

Advanced Placement (AP) World History Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What makes the Mayan number system significant?**
 - A. It shows the Mayans borrowed their calendar from the Olmecs**
 - B. The use of bars and dots was simpler than numerals**
 - C. They had a different system for the short count calendar**
 - D. It combined numbers with hieroglyphics**

- 2. What concept did Mary Wollstonecraft challenge in her writings?**
 - A. The divine right of kings**
 - B. The supremacy of men in social order**
 - C. The necessity of marriage for women**
 - D. The importance of religious faith in governance**

- 3. How did Islam primarily influence West Africa?**
 - A. Merchants rejected Islam because of its hostility toward trade**
 - B. Islam had the greatest influence on rulers and urban elites**
 - C. Farmers comprised the majority of converts to Islam**
 - D. The Arabic language was used by both Muslims and non-Muslims**

- 4. How did agricultural diffusion influence population in Central/South America?**
 - A. It maintained a consistent population level**
 - B. It caused an immediate decline in population**
 - C. It led to a slow increment in population growth**
 - D. It resulted in migration to new areas**

- 5. The text reflects which of the following policies commonly employed by Muslim leaders in conquered lands?**
 - A. The death penalty for those who refused to convert to Islam**
 - B. Taxation on those who refused to convert to Islam**
 - C. Forced exile for those who refused to convert to Islam**
 - D. No penalty for those who refused to convert to Islam**

- 6. What would be the most important factor determining a "favorable location" for a village to evolve into a city?**
- A. Nearby mountains that could provide a barrier to foreign invasion**
 - B. A plentiful supply of clay to produce pottery**
 - C. Surrounding areas filled with animals to be hunted**
 - D. A predictable supply of water**
- 7. How were women's lives generally more restricted from 600 BCE to 600 CE compared to earlier periods?**
- A. Women were increasingly thought of as primary earners for the family**
 - B. Women were increasingly responsible for the care of their children**
 - C. Women's power increasingly fell within the private sphere**
 - D. Women's power increasingly fell within the public sector**
- 8. What characterizes the Holy Roman Empire?**
- A. A centralized monarchy with absolute power**
 - B. A loose federation of German states led by an elected emperor**
 - C. A unified kingdom ruled by a singular family**
 - D. An empire focused on maritime exploration**
- 9. What is a similarity between the Mayans and the Greeks?**
- A. Used an alphabet in which symbols represented sounds**
 - B. Linked science and religion closely together**
 - C. Built tall structures to get closer to heaven**
 - D. Developed ball games as religious rituals**
- 10. What did Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses signify?**
- A. A proposal for peace among Christian denominations**
 - B. A challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church**
 - C. A celebration of Catholic traditions**
 - D. A call for a new Christian denomination**

Answers

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1. D
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. D
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What makes the Mayan number system significant?

- A. It shows the Mayans borrowed their calendar from the Olmecs
- B. The use of bars and dots was simpler than numerals
- C. They had a different system for the short count calendar
- D. It combined numbers with hieroglyphics**

The significance of the Mayan number system lies in its unique combination of numbers with hieroglyphics, showcasing both their mathematical and written language systems. The Mayans employed a vigesimal (base-20) counting system that utilized dots and bars to represent numbers, and they integrated these numerical values into their hieroglyphic writing. This fusion reflects a sophisticated understanding of mathematics, allowing them to create complex calculations and maintain accurate records. The complexity and innovation of the Mayan number system highlight their advanced civilization, where mathematics was not separate from their culture but deeply intertwined with their communication, religious practices, and astronomy. Their ability to blend these two systems represents a significant achievement in the history of mathematics and linguistics, making it a defining feature of Mayan culture and society.

2. What concept did Mary Wollstonecraft challenge in her writings?

- A. The divine right of kings
- B. The supremacy of men in social order**
- C. The necessity of marriage for women
- D. The importance of religious faith in governance

Mary Wollstonecraft challenged the supremacy of men in social order through her seminal work, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman." In this book, she argued for the equality of women and advocated for their right to education and participation in society, highlighting the need for women to be recognized as rational beings, capable of contributing to society on an equal footing with men. Wollstonecraft's writings provided a philosophical framework that contested the prevailing notions of her time, which relegated women to subordinate roles and justified their exclusion from public life and intellectual pursuits. By emphasizing that women were not inherently inferior to men but rather lacked access to education and opportunities, she laid the groundwork for future feminist movements. The other options—such as the divine right of kings, the necessity of marriage for women, and the importance of religious faith in governance—do not encapsulate Wollstonecraft's primary focus, which was on advocating for women's rights in a patriarchal society. Her challenge to the dominance of men directly contributed to the early discourse on gender equality.

3. How did Islam primarily influence West Africa?

- A. Merchants rejected Islam because of its hostility toward trade
- B. Islam had the greatest influence on rulers and urban elites**
- C. Farmers comprised the majority of converts to Islam
- D. The Arabic language was used by both Muslims and non-Muslims

Islam primarily influenced West Africa through its significant impact on rulers and urban elites. This influence can be traced back to the introduction of Islam through trade routes that connected North Africa with West African kingdoms, especially during the 7th to 11th centuries. As traders, scholars, and explorers interacted with local leaders, these elites began to adopt Islamic practices, which helped to consolidate their power and facilitated trade. Rulers who converted to Islam often did so to strengthen their political authority and establish connections with the broader Islamic world, which included access to new economic opportunities and military alliances. This alignment not only enhanced their prestige but also fostered the development of Islamic culture, education, and governance in urban centers like Timbuktu and Gao. The religion's influence extended beyond spirituality, transforming economic practices and legal structures within these societies, reflecting the adoption of Islamic principles in administration and daily life. As urban elites embraced Islam, they established educational institutions, which contributed to the spread of literacy and scholarly pursuits, further embedding the religion within the societal framework. The other options do not accurately capture the primary influence of Islam in West Africa. For instance, while many farmers did convert to Islam, the most significant changes occurred within the ranks of rulers and urban elites who had the capacity to

4. How did agricultural diffusion influence population in Central/South America?

- A. It maintained a consistent population level
- B. It caused an immediate decline in population
- C. It led to a slow increment in population growth**
- D. It resulted in migration to new areas

Agricultural diffusion played a significant role in shaping population dynamics in Central and South America. With the introduction and spread of new agricultural practices and crops, communities were able to enhance food production, which directly supported population growth. As agricultural techniques improved, such as the development of irrigation and the domestication of key crops like maize, potatoes, and cassava, food surpluses became more common. This abundance of food allowed more people to be sustained in a given area, leading to higher birth rates and a decrease in mortality rates due to better nutrition. The slow increment in population growth reflects how agricultural advancements often take time to have a noticeable effect on demographics. As societies adapted to agricultural lifestyles and settled into more permanent communities, they established a more stable food supply, fostering conditions conducive to population increases over generations. This gradual growth paved the way for the development of complex societies and civilizations in the region, further contributing to demographic changes.

5. The text reflects which of the following policies commonly employed by Muslim leaders in conquered lands?

- A. The death penalty for those who refused to convert to Islam
- B. Taxation on those who refused to convert to Islam**
- C. Forced exile for those who refused to convert to Islam
- D. No penalty for those who refused to convert to Islam

The correct answer highlights a policy of taxation on those who refused to convert to Islam, which is reflective of practices established in various Muslim empires. After the initial conquests, Muslim leaders often implemented the jizya tax, a form of protection tax levied on non-Muslims, such as Christians and Jews, living within Islamic territories. This policy allowed non-Muslims to practice their religions while contributing to the state financially, creating a system of tolerance that facilitated governance in a multi-religious empire. Implementing taxation for non-converts instead of extreme penalties like exile or death encouraged peaceful coexistence and assimilation over outright violence, making it a pragmatic approach for maintaining order and revenue. This context reconciles the need for religious consistency among the Muslim population with the realities of governing diverse populations.

6. What would be the most important factor determining a "favorable location" for a village to evolve into a city?

- A. Nearby mountains that could provide a barrier to foreign invasion
- B. A plentiful supply of clay to produce pottery
- C. Surrounding areas filled with animals to be hunted
- D. A predictable supply of water**

A predictable supply of water is the most important factor determining a favorable location for a village to evolve into a city because access to fresh water is essential for sustaining a larger population. Water is crucial for drinking, agriculture, and sanitation, which are all key elements in the growth and maintenance of urban centers. Cities need reliable agricultural production to support their inhabitants, and irrigation from nearby water sources can lead to more abundant food supplies, enabling a populace to grow and settle permanently. While the other options may provide benefits, they do not match the fundamental necessity that water supplies offer. Mountains could provide protection but do not guarantee the resources essential for survival. A plentiful supply of clay might support craft production but is secondary to basic survival needs. Hunting can offer food but is not as reliable as cultivated agriculture reliant on consistent water sources. Thus, the predictability and availability of water make it a central element in the development of urbanization.

7. How were women's lives generally more restricted from 600 BCE to 600 CE compared to earlier periods?
- A. Women were increasingly thought of as primary earners for the family
 - B. Women were increasingly responsible for the care of their children
 - C. Women's power increasingly fell within the private sphere**
 - D. Women's power increasingly fell within the public sector

Between 600 BCE and 600 CE, women's lives became more restricted primarily because their roles and power dynamics shifted increasingly toward the private sphere. In many ancient societies prior to this period, while gender roles were often traditional, women had certain rights and responsibilities that sometimes allowed them a degree of public influence or engagement in economic activities outside the home. However, during this time frame, many cultures (including those influenced by the widespread rise of patriarchal systems, religions, and state structures) began to solidify the idea that women belonged primarily in the domestic sphere. This included responsibilities centered around child-rearing and maintaining the household. Societal norms increasingly circumscribed women's visibility and agency in the public realm. As civilizations such as those in Greece, Rome, India, and China developed and expanded, cultural practices and legal frameworks became more restrictive, emphasizing a family's honor and reputation, which placed heavier burdens on women to remain confined to the home. Thus, the idea of women's power being relegated to the private sphere highlights the trend of growing restrictions on women's autonomy and public presence during this era.

8. What characterizes the Holy Roman Empire?
- A. A centralized monarchy with absolute power
 - B. A loose federation of German states led by an elected emperor**
 - C. A unified kingdom ruled by a singular family
 - D. An empire focused on maritime exploration

The Holy Roman Empire is characterized as a loose federation of German states led by an elected emperor. This structure is significant because it highlights the decentralized nature of authority within the empire. Unlike a centralized monarchy, where power is concentrated in a single ruler, the Holy Roman Empire consisted of various semi-autonomous states, principalities, and territories that operated with a degree of independence. The emperor, while being the head of the empire, did not possess absolute power over the various regions but rather relied on the support and cooperation of local rulers, who held significant authority within their own domains. Additionally, the election of the emperor by a group of prince-electors reflects the unique political system of the empire, where multiple voices and interests were represented, contrasting sharply with monarchies that followed hereditary succession. The context of the Holy Roman Empire also illustrates how local interests and traditions influenced governance, making it a complex political entity that was not defined by a single, unified national identity, but rather by a patchwork of diverse cultures and political structures within the Germanic territories.

9. What is a similarity between the Mayans and the Greeks?

- A. Used an alphabet in which symbols represented sounds
- B. Linked science and religion closely together**
- C. Built tall structures to get closer to heaven
- D. Developed ball games as religious rituals

Both the Mayans and the Greeks shared a significant connection between science and religion, demonstrating how their respective cultures intertwined these two aspects of life. The Mayans practiced astronomy to create their calendars, which were essential in agricultural cycles and religious festivals; this scientific knowledge was deeply integrated into their spiritual beliefs. Similarly, the Greeks pursued scientific inquiry in fields like astronomy and mathematics, often believing that understanding the natural world brought them closer to the divine or aided in comprehending the cosmos, which was influenced by their mythology and religious practices. The other options illustrate unique characteristics of either culture but do not reflect a similarity. The Mayans had a complex system of hieroglyphics rather than an alphabet like the Greeks. While both cultures built impressive structures, such as temples and pyramids, their motivations for these structures differed; for the Mayans, it was often related to their cosmology and the agricultural calendar, while for the Greeks, monumental architecture was closely tied to their city-states and civic pride. Lastly, although both the Mayans and the Greeks had ball games with ritual significance, the contexts and forms of these games were distinct and didn't imply a direct similarity between the cultures.

10. What did Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses signify?

- A. A proposal for peace among Christian denominations
- B. A challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church**
- C. A celebration of Catholic traditions
- D. A call for a new Christian denomination

The posting of the 95 Theses by Martin Luther in 1517 is considered a pivotal moment in the Protestant Reformation and represents a significant challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church. In these theses, Luther criticized various practices of the Church, particularly the sale of indulgences, which he saw as corrupt and contrary to Christian teachings. His actions called into question the Church's interpretation of scriptures and its role in mediating salvation, positioning Luther as a key figure advocating for reform. The impact of the 95 Theses was far-reaching, leading to increased debate about the nature of faith, grace, and Church authority. Luther's actions galvanized support from various segments of society who were discontented with the Church, ultimately leading to the formation of various Protestant denominations. The other options reflect misunderstandings of Luther's intentions. The act did not propose peace among denominations, celebrate Catholic traditions, or merely call for a new denomination; it was fundamentally an assertion against the established Catholic doctrine and hierarchy. Thus, the posting signified a critical moment of theological and institutional upheaval.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://ap-worldhistory.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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