



Test Prep and Admissions

For AP World History Teachers: How to Use This Book in Your Classroom

The AP World History exam is set up to evaluate college-level analysis and understanding. Simply drilling and memorizing historical facts will not prepare a student for the rigor of this test. Lists of names, dates, and events mean very little in AP World History. Instead, the test measures thinking skills, especially the habits of mind mentioned in the first chapter. Relating historical concepts to the big picture, such as change over time and comparisons between regions, is very important. Refrain, as much as you can, from teaching or reviewing world history as a dry series of lists. Instead, teach good essay writing, true global history, and solid historical analysis. Your students will be well-served if you do.

STRUCTURE, STRATEGY, AND ATTITUDE

Kaplan's AP World History 2006 Edition can be an invaluable tool for students, but you, the teacher, can also use it to understand the test format and the expansive amount of content covered in the AP course. Inside, you will find the basics of AP exam, scoring rubrics, and tips on test-taking strategies and stress management to share with your students, along with an extensive review and sample questions and tests.

The book will not serve as a substitute for an introductory world history text, nor will it serve as a substitute for a well-taught AP World History course. It's goal is to provide guidance, direction, and assistance to the student. If used well, the material we present here will reinforce the information acquired from the text and the class. Psychologists tell us that multiple exposures to material increases our ability to remember information.

Incorporating the book's contents into your coursework is not difficult; in fact, one chapter can be covered for each lesson in your course. The four major divisions of the review book relate well to the teaching goals of excellent student preparation.

The book begins by providing an overview of the test structure. Students should know how the test is organized so that they have the confidence to tackle the different tasks required by the exam. The three different types of essays are also explained in detail. Of special importance to you, the teacher, is the explanation of the scoring rubrics for each essay. Examples are provided that can help you develop your own rubrics for AP written work. The practice questions can be used in lessons. The Document-Based Question (DBQ), in particular, can be adapted as a teaching device for the various requirements of writing a DBQ.

THE DIAGNOSTIC TEST

A Diagnostic test comes next. This will help you to gauge student strengths and weaknesses. This 25- question test is arranged in groups of five that correspond to the five chronological divisions of the course. The questions also cover the six AP World History themes. If students have weakness in one time period, then their review time can be more focused on that period. Likewise, if a certain theme presents a problem—for example social structure or the impact of technology and demography—then you can invest additional energy in lessons that target those areas. Some questions are significantly more difficult than other questions. Even so, you can determine general trends of student performance by using the Diagnostic.

THE REVIEW SECTION

The main body of the book contains the historical content of the course. This specific material describes the major topics covered by the AP World History exam. This section can serve as a guide for framing some of the “big picture” concepts that are so important for this course. The content is divided into five chapters corresponding to the five periods of the course. Sample questions of different types at the end of each unit reinforce the concepts of each period. You can quiz your students using these questions and then discuss the correct answers afterward.

At the end of the book you will find two full-length practice tests. These tests may represent the best tools that your students have in preparing for the rigor of the AP World History exam. Each test mimics the format, length, and content of the actual exam. If used as a class activity, actual test conditions should be mimicked as well.

If you don't have enough time in class for students to take a full-length test, you might set up a special session at a separate time so that students have a chance to take a mock exam. When scoring these mock exams, identify which areas are of special concern. Perhaps students are weakest in East Asian history or Latin American history. Perhaps they need more review in the earliest time period or in late 20-century material.

All the themes of the course are present in the questions. Consequently, weakness in one thematic area can be determined as well. As with the Diagnostic test questions, explanations for each question in the full-length tests are provided. These should be studied to determine why each correct answer is indeed correct. Have your students take the second full-length practice test some time after taking the first. If the review in between has been successful, then students should show improvement.

We want students not only to *be* prepared for the exam, but also to *feel* prepared as well. Careful study and practice over time, as outlined above, builds confidence and a deeper content knowledge. Students who prepare this way are less likely to spend the nights before the exam desperately trying to cram test material into their brains. Using this book is one step in giving your students the best possible preparation for the AP World History exam.

Best of luck to you and your students!