



AP[®] African American Studies

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP African American Studies Course Overview

AP African American Studies is an interdisciplinary course that examines the diversity of African American experiences through direct encounters with varied sources. Students explore key topics that extend from early African kingdoms to the ongoing challenges and achievements of the contemporary moment. Given the interdisciplinary character of African American Studies, students in the course will develop skills across multiple fields, with an emphasis on developing historical, literary, visual, and data analysis skills.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for AP African American Studies. Students should be able to read college-level texts and express themselves clearly in writing.

AP African American Studies Course Content

The course content is organized into thematic units that have been arranged in a chronological sequence frequently found in college courses. These units comprise the content and conceptual understandings that colleges and universities typically expect students to master to qualify for college credit and/or placement.

- **Unit 1:** Origins of the African Diaspora
- **Unit 2:** Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance
- **Unit 3:** The Practice of Freedom
- **Unit 4:** Movements and Debates

In addition, the following themes serve as the connective tissue of the course, enabling students to create meaningful connections across units. Revisiting the themes and applying them in a variety of contexts helps students develop deeper conceptual understanding:

- **Theme 1:** Migration and the African Diaspora
- **Theme 2:** Intersections of Identity
- **Theme 3:** Creativity, Expression, and the Arts
- **Theme 4:** Resistance and Resilience

Course Skills

The AP African American Studies skills describe what students should be able to do while exploring course topics and examining sources. These skills are embedded and spiraled throughout the course, providing recurring opportunities for students to develop and practice these skills and then transfer and apply the skills in their course work and on the AP Exam.

- Applying Disciplinary Knowledge
 - ◆ Explain course concepts, developments, patterns, and processes (e.g., cultural, historical, political, social).
- Source Analysis
 - ◆ Evaluate written and visual sources and data (including historical documents, literary texts, music lyrics, works of art, material culture, maps, tables, charts, graphs, and surveys).
- Argumentation
 - ◆ Develop an argument using a line of reasoning to connect claims and evidence.

AP African American Studies Exam Structure

AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES EXAM: 2 HOURS, 45 MINUTES

Assessment Overview

The AP African American Studies Exam assesses student understanding of the skills and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours and 45 minutes long and includes 60 multiple-choice questions, one exam day validation question, and four free-response questions.

Format of Assessment

Section I: Multiple-Choice

60 Questions | 70 Minutes | 60% of Exam Score

- The multiple-choice questions appear in sets of three or four questions. Each set includes one or two sources which serve as stimulus material for the questions in the set.
- Up 50% of the multiple-choice questions will be drawn from required sources in the course framework. The remaining sources will be related to required course content but will not be sources that students will have directly studied as required content in the course.

Section IB: Individual Student Project: Exam Day Validation Question

1 Question | 10 Minutes | 1.5% of Exam Score

- On exam day, students answer a project validation question which presents them with the opportunity to respond in writing to one of the project oral defense questions.

Section II: Free-Response

4 Questions | 85 minutes | 30% of Exam Score

- The second section of the Exam includes three short-answer questions and one document-based question.
- Two of the short-answer questions will be based on a source (one of the questions will be based on a text; one of them will be based on a visual). The third short answer question is not based on a source.
- The document-based question presents students with five documents offering various perspectives on a historical development or process.

Individual Student Project: 8.5% of Exam Score

- Students explore four related sources on a topic of their choice and then present and defend their analysis of those sources.
- The Individual Student Project is scored by the student's teacher using the rubric provided by the AP Program.

Exam Components

Sample Multiple-Choice Question



Which of the following best captures the significance of Mansa Musa of the Mali Empire as depicted on the map?

- (A) His royal dress and display of wealth in gold had a widespread impact on African and Middle Eastern fashions and cultures.
- (B) His portrayal conveyed the importance of West African empires in global exchange networks.
- (C) His dominance caused trade to redirect from trans-Saharan routes toward the Atlantic Coast.
- (D) His depiction with foreign merchants demonstrated his territorial expansion to regions in Europe.

Sample Free-Response Question Short-Answer Question, No Source

Students must respond to parts A, B, and C.

- (A) African Americans are part of the larger African diaspora. While African Americans define their experiences as distinct from those of Africans, the idea of an African diaspora has influenced Afro-descended communities throughout the Americas. Describe one specific example of a freedom movement or practice that has been influenced by the idea of an African diaspora.
- (B) Using a specific example of a work of art, piece of literature, or music, explain how African American artistic expression emerged in response to, or in celebration of, the idea of an African diaspora.
- (C) Explain how connections to the African diaspora have shaped the lives of Afro-descended communities.