continued)

**Sample: 2B**

**Score: 4**

**Thesis: 1**

**Contextualization: 1**

**Evidence: 1**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 1**

### **A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for thesis because it establishes a claim that the most significant political change during the Reformation was the “decrease in power of church authority.”

### **B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for contextualization in the first paragraph because of its discussion of the omnipresent role of the Church in people’s lives prior to the Reformation. There is also an additional reference to the printing press in the third paragraph.

### **C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1**

#### **Providing Specific Examples of Evidence**

The response earned 1 point for evidence, using specific and relevant examples in the second paragraph (indulgences, Luther, and the 95 Theses).

#### **Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument**

The response did not earn a point because the specific evidence provided in the second paragraph is not connected to an argument about political or social change.

### **D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 1**

#### **Using Historical Reasoning**

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning by setting up a causal relationship between Luther’s critique of the Church’s abuse of power and its subsequent loss of power.

#### **Demonstrating Complex Understanding**

The response did not earn a point for complex understanding because there is no corroboration, qualification, or modification of the argument.

## Long Essay Question 2 (continued)

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 2**

**Thesis: 0**

**Contextualization: 1**

**Evidence: 1**

**Analysis and Reasoning: 0**

### **A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 0**

The response did not earn a point for thesis because it makes no attempt to address the terms of the prompt (most significant change during the Reformation period).

### **B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for contextualization by contrasting the Reformation with the prior period of Church hegemony. The reference to the printing press also contributes to establishing context for the period.

### **C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1**

#### **Providing Specific Examples of Evidence**

The response earned 1 point for evidence by providing multiple relevant pieces of evidence (Luther, 95 Theses, Calvin, and the Thirty Years' War).

#### **Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument**

The response did not earn a point for using specific evidence in support of an argument because it does not sustain a single argument throughout the paragraph.

### **D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 0**

#### **Using Historical Reasoning**

The response did not earn a point for using historical reasoning because, while it does assert historical reasoning, it is not used to structure an argument within the paragraph provided.

#### **Demonstrating Complex Understanding**

The response did not earn a point for complex understanding because no discernible attempt is made.