2025

AP® European History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Long Essay Question 3

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Question 3: Long Essay Question, Scientific Revolution vs. The Enlightenment — 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the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.

<table>
<tr><th>Reporting Category</th><th colspan="2">Scoring Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Row A
Thesis/Claim

(0–1 points)</td><td>0 points
Does not meet the criteria for one point.</td><td>1 point
Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Responses that do not earn this point:
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.</td><td>Responses that earn this point:
Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the most significant difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reason for making that claim OR establish categories of the argument.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examples that do not earn this point:

Provide a restatement of the prompt
“There were numerous differences between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.”
Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning
“The Scientific Revolution changed European society more than the Enlightenment did.”
Are overgeneralized
“A major difference between the two movements was the type of people involved in each .”</td><td>Examples that earn this point:

Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt
“While the two movements shared similar ideas about the importance of rational inquiry, the most important difference was their scope, as the ideas of the Enlightenment reached a much broader audience.”
Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories
“While both movements are intertwined, one can say that the Scientific Revolution gave birth to modern science, while the Enlightenment was an intellectual and philosophical movement that promoted the ideas of rationalism, liberty, and tolerance.”
Establish a line of reasoning
“The main difference was that the Scientific Revolution focused on math and physics, but the Enlightenment was about philosophy.” [Minimally acceptable thesis/claim]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Additional Notes:
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.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><th>Reporting Category</th><th colspan="2">Scoring Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Row B
Contextualization

(0–1 points)</td><td>0 points
Does not meet the criteria for one point.</td><td>1 point
Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Responses that do not earn this point:
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.</td><td>Responses that earn this point:
Accurately describe a context relevant to the Scientific Revolution and/or the Enlightenment.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examples that do not earn this point:

Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt
“The French Revolution challenged the political order of Europe.”
Overgeneralized statement
“Both movements led to great intellectual changes in Europe.”</td><td>Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:
The Protestant Reformation and challenges to the intellectual authority of the Catholic Church
The Age of Exploration
The printing press and the expansion of literacy
Renaissance humanism and secularism
The rise of absolutism
Rediscovery of classical scientific and philosophical works
Wars of Religion
The English Civil War
Example of acceptable contextualization:
“The Age of Exploration and the Renaissance allowed Europeans to learn more about the world, creating perfect conditions for the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.”
“The new ideas of science and the Enlightenment were spread by the printing press.” [Minimally acceptable contextualization]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Additional Notes:
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.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>Reporting Category</th><th colspan="3">Scoring Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Row C
Evidence

(0–2 points)</td><td>0 points
Does not meet the criteria for one point.</td><td>1 point
Provides specific examples of at least two pieces of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</td><td>2 points
Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least two pieces of specific and relevant evidence.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Responses that do not earn points:
Identify a single piece of evidence.
Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt.
Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt.
Repeat information that is specified in the prompt.
Examples that do not earn points:
Provide evidence that is outside the time period
“Inventions such as the telegraph, radio, and electricity revolutionized communication.”</td><td>Responses that earn 1 point:
Identify at least two specific historical examples relevant to the Scientific Revolution and/or the Enlightenment.
Examples of evidence that are specific and relevant include the following (two examples required):
Information about specific scientists and philosophers [e.g., Galileo, Newton, Locke, Voltaire, Adam Smith]
Public venues and print media
Religious toleration and changing ideas about religion
Government support for scientific inquiry [e.g., the Royal Society, the French Academy, and similar institutions]
Empiricism in the Scientific Revolution
Enlightenment attempts to apply scientific principles to social issues
The French Encyclopedia
Influence of encounters with different societies overseas on Enlightenment thought
Specific rulers [e.g., Louis XIV, Charles II, Catherine the Great, etc.]
Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence:
“Galileo’s use of the telescope to prove the heliocentric model and Newton’s application of mathematics to describe universal physical laws are both examples of how the Scientific Revolution changed people’s basic picture of the world.”</td><td>Responses that earn 2 points:
Use at least two specific historical examples to support an argument regarding the most significant difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.
Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence:
“The publication of the Encyclopedia by Enlightenment philosophers shows the greater popular reach of the movement.” [Uses evidence to support an argument about the more widespread influence of the Enlightenment]
“The demolition of the traditional, earth-centered view of the universe by Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler would have more lasting repercussions than the works of the Enlightenment.” [Uses evidence to support an argument about the more lasting significance of the Scientific Revolution]
“The ideas of the Scientific Revolution affected science and technology, but the Enlightenment had political effects such as the French Revolution.” [Uses evidence to support an argument about different aspects of European society that were changed by the two movements]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Additional Notes:
Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization.
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.</td></tr>
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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row D Analysis and Reasoning **(0–2 points)**	**0 points** Does not meet the criteria for one point.	**1 point** Uses historical reasoning [e.g., comparison, causation, continuity and change] to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.	**2 points** Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: • May include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument. • May assert the use of historical reasoning but does not use it to frame or structure an argument.	**Responses that earn 1 point:** • Must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument about the most significant difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. The reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced, or the evidence may be overly general or lacking specificity.	**Responses that earn 2 points:** 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: • 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. 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 that might include: • Explaining how multiple pieces of specific and relevant evidence [at least **four**] support a nuanced or complex argument that responds to the prompt; OR • Using evidence effectively to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different perspectives relevant to the prompt.
	Examples that do not earn points: **Assert the use of historical reasoning without framing of structuring an argument** • *"Scientific discoveries led to technological change."*	**Using a historical reasoning process to frame or structure an argument could include:** • Discussing significant differences in the effects of the Scientific Revolution vs. the Enlightenment using comparison and/or causation. • Explaining how Enlightenment figures applied some of the methods of the Scientific Revolution to deal with political, social and/or religious issues using continuity and change.	**Demonstrating a complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided:** • Considering multiple differences (e.g., social and intellectual) between the two movements before arguing for one as the most significant. [Explaining multiple thematic differences between the two movements] • Considering differences between the Enlightenment in different geographic areas and their connections to the Scientific Revolution. [Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across geographical areas] • Discussing four representative figures of the two movements to delineate the difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. [Explaining how multiple pieces of specific and relevant evidence support a nuanced or complex argument]

	Example of acceptable use of historical reasoning: • *"The Enlightenment differed from the Scientific Revolution both in the scope of its impact and its effect on the political status quo."* [Indicates difference between the two movements]	
Additional Notes: • To earn the first point for analysis and reasoning, the response must use historical reasoning to structure a response to the prompt, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced, or the evidence may be overly general or lacking in specificity. • 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.		

Sample 3A:

Starting with humanism during the italian renaissance, people were encouraged to be the best them they could be, provoking self thought, as well as the revival of classical texts. Later, in 1517, during the time of the Protestant Reformation and the 95 theses, people saw that what they once thought must be true, like the Church's words, may be up for debate. These actions led to people like Nicolaus Copernicus, who reviewed ancient greek philosophes' work, was able to challenge previously concrete ideas, sparking the Scientific Revolution. The Scientific Revolution, which brought prosperity, inventions, and new ideas to Europe, ultimately sparked people to continue to challenge thoughts and think for themselves, leading to the Enlightenment era. The biggest difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, is the Scientific Revolution was much more scientific and invention based, while the Enlightenment was more politically based, and had much more of an impact on rulers, violence, and the world overall.

The Scientific Revolution was almost entirely scientific and invention based. Copernicus challenged the otherwise globally accepted view that the universe rotated around the Earth, and created the heliocentric model, in which the universe rotates around the sun. This is very scientific and while groundbreaking, did not lead to violence. Issac Newton, invented calculus and the laws of motion, which once again, while scientifically groundbreaking, did not impact politics or lead to any sort of violence. Perhaps the third most famous inventor from this era, Galileo, invented the telescope. While this led to exploration being far easier and was used as a tool in wars for years to come, it led to no direct political change or conflict.

In comparison, the Enlightenment was extremely politically based, and let to extreme violence and changes within kingdoms. For example, the most significant people from this era, all had philosophies or creations that directly affected politics. Voltaire, who pushed for religous tolerance, was in touch with enlightened absolutists like Frederick the Great, allowing for some religous tolerance in Frederick's areas of Europe. John Locke, who made all sorts of philosophical statements, wrote that life, liberty, and possession, are all essentials to mankind. That statement would ultimately end up to be used by Thomas Jefferson, and become the backbone of the U.S. constitution. These enlightenment thinkers would host meetings called salons, in which they would discuss enlightenment ideals and how to apply them. The ideas of religous tolerance, women's rights, education, abolishing divine right, natural rights of man, and many more are some of the most important differences between today's world and the 1600s, as well as the major causes for conflict across Europe's history.

Sample 3B:

The reign of absolute monarchies caused the people of nations such as France to fight back and stand up for themself. France experienced the reign of the absolute Louis XIV and were unhappy with his rule over the nation so they chopped of the head of Louis. This event led to change across France and all throughout Europe after it had influence to the ideas of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was a time period of change that had ideas focused on indiviualism and the rights/status of the people. This was different to the Scientific Revolution because the Scientific Revolution was based on mathematically figuring out the universe and the innovations that were made to make new discoveries.

The Scientific Revolution was different from the Enlightenment because it made sense of everything in this world with math and physics. Instead of the enlightenment that focused on the importance of the individual, the scientific revolution saw further beyond into the laws of the universe. Newton and his laws were revolutionary when figuring out why and how our world worked. He made dicoveries such as gravity and how it acts on forces depending on the mass. The mathematics incorperated into his studies were formulas and proof of his work and explations to the system of the universe. Enlightenment did not have the proof when making changes to the way we think and understand the world.

The Scientific Revolution was also different from the Enlightenment in the sense of innovations that marked new discoveries. The Enlightenment did changed our view of humans and the rights each human has to themself but the Scientific Revolution did that but instead with the cosmos. Galileo was a renowned figure of the Scientific Revolution and one of his innovations was the invention of the telescope. Galileo created the first telescope and pointed it towards the sky to see what the planets outside of Earth were really like. Galileo changed the our understanding of the universe with the discovery of a heliocentric universe that we live in. It was previously believed that God had made the heavens and the universe with Earth at the center of the creation. Galileo disproved this theory and explained that the Earth and all the other planets in our solar system rotate around the Sun. This understanding of the universe stuck even after the death of Galileo and is how we understand the cosmos to this day.

The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment both had similarities in them both innovating the way we see and understand things. The key difference in these innovations was that the enlightenment innovated the way we saw people and values while the scientific revolution changed the way we understood the universe and the reasonings behind the laws of this world. The difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment belonged in the categories of ideas they changed compared to the understanding that humans originally had on them.

Sample 3C:
Science what does it help us with? For starters it helps us have a better thinking mindset on evolution and many more questions we may have. Now what about natural rights what can that help us with. Well that's a good question, having natural rights helps us feel more free and have our voice heard. I believe that scientific revolution is about having greater thinking skills and beliefs while enlightenment is more about having freedom of rights.

Enlightenment is a very important topic that is learned because it is a idea of natural rights. You may wonder who bring this idea? John lock does his idea was that poeple had rights like freedom. He also believed that the goverment gets their power from the people. Which i believe is true because if you think about it if our goverment made a law or rule for example and we just didn't care do you think the goverment would have any power i don't think so. That is why this idea is so important not just because of that but because john's idea also helped with the french revolution, liberism and the decleration of independance.

Now for the scientific revolution. The scientific revolution helps us think more about scientific matter like newtons law. Newton talks about how gravity always keeps things on ground and pushes them down if that makes sense.

In conclusion althought both the enlightment and the scientific revolution make us put our thinking caps on they are both different things that helped structure what life is now.

Long Essay Question 3

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: 3A
Thesis Score: 1
Contextualization Score: 1
Evidence Score: 2
Analysis and Reasoning Score: 2

Total Score: 6

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis by establishing a line of reasoning at the end of the first paragraph, asserting that the Scientific Revolution was more "scientific and invention based" while the Enlightenment was more "politically based" and had a greater impact.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization by describing the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation as influences on the Scientific Revolution in the opening sentences of the first paragraph.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

Providing Specific Examples of Evidence

The response earned 1 point for providing specific pieces of relevant evidence. It provides evidence about Copernicus and heliocentrism, Isaac Newton, and Galileo and his telescope in the second paragraph. The third paragraph discusses Voltaire, Frederick the Great, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, as well as salons, and their topics of discussion.

Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument

The response earned 1 point for using evidence to support an argument. It uses the evidence provided in the second paragraph to support an argument about the importance of inventions and scientific focus to the Scientific Revolution. It uses the Enlightenment evidence in the third paragraph to support an argument about the political focus and effects that movement had on 18th-century society.

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

Using Historical Reasoning

The response earned 1 point for using historical reasoning to make an argument (comparison) that the most significant difference between the two historical movements was the focus on physical sciences in the Scientific Revolution and the focus on politics in the Enlightenment.

Long Essay Question 3 (continued)

Demonstrating Complex Understanding

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating complex understanding. The response uses multiple pieces of evidence about both historical movements to successfully support the argument that scientific thinking and inventions were most important to the Scientific Revolution, while ideas about religious toleration and natural rights were most central to the Enlightenment. Furthermore, the essay argues that Enlightenment ideas affected politics more than those of the Scientific Revolution.

Sample: 3B
Thesis Score: 1
Contextualization Score: 0
Evidence Score: 2
Analysis and Reasoning Score: 1

Total Score: 4

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis at the end of the first paragraph. It establishes a line of reasoning that the Enlightenment focused on individualism and rights, while the Scientific Revolution was interested in mathematically figuring out the universe.

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for contextualization. The information offered in the opening sentences of the first paragraph is incorrect; Louis XIV was not executed, and that did not influence the ideas of the Enlightenment.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 2

Providing Specific Examples of Evidence

The response earned 1 point for providing specific examples of evidence relevant to the prompt. It discusses Newton and his studies of gravity in the second paragraph, and Galileo and his telescope in the third paragraph. The attribution of the discovery of heliocentrism to Galileo is incorrect, but there is still sufficient correct evidence to earn the point.

Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument

The response earned 1 point for using specific evidence in support of a relevant argument. It uses Newton and his studies of gravity to support an argument in paragraph two about the Scientific Revolution's focus on using mathematics and proofs. In the third paragraph, the response uses Galileo and his telescope to support an argument that scientific innovations changed the understanding of the universe.

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

Using Historical Reasoning

The response earned 1 point for historical thinking by making the argument that the Scientific Revolution was more focused on mathematics and evidence, while Enlightenment thinkers were less reliant on proofs and formulas.

Long Essay Question 3 (continued)

Demonstrating Complex Understanding

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding. Although the response offers a second point of contrast in its discussion of Galileo and his telescope affecting the way people viewed the universe, the contrast with the Enlightenment related to "the sense of innovation that marked new discoveries" is not fully explained or developed sufficiently to qualify as nuanced or complex.

Sample: 3C
Thesis Score: 1
Contextualization Score: 0
Evidence Score: 1
Analysis and Reasoning Score: 0

Total Score: 2

A. Thesis/Claim (0–1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for a minimally acceptable thesis at the end of the first paragraph that makes a claim about the most significant difference between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. It makes the claim that the Scientific Revolution is focused on "greater thinking skills and beliefs" and the Enlightenment is more focused on "having freedom of rights."

B. Contextualization (0–1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for contextualization because it does not describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. The broad discussion about the purpose of science is too vague to earn the point.

C. Evidence (0–2 points): 1

Providing Specific Examples of Evidence

The response earned 1 point for evidence for its discussion of John Locke in the second paragraph and Newton in the third.

Using Specific Evidence in Support of a Relevant Argument

The response did not earn the point for using evidence to support an argument because, while the discussion of Locke's ideas and his influence on later events supports an argument about the Enlightenment's focus on natural rights, the discussion of Newton does not support an argument.

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

Using Historical Reasoning

The response did not earn a point for using historical reasoning because the discussion of the Scientific Revolution was insufficiently developed to make an argument about the most significant difference between the two movements.

Long Essay Question 3 (continued)

Demonstrating Complex Understanding

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating complex understanding because there is no explicit attempt within the response to demonstrate nuanced understanding through effective use of evidence relevant to the prompt.