

INTRO TO THE LEQ

The Long Essay Question is the last portion of the AP exam and it is worth 15% of your score. You will have 35 minutes to answer the LEQ and will be expected to produce around 2 1/2 pages. On the exam you will be expected to write one essay with a choice of three topics.

CB Expectation	Points	What does this mean?
<i>Thesis:</i> 1. Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.	1	1. To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt, rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.
<i>Contextualization:</i> 2. Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.	1	2. To earn this point, the response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or reference. Ideally it should be 3-5 sentences.
<i>Evidence:</i> 3. Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. (1 point) or 4. Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence. (2 points)	2	3. To earn one point, the response must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. 4. To earn two points, the response must accurately describe — rather than simply quote — the content from at least six documents. In addition, the response must use the content of the documents to support an argument in response to the prompt.
<i>Analysis and Reasoning:</i> 5. Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt. or 6. Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.	2	5. To earn the first point, the response must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced. 6. To earn the second point, the response must demonstrate a complex understanding. This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.

Prompt:

Evaluate the extent to which the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution marked a turning point in the history of United States politics and society.

In the development of your argument, explain what changed and what stayed the same from the period immediately before the amendments to the period immediately following them. (*Historical thinking skill: Periodization*)

A. Thesis (1 point)

Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.

A. The ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were an enormous turning point for the United States. These amendments brought equality, integrity and hope to America by creating a more pleasing social environment in society. These two caused a turning point by ensuring a better life for African Americans, for the American people as a whole and for the overall attitude of the people of the U. S.

B. The Fourteenth Amendment, naming all men born in the U.S. as citizens, and Fifteenth Amendment, allowing all male citizens to vote, marked a turning point in U.S. society and politics. In the period of intolerance and inhumanity prior to the ratification of these amendments, blacks were viewed as property not people. Following these amendments, although still heavily discriminated against, Americans increasingly viewed African Americans as people worthy of a certain level of respect. The ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments marked a minimal turning point in the way African Americans were viewed and not much in the way they were treated, as well as a minimal political shift due to African American influence on politics.

B. Contextualization (1 point)

Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.

A. Before the Civil War African-Americans had been enslaved for hundreds of years. Slavery allowed the South to grow cash crops like sugar, tobacco, and cotton which were the focus of the economy in the South. Slavery had been enshrined in the Constitution with the three-fifths compromise, the fugitive slave clause, and the abolishment of the slave trade in 1808. As slaves African-Americans had no rights and there were even laws prohibiting educating slaves. If an African-American was freed they were still limited in their rights with laws limiting what occupation they could have and whether or not they could own land. The expansion of slavery was a central political issue prior to the Civil War with Congress attempting to compromise on the issue with items like the Missouri Compromise or the Compromise of 1850. Whether or not to expand slavery was as central an issue before the Civil War as what rights to give to African Americans was to the Reconstruction era.

B. Before emancipation African-Americans were enslaved and they had few rights. They worked on plantations picking cash crops. There were few ways to earn their freedom and freedom was rarely given. This made the rights given after the Civil War even more precious.

C. Evidence (2 points)/D. Analysis and Reasoning (2 points)

- Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.
- Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.
- Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.
- Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.

A. The role of African Americans in the US has been crucial to every period of American history. For over a hundred years they had been enslaved, and disagreements over slavery culminated in the U. S.'s bloodiest war. When the Union won, these Amendments were passed which changed the lives of black people nationwide: the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. They respectively ended slavery, made all citizens equal under the law regardless of color and gave blacks the right to vote. And while the latter two did certainly have a huge impact on American politics and society, it was not as momentous as it would seem.

Before the passage of the Amendments, blacks had almost nothing in the eyes of law. They were not afforded the same rights as white people such as due process, voting and other guarantees and freedom. The two amendments changed that by putting blacks on equal status with whites in the eyes of the law. Any black citizen could own property, run for office, and cast a ballot in an election. The concept of 40 acres and a mule gave new economic opportunities to African Americans, and the Freedman's Bureau gave them support needed to establish independent lives. Blacks also received more formal education, putting them on a closer level to whites. Subsequently, the number of black representatives in local, state, and federal governments rose, and African Americans gained a voice in legislature. For the short time being, they were not at the hands of the oppressive whites who used to rule over them. Blacks were legally equal to whites in every sense following the 14th and 15th Amendments. This opportunity was never before seen in the history of America.

However, that equality was not in the eyes of the people, and thus the amendments were not too successful in changing the treatment of African Americans. When Reconstruction ended in 1877, whites began to take back the southern governments. Soon all sorts of de jure discrimination was passed. Poll taxes and grandfather clauses were used to suppress the votes of blacks. Segregation under the guise of separate but equal, and declared constitutionally valid by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in the 1890s, undid much of the equality gained from the 14th Amendment. Blacks became relegated to being second class citizens, deprived of the assurances these Amendments guaranteed. African Americans representatives became virtually absent in most parts of the country, and for half a century discrimination endured, and even thrived. In this way, the 14th and 15th Amendments had importance in mostly only name and symbolism. They were like empty words, and sharecroppers in the 1880s became not too distinguished from the slaves in the 1850s.

B. The United States promotes its democratic equality through its legislation and its existence. However it was not until the 1970s that the minorities of the United States finally got a voice within the legislation of the United States. Even with powerful opposition, the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution marked a major turning point in the United States politics and society.

Before the Civil War and the Reconstruction era when the amendments were passed, politics were dominated by Anglo-Saxons. Not only were blacks not seen as equals or had the right to vote, they were enslaved or strictly discriminated against. In the court case of *Douglas*, the Supreme Court led by Judge Tawney ruled that blacks were not only not people but property. Blacks were seen as inferior beings for they were banned from education by legislation from the southern states such as South

Carolina. As early as the thirteen colonies blacks were made inferior and subjected to white control by laws in Maryland and Virginia that stated that blacks born into slavery were to remain slaves and they could never marry outside of their race.

After the Civil War and Reconstruction began with the ratification of the amendments of 13, 14, and 15, slaves were not only freed but given equal rights and suffrage as well. With the promotion of the northern governments blacks established communities and schools prospered, and blacks even held offices. With the northern guard in place along with the carpetbaggers, the south was forced to comply with the Union demands. This included allowing blacks to vote which ultimately led to the President Grant's victory in the elections. The prosperity of the freedman were increased by the Freedman's Bureau that advocated equality in education and ownership of the land. However, once the compromise of the next election occurred and ended Reconstruction the reforms of equality between races began to decline. Regardless the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments was still in effect. Even though the poll taxes and the grandfather clause restricted many blacks from voting and achieving full equality, it was still an amendment that would live to continue to establish equality in the decades to come.