

2025



AP[®] European History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

Inside:

Short-Answer Question 4

- Scoring Guidelines**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

Question 4: Short Answer No Stimulus**3 points****General Scoring Notes**

- Each point is earned independently.
- **Accuracy:** These scoring guidelines require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.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 responses 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.
- **Describe:** Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic. Description requires more than simply mentioning an isolated term.
- **Explain:** Provide information about how or why a historical development or process occurs or how or why a relationship exists.

A Describe one significant political characteristic of European unification efforts in the period from 1945 to 1990. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Unification efforts in Western Europe, including but not limited to NATO, were motivated by the competition with the socialist Eastern bloc, which responded by uniting under the Warsaw Pact.
- Unification was a gradual process that was mostly pushed by France and West Germany.
- Attempts at political unification were intended to follow economic unification.
- European unification was a means for Western European countries to challenge the dominance of the United States after World War II.

B Describe one economic factor that facilitated European unification efforts in the period from 1945 to 1990. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Unification efforts in Western Europe were spearheaded with economic measures like abolishing tariffs and trade barriers.
- United States economic support to Western Europe such as the Marshall Plan encouraged states to make moves towards unification.
- Integration began with the successful coal and steel treaty which motivated next steps for unification.
- The loss of overseas colonies deprived Western European states of captive markets for goods and of exploitable resources, which encouraged the lowering of trade barriers within Western Europe.

- C** Explain one way the economic system in Eastern Europe differed from the economic system in Western Europe in the period 1945 to 1990. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Countries in Western Europe rebuilt their economies faster than the countries of the Soviet bloc due to the Marshall Plan, which led to the “economic miracle.”
 - Western Europe was more prosperous than the countries of the Eastern bloc due to free market policies, in contrast to the centrally planned economic development pushed by the Soviet Union, which proved to be ineffective.
 - Western European countries, integrated into the global economy, developed richer consumer culture while this did not happen in the less prosperous countries of the Soviet bloc.
-

Sample 4A:

A. One significant political characteristic of European unification efforts in this period after the Second World War was the need to choose a side in the Cold War: the Western United States or the Eastern Soviet Union. NATO was formed by Western nations as united protection against the Soviet Union, while the Warsaw Pact was formed by the Soviet Union and its satellite nations in the Eastern Bloc. Eastern Europe unified into communism and the umbrella of the Soviet Union while Western Europe unified under NATO and the American commitment to democracy.

B. One economic factor that facilitated European unification in this period was the Marshall Plan. This plan, by the United States, gave money and economic aid to European nations to help them rebuild after the devastation of the Second World War while promoting a good image of democracy. Countries like France, the United Kingdom, West Germany, and many others that received economic aid from the United States were more receptive to Western democracy, more likely to join NATO, and more likely to fight communism as a part of Western European unification. On the other hand, Eastern European nations that did not receive aid under the Marshall Plan were much more likely to be unified under communism and the Soviet Union.

C. One way that the economic system in Eastern Europe differed from the economic system in Western Europe in this postwar period was through the government and state control of the economy in these Eastern Bloc countries as compared to the capitalist tendencies of the Western Europe economic system. In the Soviet-controlled economic system of Eastern Europe, the government regulated and controlled the economy, as part of the communist ideals the Soviet Union was founded upon. However, on the other side of the Iron Curtain, the West took a more capitalistic approach. There was less state intervention and more international trade in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe. In short, Eastern Europe followed a state-run communist economic system, while Western Europe differed by following a capitalist economic system.

Sample 4B:

A. One significant political characteristic of European unification efforts in the period from 1945-1990 was nationalism. This is exemplified by the unification of Poland. For decades, territories of Poland were split among many European nations, but after WWII Poland became an independent nation with its own governing system due to the nationalistic qualities of its people.

B. One economic factor that facilitated European unification efforts in the period from 1945-1990 was the Marshall Plan performed by the U.S. After the devastating destruction of WWII, U.S. gave European Nations money to help rebuild their societies and industries through the Marshall Plan. This allowed for nations to become strong again and have the materials to unify.

C. One way the economic system in Eastern Europe differed from the economic system in Western Europe in the period from 1945-1990, was that the East was communist while the West was capitalist. Capitalism flourished in the West and allowed for increased work ethic due wanting to gain more capital, whereas communism was an equal amount of capital no matter how hard you worked. This is exemplified by consumerism in the West and the increased production due to supply and demand.

Sample 4C:

4a. One significant political characteristic of European unification efforts in the period from 1945 to 1990 was fascism and warfare. In Germany, there were efforts by rulers such as Hitler to fulfill the values of national self-determination, which involved the people holding a common language and ethnic background to be able to exist under the same nation with a clearly defined border with little outside influence. This led to Adolf Hitler, a major figurehead in Germany at the time, to take efforts to control lands with a large ethnic German population and thus unite the German people under one strong nation. Fascism contributed to this process by guiding the method with which Hitler engaged in this. Fascism is a form of extreme nationalism in which war and battle are glorified, and Hitler's actions match exactly with this. He led a series of military campaigns to expand Germany and obtain more land for his people, using national self-determination and the unification of the people of Germany as an excuse. Even though the German states had been unified prior, there were still regions with German ethnic populations that Hitler wanted to take to grow his nation through battle and force, highlighting nationalism and war as major parts of his efforts of the unification of the German people during this time.

4b. One economic factor which facilitated European unification efforts in the period from 1945 to 1990 was the lasting impacts of the Great Depression and War Guilt Clause on Germany. The Great Depression was a European economic crisis which was unique in its severity and uneven recovery, and involved things such as mass poverty and famine throughout the world. It hit Germany especially hard due to the large debt the nation had already endured due to the end of the First World War, which caused Germany to pay many reparations. This hurt the nation because it was already under a lot of financial stress from having to undertake the debts, but now also had to worry about more negativity from the Great Depression. Germany was struggling and felt that the reparations were unfair, and so they fought in more wars to unify their ethnic peoples under one strong nation that could fight back under similar injustices and defend itself. This demonstrates how poverty and the Great Depression led to German unification movements of the ethnic peoples during this time by heightening nationalistic principles and desires for a strong nation to preserve the ideals of these people.

4c. One way in which the economic system in Eastern Europe differed from the economic system in Western Europe during the period from 1945 to 1990 was in the establishment of capitalism versus communism. After the World Wars, Russia took hold of Eastern Europe, whilst the United States exerted a large amount of influence over the West. Russia had embraced communism for a great while after a series of internal revolutions and internal hardship, and thus it forced this form of economics, in which the means of production were not held in the hands of one group or class and goods were distributed equally to minimize class disparity, in an effort to achieve civil peace and fair economic positions. The West, on the other hand, wanted capitalism, with its free trade policies with limited government interference and the ability of people to profit off of their own works. They wanted private institutions to be allowed to exist and people to earn their own money, meaning the two policies were vastly different. These differences led to the Cold War over which would take hold, and highlights how the economic systems between the sides of Europe differed during

this period due to whoever held influence over the individual, respective spheres and put on them communism or capitalism.

Short Answer Question 4

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: 4A

SAQ Part A Score: 1

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for Part A by describing NATO as an alliance motivated by a need for protection from the socialist Eastern bloc.

The response earned 1 point for Part B by describing that the United States' Marshall Plan was motivated by an effort to unify Europe against Communism.

The response earned 1 point for Part C by explaining how Eastern European Communism was characterized by government-regulated and controlled economies.

Sample: 4B

SAQ Part A Score: 0

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Score: 2

The response did not earn the point for Part A because it provides inaccurate information about the post-World War II independence of Poland and does not accurately describe the role nationalism played in European unification efforts between 1945 and 1990.

The response earned 1 point for Part B by describing how the Marshall Plan provided funding that facilitated the rebuilding of European societies and industries.

The response earned 1 point for Part C by explaining theoretical differences between Communism in Eastern Europe and the capitalist West.

Short Answer Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4C

SAQ Part A Score: 0

SAQ Part B Score: 0

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Score: 1

The response did not earn the point for Part A because its discussion of Hitler's efforts to nationalize and unify the German people falls outside the timeframe of the prompt.

The response did not earn the point for Part B because the description of the Great Depression and the War Guilt Clause in the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 predates the time parameters of the prompt.

The response earned 1 point for Part C by describing the hard economic conditions of Eastern Europeans under the control of the Soviet Union.