

2025



AP[®] European History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

Inside:

Document-Based Question

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Question 1: Document-Based Question, Causes of the First World War

7 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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 whether the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism or by the decisions of government leaders.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Thesis/Claim (0–1 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not historically defensible. • Only restate or rephrase the prompt. • Do not respond to the prompt. • Do not establish a line of reasoning. • Are overgeneralized. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about whether the First World War was primarily caused by nationalism or by the decisions of government leaders. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reason for making that claim OR establish categories of the argument.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Does not respond to the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The slaughter in the trenches created a ‘lost generation’ in Europe.”</i> <p>Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Leaders made bad decisions that caused the war.”</i> <p>Provide an overly generalized response to the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The First World War was caused by a lot of different factors.”</i> 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Although nationalistic enthusiasm enabled leaders to risk starting a war, it was really their decisions that drove the major powers to conflict.”</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“It was really leaders’ decisions that caused the conflict, such as starting the massive arms race and creating the system of alliances.”</i> <p>Establish a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“By challenging one of the great powers, Serbian nationalists started the chain of events that led to World War.”</i> [Minimally acceptable thesis/claim]
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development(s) in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p>Row B Contextualization (0–1 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.</p>		
<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"> <p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt. • Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. • Provide a passing phrase or reference. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Industrialization in Europe caused a lot of social problems.”</i> <p>Provide an overgeneralized statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Nations have always competed for territory and prestige.”</i> <p>Provide a passing phrase or reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Europe was in an arms race.”</i> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"> <p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately describe a context relevant to the causes of the First World War. <p>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German unification altering the balance of power in Europe • The growing arms race • Colonial competition • Alliance systems • The multiethnic nature of the European empires • Austria’s annexation of Bosnia in 1908 • The Balkan Wars • The Second Industrial Revolution • The Franco-Prussian War and German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine • The growth of nationalism in the 1800s • The Dreyfus Affair • Napoleon and Congress of Vienna • Revolutions of 1848 <p>Examples of acceptable contextualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“In the late 1800s and early 1900s, European powers were locked into a series of alliances designed to protect themselves and advance their interests.”</i> • <i>“Before 1914, the major powers were competing for overseas colonies in Africa and Asia.”</i> [Minimally acceptable contextualization] </td> </tr> </table>			<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt. • Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. • Provide a passing phrase or reference. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Industrialization in Europe caused a lot of social problems.”</i> <p>Provide an overgeneralized statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Nations have always competed for territory and prestige.”</i> <p>Provide a passing phrase or reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Europe was in an arms race.”</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately describe a context relevant to the causes of the First World War. <p>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German unification altering the balance of power in Europe • The growing arms race • Colonial competition • Alliance systems • The multiethnic nature of the European empires • Austria’s annexation of Bosnia in 1908 • The Balkan Wars • The Second Industrial Revolution • The Franco-Prussian War and German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine • The growth of nationalism in the 1800s • The Dreyfus Affair • Napoleon and Congress of Vienna • Revolutions of 1848 <p>Examples of acceptable contextualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“In the late 1800s and early 1900s, European powers were locked into a series of alliances designed to protect themselves and advance their interests.”</i> • <i>“Before 1914, the major powers were competing for overseas colonies in Africa and Asia.”</i> [Minimally acceptable contextualization]
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<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response must describe broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question that are relevant to the topic of the prompt. • To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference. 				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
<p>Row C Evidence from Documents</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt.</p>	<p>2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents.</p>
<p>(0–2 points)</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>		
	<p>Responses that do not earn points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use evidence from less than three of the documents Misinterpret the content of the document Quote the content of the documents without providing an accompanying description Address documents collectively rather than considering separately the content of each document 	<p>Responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately describe—rather than simply quote—the content from at least three of the documents to address whether the First World War was primarily caused by nationalism or by the decisions of government leaders. <p>Examples of describing the content of a document:</p> <p>Describe evidence from the documents relevant to the topic but do not use that evidence to support an argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Document 2]: <i>“French authors describe young people wanting to be heroes in the war.”</i> [Document 7]: <i>“Luxemburg wrote that in 1915 people were no longer excited for the war.”</i> 	<p>Responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support an argument in response to the prompt by accurately using the content of at least four documents. <p>Examples of supporting an argument using the content of a document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Document 4]: <i>“The decision of the Austro-Hungarian government to formally blame Serbia for the Sarajevo assassination led to the outbreak of the devastating war.”</i> [Uses evidence from the document to support an argument about the central role of government leaders in the First World War] [Document 1]: <i>“Separatist actions of nationalist, grassroots organizations such as the Black Hand, who aimed to infiltrate all layers of Serbian state and society, led to World War I.”</i> [Uses evidence from the document to support an argument about the role of nationalism in the outbreak of the First World War]
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn two points, the four documents do not have to be used in support of a single argument—they can be used across sub-arguments or to address counterarguments. 		

<p>Row C Evidence Beyond Documents</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Uses at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence [beyond that found in the documents] relevant to an argument in response to the prompt.</p>
<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>		
<p>(0–1 points)</p>	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence that is not relevant to an argument about the prompt. • Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt. • Repeat information that is specified in the prompt or in any of the documents. • Provide a passing phrase or reference. 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must use at least one specific piece of historical evidence relevant to whether the First World War was primarily caused by nationalism or by the decisions of government leaders. <p>Examples of specific and relevant evidence beyond the documents that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inflexibility of mobilization and war plans • Gavrilo Princip and his assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand • Details of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia and declaration of war on Serbia • The Russian role in protecting Serbia due to pan-Slavism • The German invasion of Belgium • Details of the European alliance system [e.g., the Triple Alliance, Triple Entente] • The naval arms race of the late 19th and early 20th centuries • Specific war goals of various European powers [e.g., France seeking the return of Alsace-Lorraine from Germany, German expansionism, etc.] • Socialist refusal to support the war effort in many countries • Socialists voting to support the war effort in some countries • Wartime and prewar propaganda <p>Examples of evidence beyond the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“French nationalists were looking forward to revenge and taking back lands lost to Germany in the Franco-Prussian war in the 19th century.”</i> [Provides a piece of evidence not in the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt] • <i>“The Austrian government declared war on Serbia after the Serbian government did not fully accept the Austrian ultimatum hoping for Russian support.”</i> [Provides a piece of evidence not in the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt]
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization. • To earn this point, the evidence provided must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization. • To earn this point, the evidence provided must be more than a phrase or reference. • The point for evidence beyond the documents may be awarded for evidence that appears in any part of the response. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row D Analysis and Reasoning Sourcing</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point For at least two documents, it explains how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.</p>
<p>(0–1 points)</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain sourcing for fewer than two of the documents. Identify the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience but fail to explain how or why it is relevant to an argument. Summarize the content or argument of the document without explaining the relevance of this summary to the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Identify the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience, but do not explain how or why it is relevant to an argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Rosa Luxemburg was a famous feminist and revolutionary.” <p>Summarize the content of the document without explaining the relevance of this to the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Wilhelm and Nicholas were writing to each other to explain their positions in terms of their military mobilization efforts.” 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must explain how or why—rather than simply identifying—the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt for each of the two documents sourced. <p>Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the author’s point of view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Document 1]: “The members of Black Hand were Serbian nationalists who sought to use the political turmoil in the Balkans to overthrow Austrian rule.” [Connects the point of view of the document relevant to an argument about the role of nationalism] <p>Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the author’s purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Document 4]: “The Austrian government produced the ultimatum to pin the blame for the Archduke’s murder on the government of Serbia and win popular support for military action against Serbia.” [Connects the purpose of the document relevant to an argument about the actions of the government leaders] <p>Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the historical situation of a source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Document 6]: “The photo was taken right at the beginning of the war when people were genuinely excited for what they thought would be a heroic and patriotic opportunity to defeat the Germans.” [Connects the historical situation of the document relevant to an argument about the role of popular nationalism] <p>Example of acceptable explanation of the relevance of the audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Document 5]: “The telegrams were private correspondence between government leaders, who were also close family attempting to engage in diplomatic negotiations to prevent war.” [Connects the audience of the document relevant to an argument about the role of government leaders] 	

<p>Row D Analysis and Reasoning Complex Understanding</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.</p>
<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>		
<p>(0–1 points)</p>	<p>Responses that earn this point: May demonstrate a complex understanding through sophisticated argumentation that is relevant to the prompt. This may be done in a variety of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining multiple themes or perspectives to explore complexity or nuance; OR • Explaining multiple causes or effects, multiple similarities or differences, or multiple continuities or changes; OR • Explaining both cause and effect, both similarity and difference, or both continuity and change; OR • Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods or geographical areas. These connections should clearly relate to an argument that responds to the prompt. <p>May demonstrate a complex understanding through effective use of evidence relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt. This may be done in a variety of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively using seven documents to support an argument that responds to the prompt; OR • Explaining how the point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience of at least four documents supports an argument that responds to the prompt; OR • Using documents and evidence beyond the documents effectively sophisticated understanding of different perspectives relevant to the prompt. <p>Demonstrating a complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguing that popular nationalism in European countries was not the reason for the outbreak of the war, but the tool used and fueled by the leaders to mobilize their societies for the war effort. [Demonstrates complexity and nuance] • Arguing that nationalism affected not just the masses of ordinary Europeans but was also a central motivation for the government leaders to enter the war, as in the example of the pan-Slavism of the Russian leaders. [Demonstrates sophisticated understanding] • Arguing that nationalism was a force that was on the rise long before the First World War and was fueled by several factors, including colonial expansionism, the arms race, and a complex web of alliances, which inevitably led to a global war. [Demonstrates relevant and insightful connections] • Arguing that while the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism, it was also caused to a lesser extent by decisions of government leaders. [Explaining multiple themes or perspectives] 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This complex understanding must be part of the argument and may be demonstrated in any part of the response. • While it is not necessary for this complex understanding to be woven throughout the response, it must be more than merely a phrase or reference. • To earn a point for complexity by using seven documents in support of an argument, there must be an attempt to use all seven documents to effectively support an argument, but the use of the documents may be unevenly or inconsistently developed, or the document use may be weaker in one or two instances. 		

Document Summaries

Document	Summary of Content	Explains the relevance of point of view [POV], purpose, situation, and/or audience by elaborating on examples such as:
1. Constitution of the Black Hand, Belgrade, Serbia, 1911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes goals and objectives of the secret organization devoted to liberating Serbs living under Austro-Hungarian rule States the goal of achieving control over state power in Serbia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The audience of the document were the members of the organization and its potential sympathizers. [audience] The constitution was written during the struggle of the Serbian people for independence from Austro-Hungarian rule and after the Balkan Wars liberated several nations from Ottoman rule. [historical situation]
2. Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde, “The Young People of Today,” Paris, 1912	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claims that young elite Frenchmen are looking forward to a war Argues that young Frenchmen are attracted to the war due to the idea of heroism and military aesthetics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article was written in the atmosphere of impending war as a series of crises dominated the news in the years leading up to World War One. [historical situation] The article was printed in a newspaper and was intended to be read by a wide variety of people in France that the author hoped to convince. [audience] The article was based on a survey, conducted among the students of elite institutions, and was relaying their opinions. [POV]
3. Jules Cambon, French Ambassador to Germany, report to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Berlin, 1913	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claims that the Imperial German government roused patriotic sentiment in Germany Argues that the Kaiser used patriotic sentiment to pass an expensive military spending bill in the legislature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report was written for the French Minister for Foreign Affairs and was probably read by other bureaucrats who were concerned about German militarism and the possible threat to France. [audience] The report was written by a French diplomat stationed in Berlin who was describing public opinion in Germany for his superiors back in Paris. [POV]
4. Leopold Berchtold, Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, diplomatic note to Serbia, July 1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claims that the Serbian nationalist movement is spreading separatism in Austria-Hungary Argues that the Serbian government is ultimately responsible for the murder of the archduke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The note was prepared by the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs to be delivered as an ultimatum to the government of Serbia by Austria-Hungary’s ambassador. [audience] The note was a formal accusation against the Serbian government for its support of the terrorists involved in the assassination of the Archduke. [purpose]
5. Telegrams between Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, July–August 1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicholas claims that he hopes for peace but argues that he must mobilize the Russian army due to the Austrian mobilization efforts Wilhelm claims he also must mobilize his army and warns Nicholas to stay away from the German border 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The telegrams were correspondence between two leaders who attempted to mediate on a more personal, family level to prevent a large war. [POV, purpose] The telegrams were written after Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and an expansion of the conflict to involve the great powers was likely imminent. [historical situation]

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<p>6. Jacques Moreau, photo of women seeing off soldiers going to the front, Paris, August 1914</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows happy soldiers leaving for the front and excited women seeing them off • Depicts the public enthusiasm at the beginning of the war in France 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The photo was taken at the very beginning of the war when a lot of people were excited by patriotism. [historical situation] • The photographer aimed to capture the popular mood of patriotism and support of the troops at the start of the war. [purpose]
<p>7. Rosa Luxemburg, pamphlet written from prison, 1915</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the German public euphoria in the beginning of the war • Claims that German excitement for the war was gone by 1915 after the failed march on Paris • Argues that there is no impending end to the mass slaughter of the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The author was an antiwar German revolutionary socialist writing from jail in protest of the continuation of the war. [POV] • The pamphlet was written in 1915 after the initial excitement for the war was replaced by despair in Germany after the failure to win a quick victory. [historical situation]

Sample 1A:

Before the events of the First World War ensued, the Revolutions of 1848 took place in a variety of European countries. During these revolutions in 1848, the middle-class began revolting due to the increasing want for a government that represented the people and their desires. Much to the revolutionaries dismay, the Revolutions of 1848 were widely unsuccessful and crushed by the ceaseless power of absolute rulers. However, the ideologies of the Revolutions of 1848 such as nationalism continued to spread even after the revolts unsuccessfulness. Although the decisions of government leaders heavily impacted the start of World War I, the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism because people craved glory from war and wanted to feel liberated by their own countries' success.

World War I can be attributed to a rise in widespread nationalism because the glorification of war was highly popularized during the time. For example, Document 1 outlines the Constitution of the Black Hand in which the document states that they aim to spread Serbian influence and support any other nation that also craves liberation. This constitution was intended for all members of the Black Hand to read and agree to because it highlighted the main principles of the secret organization. Gavrilo Princip, the 17 year old who assassinated Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was a member of the Black Hand who also most likely contributed to and abided by the ideals outlined in the constitution. Furthermore, Document 2 describes the general view of war in France based on a poll taken by male students in which war is seen as glorious and desirable because of the appeal of heroism. This is significant because this article demonstrates how young men wanted to go to war at the time because fighting for one's country was the most heroic quality a man could possess, indicating how young men were filled with nationalism. This article was created for the purpose of showing the French public of how unopposed their citizens were to the idea of war. Lastly, Document 6 depicts a photograph taken of women bidding farewell to French soldiers heading off to fight on the front. Jacques Moreau, the photographer who took this picture, as a young man himself believed that war was glorious because he aimed to capture a moment of glorification of soldiers. This is significant because this highlighted the romantization of war and the glory that all soldiers had hoped to achieve by defending their country and exemplifying nationalist values. The First World War was highly influenced by the general consensus of honorable nationalism within countries young men seeking glory from war.

Although nationalism can be observed as a main cause for World War I, some may argue that the decisions of government leaders were more influential. For example, Document 3 explains the uneasiness that people feel surrounding the new German military spending bill that was evoked by German leaders. This report was created by a French Ambassador in order to convey to the German leaders that the passing of this bill may lead to conflict in the future. This is significant because this supports how the actions of government leaders had an impact on the tensions between countries that could lead to the development of the First World War. Furthermore, Document 5 depicts telegrams between Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany in which Nicholas advocates for the countries to not go to

war with one another and in which Wilhelm responds by informing Nicholas that he had mobilized his army. Wilhelm thereafter mobilizing Germany's army, came up with the Schiefflen Plan in which he intended to attack France on the Western Front first before Russia could mobilize, however, to Wilhelm's dismay, Russia was capable of mobilizing their army within ten days. This is significant because this exemplifies how the decisions of government leaders, such as Wilhelm deciding to mobilize against Russia, led to the start of World War I. However, the impact of nationalism within the vast majority of European citizens had a much greater effect than the actions taken by government leaders because the appeal of being glorified by war and the desire to defend one's own country was much stronger than any actions taken by government officials.

Overall, despite the fact that the actions carried out by government leaders at the time had an influence upon World War I, the First World War was most significantly caused by popular nationalism because the general view of war was extremely positive due to the attraction of being glorified and liberated for fighting and potential dying for one's home country. This romanticization of war can be traced back to Napoleon's time in which Napoleon was able to take over the French government because he was viewed as an honorable war hero and therefore gained popularity because he offered stability and security following the events of the French Revolution. This goes to show that the common theme of the glorification of war and nationalism promoted towards young men can be observed throughout centuries of European history and be attributed to the mass destruction that can occur due to these harmful viewpoints of war.

Sample 1B:

One of the many factors that led to the beginning of the First World War was the assassination of archduke Franz Ferdinand. While on a ride with his wife out in public, he was assassinated. The man that killed Franz was said to have had nationalistic motives which is shown to be a continuous theme. Although the start of the First World War was aided by the decisions of government leaders, it was primarily caused by nationalism because of the large role that the morale and dedication to their home that citizens and soldiers had.

The start of World War 1 being primarily caused by nationalism is seen through the alliances and agreements that the countries had made among themselves. In the constitution of the secret organization called "The Black Hand", it is stated that the organization will aid nations who are at war and are fighting for nationalism and it will remain friendly with those who sympathize with Serbia and its people (doc 1). Leading up to World War 1, tensions were very high and many alliances were made as a precaution. This alliance is significant because as soon as there is any conflict, Serbia has agreed to step in and help fight with the nationalists.

Similarly to in Serbia, German nationalism played an important role in the beginning of the First World War. French Ambassador Jules Cambon informs the French Minister for Foreign Affairs that in Germany, there was a military parade where nationalistic speeches were given that compared their current situation to that of a hundred years ago (doc 3). Cambon was reporting on a new German military spending bill, showing that the rich classes of Germany had to pay for the new bill. The upper classes, although disappointed with the current economic struggles, were able to "pretend to accept the sacrifices" in order to provide their government to pay for the soldiers.

Popular nationalism was the primary cause of the First World War, as it effectively inspired the younger generations. In an article of a Paris newspaper titled "The Young People of Today", Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde tells readers about the excitement and pride that the youth has about war, claiming that they believe heroism is needed (doc 2). So whenever there was a conflict, such as the assassination of Franz Ferdinand or economic hardships, many young men were eager to help and fight for their country, leading to many soldiers being readily available for war.

Nationalism, while being the primary cause of World War 1, continued to be seen throughout the war. It is most prominent when the war initially started. A picture taken by Jacques Moreau shows women seeing off soldiers as they are seen happily leaving for war (doc 6). The morale of the men is shown to be extremely high, as they thought that the war would be over extremely soon. When preparing for the war, the soldiers were extremely nationalistic, with many new young men excited to fight for their country and signed up to help fight.

Sample 1C:

The First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism rather than the decisions of government leaders, through as secret organizations, violence, assassinations, and injustice. Before the First World War, the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand was seen as the start of the World War I. His assassination was caused through popular nationalism, in Serbians hating Austria-Hungary for them taking authority over them, and so Serbia fought back to get independence, which they did receive. Once Archduke Ferdinand had talked to Wilhem Kaiser of Germany for negotiations in Serbia, he had went to the one country that hated him. He was assassinated and it had sparked a hatred in Austria-Hungary and Serbia, but due to Allies of both sides, it conducted into a world war. So, the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism rather than the decisions of government leaders through acts of secret organizations, violence, assassinations, and injustice.

First of all, there was a secret organization called the Black Hand that is a prime example of the First World War being caused by popular nationalism. Black Hand was a secret organization of Serbian liberals under the rule of Austro-Hungary. In Document 1, the Black Hand is trying to get influence over the Serbian government, fight against enemies, maintain relations with other nations, sympathize with the natives, and assistance others who are fight for their own unity. Document 1, is the perfect example of popular nationalism because it defines nationalism as a whole. Nationalism is the act of supporting and fighting for the gain of your country. The Black hand is showing nationalism by their need of helping their own country, Serbia, and the people involved with them. They would fight for their country and their people, which is the main basis of Nationalism. So, the Black Hand is an example why the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism.

Secondly, violence is an example of popular nationalism being the cause of World War I. In document 2, France is willing to fight rather than wait for something to happen. This is an example of popular nationalism because France is fighting as a whole, just for their own sake, not their leader's. Also, the use of the word "patriotic" goes hand and hand with nationalism. Patriotic shows that they are loyal to their country, as with nationalism. The act of violence that France is willing to have shows that violence is an example of popular nationalism being the cause of World War I.

Next, as stated in the context, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was a big factor of the First World War being caused by popular nationalism. Serbians had killed Franz Ferdinand in hatred of Austria-Hungary in their acts of terrorism on them. In Document 4, it explains how the assassination had affected all of Serbia and Austro-Hungary. Document 4 shows an example of popular nationalism, not through the text, but through the background knowledge. We already know that the Serbians had killed Franz Ferdinand as a country, which is known as nationalism. I see document 4 being the effect of the assassination, being the cause. So, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was a big factor of the First World War being caused by popular nationalism.

Lastly, injustice in gender equalities and freedom are examples of popular Nationalism being the cause of the First World War. In Document 6, the women are being taken by the

Frenchmen. You can infer that they are doing this for the good of their country, not because their leader had told them to. This document is in 1914, where women are still not treated fairly, but still have some freedom. The Frenchmen are listening to the rules of their country and treating the women how they were taught to treat them. Document 6, is an ambivalent example of popular nationalism and the decision of government leaders, but it was never stated to be the decision of government leaders. It is safer to assume, the Frenchmen are just bad people, because their country had given them the mindset of men over women. So, injustice in gender equality and freedom are examples of popular Nationalism being the cause of the First World War.

Concluding everything up, through secret organizations, violence, assassinations and injustice, the First World War was caused by popular Nationalism. The Black Hand of Serbia gave the Serbians power to fight for their own organization that will give them justice and freedom over the Austro-Hungarians. Violence in France, caused Frenchmen to want to fight for their country instead of waiting for magic to happen. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is a prime example of a country getting together and standing on business for their own sake. Injustice in freedom and gender equality had given the Frenchmen the mindset of men are better than women, from their own countries' education. So, the First World War was caused by popular Nationalism through secret organizations, violence, assassinations, and injustice.

Document-Based Question 1

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

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses on AP Central*.

Sample: 1A

Thesis Score: 1

Contextualization Score: 1

Evidence From Docs Score: 2

Evidence Beyond Docs Score: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Score: 1

Analysis and Reasoning: Complexity Score: 1

Total Score: 7

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for the thesis in the introduction by establishing a claim with the line of reasoning that the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism because people craved glory from war.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization in the first paragraph by describing the broader historical context of the spread of nationalism due to the Revolutions of 1848.

C. Evidence (0–3 points): 3

Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt: 1

The response earned 1 evidence point by correctly using the content of at least three documents: 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents: 1

The response earned 1 point for using at least four documents in support of an argument by using document 1 to support an argument for the importance of popular nationalism, and documents 2 and 6 to support an argument about the glorification of war as a component of nationalism. The response uses documents 3 and 5 to support an argument that the actions of leaders also contributed to the onset of the First World War.

Uses at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt: 1

The response earned 1 point for using an additional piece of specific historical evidence relevant to an argument about the prompt because it explains how the Schlieffen Plan was tied to the decisions of leaders leading to World War I.

Document-Based Question 1 (continued)**D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 2****Sourcing for at least two documents: 1**

The response earned 1 point for sourcing. It provides sourcing for Documents 1 (Historical Situation), 2 (Purpose), and 6 (Purpose).

Demonstrating Complex Understanding: 1

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating complex understanding by using evidence effectively to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different perspectives relative to the prompt. It does so by arguing that the First World War was caused primarily by popular nationalism, but also to a lesser degree by the decisions of government leaders. The conclusion's discussion of Napoleon's glorification of war also demonstrates complex understanding by making an insightful connection across periods.

Sample: 1B**Thesis Score: 1****Contextualization Score: 1****Evidence From Docs Score: 2****Evidence Beyond Docs Score: 0****Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Score: 1****Analysis and Reasoning: Complexity Score: 0****Total Score: 5****A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for the thesis in the introduction by establishing a line of reasoning that although the start of the First World War was aided by the decisions of government leaders, it was primarily caused by nationalism because of the large role the morale and dedication to their home that citizens and soldiers played.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization in the introduction with its discussion of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand with his wife in public in the first paragraph combined with the mention of alliances in the beginning of the second paragraph. The claim that Serbia was obligated as part of the alliance system is incorrect. However, there is enough correct evidence to earn the point.

C. Evidence (0–3 points): 2

Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt: 1

The response earned 1 evidence point by correctly using the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt: 1, 2, 3, 6.

Document-Based Question 1 (continued)

Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents: 1

The response earned 1 point for using evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt. It uses documents 2 and 6 in support of an argument about the desire for glory as a motivation for war, and document 1 to make an argument about how the Black Hand's role in the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand is rooted in nationalism. It uses document 3 in support of an argument about nationalism leading to military spending in support of war.

Uses at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt: 0

The response did not earn the point for evidence beyond the documents because it does not make an attempt to provide evidence beyond the documents relevant to an argument about the prompt.

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

Sourcing for at least two documents: 1

The response 1 point for sourcing. It sources document 1 (Historical Situation) and document 2 (Purpose).

Demonstrating Complex Understanding: 0

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because there is no explicit attempt within the response.

Sample: 1C

Thesis Score: 1

Contextualization Score: 1

Evidence From Docs Score: 1

Evidence Beyond Docs Score: 0

Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Score: 0

Analysis and Reasoning: Complexity Score: 0

Total Score: 3

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for the thesis in the introduction by establishing a line of reasoning that the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism sparked by injustice. This thesis is stated more clearly in the conclusion than in the introduction. This is a minimally acceptable thesis.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization for its discussion of how the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand led to the outbreak of the war because Serbia wanted independence from Austria.

Document-Based Question 1 (continued)**C. Evidence (0–3 points): 1****Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt: 1**

The response earned 1 point by correctly using documents 1, 2, and 4, to address the topic of whether the First World War was primarily caused by popular nationalism or the decisions of government leaders. Its attempt to use document 6 is unsuccessful because it misinterprets the photograph.

Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents: 0

The response did not earn the evidence point for supporting an argument using at least four documents. The response uses documents 1, 2, and 4 in support of an argument about popular nationalism. Document 1 argues that the Black Hand was a nationalist organization, document 2 discusses French patriotism, and document 4 argues that tensions between the Serbians and Austrians caused World War I. The attempt to use document 6 to argue that the photo was an example of how “injustice in gender equalities and freedom” caused World War I is historically inaccurate and misinterprets the photograph.

Uses at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt: 0

The response did not earn the evidence point for using at least one additional piece of specific evidence that is relevant to an argument about the prompt because it made no explicit attempt to do so.

D. Analysis and Reasoning (0–2 points): 0**Sourcing for at least two documents: 0**

The response did not earn the point for sourcing because it provides no explicit attempt to do so.

Demonstrating complex understanding: 0

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because it does not provide a sophisticated argumentation or the effective use of evidence.