

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. There are four types of essays (periodization, comparison, causation, and CCOT) however on the exam you will only be expected to write one kind of essay with a choice of two topics.

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)

Presents a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.

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. Historical Thinking Skills (2 points)

Describes the ways in which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from OR similar to developments that preceded AND followed.

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 ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution marked a turning point in the history of the United States. The 14th Amendment granted equal rights to all men and women in society. The 15th Amendment granted all men, even African Americans the right to vote. Giving African Americans the right to vote led to the rise and creation of the Ku Klux Klan. During Ulysses S. Grant presidency, it was a majority of black votes that him into office. The KKK didn't like the amendment, so they would use scare tactics, such as burning churches and burning African American homes, to scare black people from voting. Grant took action and forced the KKK to stop the hatred against his African American voters. This caused the great migration and most African Americans moved to the north to find jobs and get out of sharecropping as there was still discrimination in the North. Up in the North, came the Harlem Renaissance that gave black culture a voice with the rise of jazz, literature and art. Even when the 14th Amendment was passed, schools were 'separate but equal' according to the Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Later during Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency, the ruling of was overturned by the Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, 'separate but not equal.' This led to the action to integration in schools by states. With the assistance of federal troops sent by Eisenhower, 4 African American students entered an all white public school in Little Rock, Arkansas. The 14th and 15th Amendments changed the United States socially and economically since its ratification, especially to the African American community.

Explains the extent to which the historical development specified in the prompt was different from AND similar to developments that preceded AND followed.

A. 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 Taney 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.

B. The ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendment revolutionized the lives of African Americans in the United States. These amendments granted former slaves citizenship and voting rights that they had never experienced on American soil. These two amendments marked a major change from the unequal treatment and discrimination that existed under the law prior to the civil war. These 2 amendments here ratified during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War and demonstrated a victory for abolitionists and loss for southern slave owners. The 14th and 15th Amendments forever changed the dynamics of American society regardless of the region a person lived in and revolutionized the lives of African Americans. The ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments marked a major change in the way American society accepted African Americans and set the foreground for future advancements for African Americans.

The 14th Amendment forever changed the United States as it granted citizenship to former slaves and the rights of citizenship equally protected under the law. In the early 1800s a law like this would've been furiously debated by slave owners and abolitionists. However, since the Union had won the Civil War, the country could proceed to progress and eliminate slavery in America. The 14th Amendment eliminated the debate that existed under the Dred Scott decision as African Americans were now citizens and had the right to sue in court. The 14th Amendment opened doors for African Americans as seen in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case and *Brown v. Board of Ed* court cases. If it were not for the 14th Amendment, those court cases would have never existed.

The 15th Amendment enfranchised African Americans for the first time, blacks could participate in the political process and vote for leaders who represented their interest. Prior to the 15th Amendment, only white men could vote, so the 15th allowed African Americans to voice their concerns to society through the power to vote. However, this amendment also marked the beginning of voting restrictions such as poll taxes and literacy tests in southern states where racist sentiment continued to exist. Politics in the south would still restrict African Americans however these restrictions set the stage for the future in legislation such as the Voting Rights Act in the 1960s which abolished literacy tests. Despite southern hostilities, if the 15th Amendment hadn't been passed, African Americans would have never had the opportunity to gain political freedom in America.

Furthermore, the 14th and 15th Amendments marked a change in civil rights for African Americans. These two amendments were the start of government intervention of the 1960s. Civil rights leaders like Martin L. King Jr, Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael would go on to reference the 14th and 15th Amendments in their argument for civil rights in the 1960s. These two amendments guaranteed certain freedoms to blacks and allowed for rights to be extended in future decades.

Even though the 14th and 15th Amendments revolutionized the lives of African Americans they also triggered the Jim Crow laws in southern states which restricted African Americans despite their rights. These Jim Crow laws existed through Reconstruction until the 1960s and demonstrated the remainder of anti-black extent despite earned rights by the law. The 14th and 15th Amendments revolutionized the worlds of African Americans in terms of the political process and future improvements to the civil conditions of African Americans in the 1960s. Despite institutions like the Jim Crow laws, the 14th and 15th amendments opened doors for African Americans in ways that anticipated the negatives of the Jim Crow laws. Not only did they immediately improve the lives of African Americans when they were passed, but they also set a precedent for future civil rights movements that expanded upon what they had initially accomplished.

C. Evidence (2 points)

Addresses the topic of the question with specific examples of relevant evidence.

A. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were involved in playing an important role in the United States. They gave African Americans the right to vote as well as letting them be free in the country from being slaves.

African Americans had been through many tough situations throughout history. With the Fourteenth Amendment being ratified African Americans could take part in voting which was a major turning point because their vote was helpful for the election of many different presidents. This couldn't have happened without the Civil Rights Act, this act gave everyone in the United States the opportunity to have equal rights no matter their race. Making this amendment beneficial for African Americans in history which resulted in a major turning point in history of the United States politics and society. What stayed the same was that they were still African Americans who still got treated disrespectfully because of their color.

Moreover, the Fifteenth Amendment gave freedom to slaves in the United States. Allowing them to live a life they never had the experience of doing. Abraham Lincoln helped the enslaved to be free with his creation of the Emancipation Proclamation which freed all slaves so Lincoln was an abolitionist which were those against slavery. Also a known person for helping freeing slaves was Harriet Tubman she was in charge of an underground railroad that help lead the slaves to escape and free on their own. Tubman escaped herself because she too was a slave so she saw her opportunity and took the chance she had. After the amendment the slaves were free at last, what stayed the same was African Americans would still be looked at as a slave.

B. With the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction period in America, freed slaves were left with an unsteady fate. They lacked citizenship and suffrage, but were no longer chattel. So, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were ratified to ensure rights given to African Americans, with significant effects on United States politics and society. These amendments secured actions such as the Civil Rights Act of 1966 and expanded freedom for African Americans.

Prior to the ratification of the 14th and 15th amendments, African Americans had been freed from bondage by the 13th Amendment. However this amendment did not extend to them rights of citizenship and suffrage. Therefore, they were not considered property but were not considered citizens of America and could not vote. So, with the ratification of the 14th Amendment, which gave citizenship to all people born or naturalized in the United States. As a result, African Americans were given rights, such as the ownership of property, that came with citizenship. Later African Americans were also given suffrage by the 15th Amendment, allowing them to vote in local and federal elections. This not only expanded democracy in America and gave African Americans more rights, but also increased support for the Republican Party. In fact, suffrage was given to African Americans in part because it would strengthen the influence of the Republican Party, especially in the south. So, with the ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments, democracy as a whole was expanded in the United States.

As slaves and freed people without citizenship or suffrage, African Americans faced much discrimination, especially from southerners and pro-slavery groups. This social discrimination remained largely the same with the extension of citizenship and suffrage to former slaves through the 14th and 15th Amendments. In fact, this sentiment remained a large focus in America and even resulted in the passage of legislation such as Jim Crow laws and Black codes. The Jim Crow laws limited voting rights for African Americans by establishing poll taxes and literacy tests, whereas the Black Codes were created to maintain a subservient labor force on southern plantations. Both of these limitations were observed in the south due to discrimination against African Americans. Other sentiments of the time included the question of women's rights as suffrage from women was still withheld even as African American men were extended the right to vote.

Utilizes specific examples of evidence to fully and effectively substantiate the stated thesis or a relevant argument.

A. The ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments marked a great turning point in the history of the United States. Although the passing of these amendments brought great change in the US, there were aspects that still stayed the same.

After the Civil War and the passing of the 13th Amendment African Americans were freed from slavery and were granted citizenship. The 14th and 15th Amendments were passed in order to secure the rights of these new citizens. The 14th Amendment defined what a citizen was and explained that a citizen of the US was entitled the right to vote. The 15th Amendment stated that citizens cannot be prohibited from voting based on their race or previous condition of servitude. This secured the African Americans the right to vote. This was a significant point in US history because for the first time in history, white men were not the only ones with the right to vote and be a part of the government. From this point on African Americans were considered citizens and were entitled to the same rights as white citizens. For example, Hiram Revels was one of the first African American senators. The passing of these amendments allowed integration in the voters of the president. For many years up until the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, African Americans highly promoted the Republican party and had an influential amount of votes for the Republican party. This was because of Abraham Lincoln was a Republican president that freed the enslaved African Americans.

Although the passing of the 14th and 15th Amendments greatly changed society, many aspects still stayed the same. The African Americans were still viewed in society as unequal to whites. The whites still believed their race was superior to the African Americans. Racist groups such as the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) led by Nathan Forrest used violence to threaten and intimidate African Americans from exercising their new rights. The KKK used violence to make African Americans to feel as if they were not equal to the whites in society. In the south, the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws allowed legal segregation of African Americans. The African Americans were not allowed equal social opportunities as men and were treated as if there were less than the whites, even though there were both citizens. Segregation was the new way to maintain the discrimination of African Americans, which was previously reinforced by slavery. Even after the ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments, the government was mainly controlled by whites because blacks were denied equal political opportunities because of de facto segregation in society. Blacks were also prevented from voting, like before, through the creation of the poll tax, literacy test, and the grandfather clause. Many African Americans were poor and illiterate, making them unable to handle the poll tax and literacy test. African Americans could not get past the grandfather clause, which stated that a person could vote if their grandfather could vote prior to 1865. This was not possible for African Americans because prior to 1865 majority of their grandparents were enslaved.

B. African Americans have been unfairly mistreated throughout American history. Although there had been some success with equality under the law with the 14th and 15th Amendments, many southerners

backlashed after the ratification of these amendments.

Establishing the 14th and 15th Amendments seemed to mark a victory for African Americans for it granted citizenship and voting rights under the law. During the Reconstruction Era, African Americans have advanced their position politically for some obtained political positions that their predecessors have never done before. This, to an extent, increased the voices in politics and decision-making process. However, most of the southerners were still not over the idea that white people were better than black, in other words white supremacy still permeated throughout the south, and they were not about to react kindly to these new amendments. After Reconstruction and the ratification of these amendments, literacy tests and polls were imposed specifically on African Americans in order to prevent them from voting. Jim Crow laws were also established in the south, segregating African Americans from the white southerners and denying them certain privileges.

D. Synthesis (1 point)

Extends the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and ONE of the following:

- a) A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area.
- b) A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual history)

A. The 14th and 15th Amendments were a sign of a new era in American society and politics, but were not enough to get the country to its destination. Nearly one hundred years after the Civil War, the 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Ed of Topeka* ended the legality of Jim Crow segregation, and ten years later the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made equality mostly present. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 further solidified the promises from those two amendments. Thus the 14th and 15th Amendments were crucial as a step in the right direction, but largely failed in immediately changing the political and social culture of the United States.

B. Although the progressive amendments had some significance to American history it did little to prevent Southern retaliation. In court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* claimed that African Americans can be “separate but equal,” and it was not until a later court case during the Civil Rights movement, *Brown v. Board*, overturned the rule stating that segregation was “inherently” unequal. Though, southerners were still finding a way to get around the case. The incident with the Little Rock Nine and the college student who was forced to study outside (and separate from) the classroom suggests the limitations of how equal African Americans were from the two amendments.