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AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

The Ultimate Student's Guide to AP European History

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET STARTED



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Introduction

AP European History is no walk in the park. Last year, only 7.9% of students earned a 5 on the exam.

That's why we've created this comprehensive study tool. It's intended to be a helpful resource for any student planning to take the AP European History exam. By beginning here, you'll have a better understanding of the test, and receive essential tools to set yourself up for success.

This guide starts by introducing the exam format, curriculum, and scoring guidelines. Then it includes a series of detailed content guides and crash course reviews. The last section features study tips and strategies to help you score every possible point on test day. With this eBook, you'll be able to confidently take action in creating your study plan and framing your goals.

This book features information from the [Albert Blog](#), where new academic resources are published every day of the week. Be sure to regularly check the blog and subscribe to hear about our new posts. You can also find tips and study guides for your AP classes, and admissions advice for your dream school on our blog.

E-mail us at hello@albert.io if you have any questions, suggestions, or comments!

Last Updated: February 2017.

About Us

What is Albert?

Albert bridges the gap between learning and mastery with interactive content written by world-class educators.

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Explore

Why Educators Love Us

We asked teachers how their students did after using Albert.

Here is what they had to say:



My students had an 81.2% passing rate - the previous year was 76% (the highest rate in our county)! I am thrilled. I had 64 students total, with 6 receiving 5s, 19 scoring 4s, 27 receiving 3s, 10 scored 2s and 2 received 1s.

Susan M., JP Taravella High

70% of my students scored 3 or higher. This is up from last year, and is also well above the national average. Needless to say, I am very happy with my students' success. I used Albert more intentionally this year. In the beginning of the year, I wanted students simply to answer questions and practice. Once they had 150-200 questions answered, we looked for trends, strengths, and weaknesses and worked on addressing them. Students were tasked with increasing their answer accuracy no matter how many questions it took, then they set their own goals (some wanted to focus around tone; others needed practice with meaning as a whole).



Bill S., Lapeer High School



Last year 40% passed with 3s and 4s. This year 87% passed, most had 4s and 5s. We used the stimulus-based multiple choice questions throughout the year and as review for the exam. I think it helped tremendously.

Alice P., First Baptist Christian Academy

Why Students Love Us

We asked students how they did after using Albert.

Here is what they had to say:



I scored very well this year – four 5s and one 4. Albert helped me get used to the types of questions asked on the exam and overall my scores were better this year.

Robyn G., Chambersburg Area Senior High School

Last year was my first year taking an AP test, and unfortunately I did not do as well as I had hoped. The subject had not been my best, and that was definitely displayed on my performance. However this year, I made a much higher score on my AP test. The previous year had been AP World History and I had made a 2. For this year it was AP English Language, and I scored a 4. There was a definite jump in my score, because Albert pushed me to focus on my weaknesses and form them into strengths.



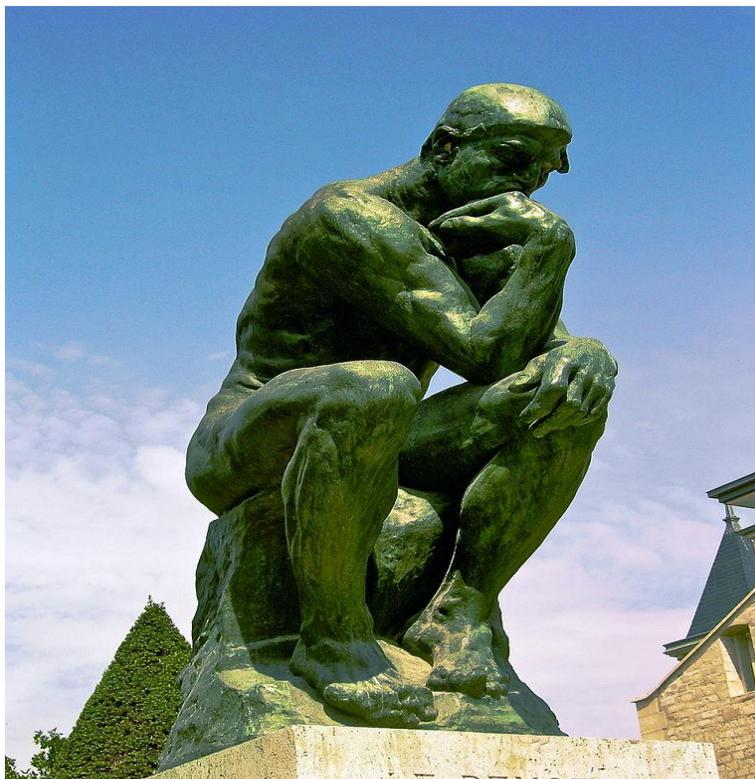
Charlotte R., Rome High



I scored a 4 on AP Biology, much higher than expected. Albert was an effective resource to guide me through AP Biology. Keeping up with it consistently all year as I learned the lesson in class was crucial to reinforcing my understanding and long-term memorization of Biology. After class each day, Albert helped to sink in the ideas that I was taught in the morning.

Lily O., Wake Forest High School

Is AP European History Hard?



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

If you are considering taking the AP Euro course and exam, then you've probably already asked yourself, "Is AP European History Hard?" It's perfectly natural for you to want to seek an answer to a question like this and we guarantee that you're not the only one. Despite how regularly AP students ask this question, it can be rather difficult to find someone that will answer the question honestly.

That's why we're not going to beat around the bush here when it comes to AP Euro difficulty. The answer is yes, AP European History is hard. But that doesn't mean a 5 is not achievable. It also doesn't mean that the whole AP Euro review process is not a worthwhile one.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

This [AP Euro study guide](#) will highlight how and why successfully passing the AP European History exam is a difficult feat to accomplish. We will cover the key skills that are required to earn that 5 on the exam, analyze the ways that the AP Euro exam differs from the other AP exams you may be taking, and lay out all of the benefits of taking the AP European History course.

Let's get started!

By the Numbers

Statistically speaking, AP Euro ranks somewhere in the middle. It's not the most difficult AP list on the AP block, but it's no walk in the park either. Let's take a look at these numbers:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
5	12.7%	10.6%	10.5%	10.4%	8.6%	10.3%
4	18.4%	18.7%	18.8%	18.8%	16.9%	17.4%
3	34.5%	35.5%	36.0%	34.8%	34.1%	35.6%
2	11.2%	11.6%	10.8%	11.0%	11.7%	10.6%
1	23.2%	23.6%	23.5%	25.0%	28.7%	26.1%

Those are the grade distributions for the years 2010 through 2015. As you can see, only 10.3 percent of people earned a five in the year 2015, while 26.1 percent of the AP Euro test takers received a score of 1 on the exam for the same year. The mean score for all the years mentioned above comes to 2.78.

In other words, this is not an easy test to pass. Even though it may not be considered the most difficult AP exam out there, you're still going to have to stay on top of your studies for this one. None of this indicates that the AP Euro exam is an impossible feat. So, that's ultimately good news.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

Even if you're not the kind of European history buff who owns the name of every single English monarch by name and in successive order, you can still use AP European History study guides to your advantage and score a 5 when it comes to test day.

Why is AP European History Difficult?

Before we go full-blown into the nitty-gritty details of the AP Euro exam itself, we wanted to let you in on the difficult nature of the AP Euro course and exam. Let's take a look at the course name: AP European History.

The name indicates a massive time period. The name can apply to a rather vast array of topics and ideas. But don't worry too much; you will not be responsible for [European history](#) in its entirety. Since college-level courses rarely expect you take all of European history in a single semester, neither does the CollegeBoard.

When going through your AP European History review process, it would be a good idea to remember that the course is broken up into four important periods, approximately beginning with the year 1450. They are:

- **Period 1:** 1450 to 1648
- **Period 2:** 1648 to 1815
- **Period 3:** 1815 to 1914
- **Period 4:** 1914 to the Present

Even though you will not be held responsible for knowing the entirety of European history, the amount of content for AP Euro is still massive. In its [AP European History Course Overview](#) packet, CollegeBoard describes the course in these terms:

The AP European History course focuses on developing students' understanding of European history from approximately 1450 to the present. The course has students investigate the content of European history for significant events,

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

individuals, developments, and processes in four historical periods, and develop and use the same thinking skills and methods (analyzing primary and secondary sources, making historical comparisons, chronological reasoning, and argumentation) employed by historians when they study the past. The course also provides five themes (interaction of Europe and the rest of the world; poverty and prosperity; objective knowledge and subjective visions; states and other institutions of power; and individual and society) that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places.

This is all just a really long and complicated way of saying that AP Euro students are going to have to know more than the important dates and names in Europe's past. There is a method to studying and writing history and this method is something that the CollegeBoard wants AP Euro students to learn. On top of learning how to think and work like a professional historian, AP Euro students have several central themes that they need to be aware of throughout the entire course.

These themes(interaction of Europe and the rest of the world; poverty and prosperity; objective knowledge and subjective visions; states and other institutions of power; and individual and society)may or may not apply to whatever time period or topic you are discussing for the moment. With this in mind, studying a single topic could mean that you have to look at that topic from five different angles. For example, the rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte touches on all five of these themes, meaning that you have to understand more than just how his military maneuvers affected the battlefield.

There is another aspect of the AP Euro exam that can strike fear in just about any AP student's heart: the DBQ. DBQ stands for Document Based Question and is a rather difficult aspect of the AP Euro exam. The DBQ is in the essay-writing section of the exam, where students are expected to write a clear and concise essay that revolves around six or seven primary-source documents.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

The point of the DBQ is for you to show that you understand the complexities of the historical narrative being discussed. That means structure and argumentation matter nearly as much as the evidence you use. This is no easy task and scare off even the most stalwart AP student.

Even though the DBQ is a huge pain you can master it with hard work and dedication. One of the first steps to achieving this is to [understand how the DBQ](#) and the AP Euro exam are structured.

Exam Structure

If you want to master the AP Euro exam, understand how the exam is structured. This piece of advice actually applied to every AP course and exam you may be interested in taking, but it is especially true of AP European History.

Here is how the exam breaks down:

- **Section I — Part A: [Multiple Choice](#)**
 - 55 questions
 - 55 minutes
- **Section I — Part B: Short-Answer Questions**
 - 4 questions
 - 50 minutes
- **Section II — Part A: Document-based Question**
 - 1 question
 - 55 minutes (includes a reading period with a suggested time of 15 minutes)
- **Section II — Part B: Long Essay Question**
 - 1 question (chosen from a pair)
 - 35 minutes

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

If you haven't already done so, look through the [AP European History Course Overview](#) and the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#) for a thorough outline of how both the AP Euro course and exam works. When reading through these, you'll notice that the exam is broken down into two major components, the multiple-choice/short-answer section and the DBQ/long essay section.

The multiple-choice section consists of 55 questions where you will be expected to examine excerpts from various historical works and answer corresponding questions regarding the piece. These will be stimulus based questions and may come from either primary or secondary sources, so you will have to understand not only the events of the past but how historians themselves have interpreted those events. You will be given just under one hour to complete this portion.

Then comes the short-answer section. Unlike the DBQ or the long essay, these short-answer questions do not require a thesis. The expectation, however, is for you to understand the topic at hand. You may be asked a question or two about a primary-source document or you could be asked to explain the reason a certain event occurred.

Here's an [example question](#) for the short-answer section of the exam:

Answer parts a, b, and c.

- a) Briefly explain ONE important similarity between the wars of religion in France and the English Civil War.*
- b) Briefly explain ONE important difference between the wars of religion in France and the English Civil War.*
- c) Briefly analyze ONE factor that accounts for the difference you identified in part B.*

The questions vary, which means you have to study hard for this section of the exam.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

Like we stated above, the DBQ stands for Document-Based Question and is arguably the most difficult part of the AP Europe Exam. You will have 55 minutes to answer a single question. Your answer is going to revolve around 6 or 7 primary-source documents that range between photographs, letters, legal cases, etc.

But the answer you provide is going to have to be in a concise essay format with a thesis that covers nearly every single document and shows that you understand the complexities of the historical narrative provided. That means structure and argumentation matter nearly as much as the evidence you use.

The final part of the exam will probably feel like a cake-walk after finishing the DBQ. This part of the AP Euro exam will have you write a long essay on a broad topic. Critical thinking and historical analysis are important in these, all while the evidence you choose to use is mostly up to you. Like the DBQ, organization and the creation of a strong thesis are essential components of this part of the AP Euro exam. Here's an [example question](#):

“Analyze whether or not the revolutions of 1848 can be considered a turning point in European political and social history.”

Content

Whether you choose to take the course at school or do your own AP European History review process, you are going to want to get a solid grasp on the historical thinking skills associated with the AP Euro course and exam.

It goes without saying that AP European History covers the history of Europe. But some events are more important than others. For example, you do not really need to know that Karl Marx met with Friedrich Engels in the Chetham's Library in Manchester, England. Instead, any good AP Euro study guide will tell you how their book, *The Communist Manifesto*, changed the face of social and political movements of the modern era.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

So, of course, the dates and names of Europe's past will be important when you start studying for the AP Euro exam, but the emphasis really should be on the historical thinking skills that come with studying the past.

The CollegeBoard indicates these central historical thinking skills as:

- Analyzing Evidence—using and interpreting evidence from the past as a way to create historical narratives.
- Interpretation—understanding that the past can be interpreted and constructed.
- Comparison—viewing events and peoples in relation to one another rather than seeing the past as a series of isolated incidents.
- Contextualization—understanding that events occur for a reason and those reasons are based within a context.
- Synthesis—students will make connections and use a diverse set of documents and arguments to create an understanding of the past.
- Causation—events and ideas have both long and short-term causes.
- Patterns of Continuity and Change—understanding that even though something like a war can be devastating, the underlying causes of that war may not have disappeared with the signing of a treaty. Or vice versa.
- Periodization—the history can be broken up into definable periods.
- Argumentation—that as a student of history, you too can create and argue for a historical narrative using evidence from the past.

In other words, even though students of AP European History explore a rather large cross-section of places and events, the actual content of the course revolves around the development of key critical-thinking skills.

On top of this, students will be held responsible for understanding the central themes of every time period covered. These include, the interaction of Europe and the rest of the world, poverty and prosperity, objective knowledge and subjective visions, states and other institutions of power, and individual and society.

In other words, there's a lot more to knowing about Adolf Hitler than that he was the leader of the Nazi Party.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

Skills Required

This is perhaps one of the best qualities of the AP Euro course and exam—you don't really need a strong background in history. You just need to be able to read.

But then again, this is easier said than done. Expect to do some high-level thinking in this AP course. You will be expected to go deep into the past. Your ability to memorize dates and names is less relevant than your ability to critically analyze the events of the past. Not only will you have to examine and become familiar with the most important battles, thinkers, and political ideologies, but you will also have to determine the presence of any central theme that may create a deeper understanding of both and how why these events in Europe's past occurred. In this regard, critical thinking ability and analytical skills are also highly desirable for students interested in AP Euro.

Granted, using content analysis and critical-thinking skills when studying the past isn't everyone's cup of tea. But if you are determined to get this course done and score a five on the exam, you can totally achieve this goal without much experience in using these skill sets in your past reading endeavors.

In fact, the CollegeBoard doesn't really indicate any specific requirements for anyone interested in taking the AP Euro course. All you really need is your notebook, your thinking cap, and a strong interest in Europe's past.

Is AP European History Worth It?

We know that we've spent all of this time explaining how difficult the AP Euro review process can be, but don't be dismayed. This course and exam is totally worth it. Plus, with hard work and dedication, acing the exam is within anyone's reach.

In terms of academics and intellectual merit, the AP Euro exam will help you across the board when it comes to just about any high school or college-level class. The content analysis and critical-thinking skills that are covered in this course are absolutely necessary for your future life as a student.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

Whether you want to be a professional historian or an astrophysicist, you will be expected to think deeply and critically. These are the skill that AP Euro excels at helping you develop.

Another excellent reason to take AP Euro is that it will help you out as a writer. You will develop a deep and meaningful understanding of how to create, organize, and thoughtfully execute an argumentative essay. The conceptual and interpretive nature of history is built into the AP Euro course and exam. In other words, you will become a better writer in the end and excellent writing skills are sought after in pretty much every single classroom and job place.

Just in the nature of studying the past, you will also begin to understand the present. The core themes of the AP Euro course, including those associated with social and state structure, will help you develop a unique and well-rounded understanding of the complex world we live in. You will walk away from this course understanding better how modern political systems operate, the reasons the societies may or may not get along, and why we are where we are. These are indispensable tools to sharpen.

On top of these, as with any AP course, passing the AP Euro exam will save you money. College is getting crazy expensive and if you can chip away at your coursework now, you should do it. True, AP Euro is difficult, but all of these opportunities make it a completely worthwhile venture.

Next Steps

Start getting familiar with Europe's past. [Pick up a textbook](#) or a really good history article written and just dive right in. You can never have too much information floating around in that head of yours if you are truly interested in taking AP European History.

Once you've decided that you want to take the exam, the best thing to do is ask your school about taking the AP Euro course. Make sure that you've met all of the requirements that your school has set into place for all the AP Euro students.

Is AP European History Hard? Cont.

If your school does not officially offer an AP Euro class, you may be able to work with administrators and history teachers for an independent study course. They may be able to design you an AP history study guide that will provide an overview that you can use to guide your studies on your own.

There is always the option of not attending any sort of AP Euro course and taking the exam anyways. If you do go this route, make sure that you are using a good AP European History review guide like those offered by [Albert.io](https://albert.io) and stick to a solid study schedule. The AP Euro exam is already hard enough, so you'll want any and all that help you can get.

Even though this is a difficult exam, AP Euro is not impossible. You'll need to work on those reading, analytical, and composition skills, but these will definitely work to your advantage in your future college endeavors.

What do you think, is AP European History difficult? Let us know about your experiences with the whole AP Euro review process and what has worked and not worked out for you.

The Wars of Religion



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Note: This article was released prior to the 2015-2016 revision to the AP European History exam. In order to see what is still in the Course and Exam Description, explore the course framework [here](#).

The 89 years between the commencement of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis in 1559 and the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 were marred by true holy wars. The last truly dynastic war of the 1500s, the Hapsburg-Valois Wars, ended in 1559 and made way for a series of conflicts fought in a large part over religion.

This AP European History crash course for the Wars of Religion will explore those 89 years pretty thoroughly. However, with the redesign of the AP European History exam that will begin in the 2015-2016 school year, you can concentrate less on learning a breadth of knowledge on the Wars of Religion in a superficial manner. Now, you can succeed by studying certain pertinent aspects of this concept in European History.

The Wars of Religion Cont.

The Wars of Religion

From 1560 through 1648, a multitude of European powers initiated wars on purely religious bases. The qualifier “purely religious bases” is necessary here because subsequent wars would also be considered religious conflicts, though they are not considered directly related to the Wars of Religion. However, many of these subsequent wars were religious, as well as apparently political.

Several separate conflicts took place throughout this time period. Spain attempted to combat Protestantism in Europe and Islam in the Mediterranean. French Catholics began something of a civil war against the French Calvinists, the Huguenots. The Holy Roman Empire wanted to re-impose Catholicism in Germany. The Calvinist Netherlands wanted out from under Spanish rule. The English Puritans and Anglicans fought a civil war.

In the next section, we’ll explore these religious wars and give you some key points throughout the Wars of Religion to guide your preparation for the AP European History exam. We find it very useful to separate these conflicts by the countries involved.

The Spanish Crusades

Spain’s Philip II made central to his reign for the re-imposition of Catholicism in Western Europe. Under Philip, Spain dominated Europe; Spain entered its Golden Age.

Spain was involved in a few international conflicts.

First, Spain fought the Turks in the Mediterranean. The Ottoman-Venetian Wars were fought specifically to provide security for Christians in the region. In essence, this conflict ceased in 1571 at the Battle of Lepanto. The Turks suffered massive losses. Spain stopped the spread of Islam in the Mediterranean.

The Wars of Religion Cont.

Next, William I, known as William of Orange, fought against the Spanish Inquisition and for tolerance of the Calvinists. In 1581, the Dutch Republic was formed from the 17 northern provinces of Netherlands, while the 10 southern provinces remained Spanish and became modern-day Belgium. Spain and Philip failed to maintain Catholicism throughout the empire.

England's Queen Elizabeth, after the death of Queen Mary Tudor, who was Philip's wife, had provided aid to the Protestant Netherlands in their successful bid for independence from Spain. Philip not only wished to bring Catholicism back to England, he wanted revenge for English support of the Dutch. In 1588, the Spanish Armada failed in its mission to invade due to weather and was decisively bested by the British Navy.

The French Civil Wars

Between 1562 and 1598, there were at least nine wars that can be considered part of the French Civil Wars.

The conflict between Catholics and Calvinists began in 1562, after the death of Henry II in 1559. Three families vied for the throne. From 1559 to 1589, Catholics remained in control in France. However, roughly half of all nobles in France became Calvinists (Huguenots), many of whom were of Bourbon decent.

On August 24, 1572, Margaret of the Valois family (Moderate Catholics) was to be wed to Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot. The Guise family (Extreme Catholics) ordered the murder of a Huguenot leader the night before the ceremony, causing riots and the subsequent order by the ruling Valois family to massacre 20,000 Huguenots by October of that year. This massacre started the War of the Three Henrys: Valois, Guise, and Bourbons.

When Henry IV (Navarre; Bourbon) rose to power in France, and ended the civil wars. He devised a solution to the religion problem in France: he converted to Catholicism and granted religious toleration to the Huguenots in the 1598 Edict of Nantes.

The Wars of Religion Cont.

The Thirty Years' War

The Thirty Years' War is considered the most important war of the 17th century. In 1618, the Peace of Augsburg failed and the Holy Roman Empire began a massive conflict.

The Thirty Years' War began with the elimination of Protestantism in Bohemia. The Danish phase of the conflict is earmarked by the 1629 Edict of Restitution, whereby the Catholic Church reclaimed all secularized territory lost since 1552. In the Swedish phase, Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, pushed the Catholics back to Germany, effectively negating the gains from its Danish phase. However, in 1634, the Holy Roman Empire defeated the Swedish.

The commencement of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marks the end of the Thirty Years' War. This treaty ended the Catholic activity in Germany, kept Germany divided, and renewed the Peace of Augsburg. Most importantly, the Treaty of Westphalia provided toleration of Calvinism.

The English Civil War

In 1642, civil war broke out in England between the Calvinists and Anglicans. Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan military leader, led his New Model Army to victory in 1649, after a rift between the Puritans and Anglicans, when Charles I was beheaded. Cromwell denied toleration to Anglicans and Catholics, yet allowed Jews back into the country for the first time since 1290. He subdued the Irish and conquered the Scottish during his reign until 1658 when he died and he was succeeded by his son, Richard, who failed to maintain power.

Charles II regained the throne in 1660.

The Wars of Religion Cont.

The Bottom Line—The Wars of Religion

The bottom line on the Wars of Religion is that this period of 89 years was decisive in the development of modern European powers. During your AP European History review, study the key points laid out in this crash course on the Wars of Religion. Remember that the AP European History exam is undergoing a redesign for the upcoming test year. Knowing these four categories of conflicts within the Wars of Religion can serve you better than studying the entire breadth of information out there for this time period.

Reviewing this AP European History crash course on the Wars of Religion is a great way to get started studying this decisive time period for Europe.

Thirty Years War



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

The Thirty Years War and the AP European History Exam

AP European History is full of significant and memorable wars that shaped the direction of Europe and, by extension, the world. One of these wars is the Thirty Years War. Perhaps your course did not emphasize this war, or maybe you just don't remember it! In this AP European History Crash Course Review, you will learn when the Thirty Years War happened, who it involved, and in this case, most importantly what its end meant for Europe.

Thirty Years War Cont.

What Led to the Thirty Years War?

The Protestant Reformation began in 1517, but its effects were to last far longer. The authority of the Catholic Church in Europe was in question for the first time in a long time, and the continent divided into Catholics and Protestants. While some countries were more clearly Protestant, such as England and the Netherlands, and others remained staunchly Catholic like Spain, still others were marked by acute internal division. It is important for you to remember that because of the link between ecclesiastical (church) and state power at the time in history, the religious divide had serious political implications. Don't think of the church and state as separate entities, but as sometimes combined and sometimes competing powers.

Background to the Thirty Years War

The Thirty Years War occurred from 1618-1648. Which groups were in conflict? After the Reformation, German Lutherans and the Catholics were pitted against one another. In the 1530's the Lutherans submitted a petition for religious freedom to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. How did he respond? He outright rejected their offer. There was one catch, though. Charles V did not have the ability to actually challenge the Protestants.

If you want an example of the bloody religious conflict that predated the war, it's the death of Ulrich Zwingli, considered by Protestants to be the third most influential reformer —after Luther and Calvin. Zwingli started as a Catholic priest in Switzerland, but grew to criticize the church openly. He joined forces with political rulers to gain the independence he believed priests should have, such as the right to marry. In 1531, in one of the religious conflicts fought between Catholic and Protestant forces, Zwingli was on the battlefield, helping to lead the fight for Swiss Protestant rights. He was killed in battle, which led to his glorification as a Protestant martyr and inspired future Swiss to fight on in his name in the soon-to-come Thirty Years War.

Thirty Years War Cont.

The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 somehow and temporarily resolved the conflict in Europe, allowing each territory within the empire to choose a government that would align itself with either Lutheranism or Catholicism. The northern and central German lands chose Lutheranism, while the southern territories elected to remain Catholic. Charles V realized that his primary goal as emperor, the uniting of all the lands of the Holy Roman Empire under Catholicism, was over. He abdicated the throne, moving to a monastery in 1556. Although other rulers of the HRE followed Charles V, he was the last crowned by the Pope, which allowed him the right to be called “Emperor.”

What Led to the Outbreak of War?

The Peace of Augsburg was successful in keeping the German states from warring against each other for about 50 years, but by the first decade of the new century, the Protestants and Catholics of Germany were preparing for a fight. Gearing up for a fight, both groups formed leagues or unions to defend their territories and faith. The Spanish Habsburg rulers were very concerned that all rulers of the HRE would continue to profess Catholicism, and they were jealous guardians of the royal thrones throughout Europe. One way they tried to ensure their continued domination was through marriage of Habsburg heirs to royals around Europe!

The Four Phases of the Thirty Years War

Get ready! Because the Thirty Years War eventually involved the armies of multiple nations and because of its religious nature that sometimes caused warring within a nation, we can understand it in four phases.

Phase One: The Bohemian Phase (1618-1625)

In 1618, Ferdinand II, Catholic ruler of Bohemia, started to limit the kinds of religious activities allowed by his subjects. Protestants under his rule felt restricted and oppressed and began to look for help from Protestants in other areas. These areas included Denmark, the Dutch, and Great Britain. When Ferdinand got wind that these nations planned to come to the Protestant aid, he reached out to Spain, German Catholics, and of course, the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.

Thirty Years War Cont.

Ferdinand and his pals were able to defeat the Protestant group in the Battle of White Mountain.

Phase Two: The Danish Phase (1625-1629)

In this part of the Thirty Years War, the Protestant Danes were challenged by the Catholic Imperial armies. Their success led to major Catholic victories and put the Catholic Habsburg rulers of Spain and Austria at the height of their power. After this Catholic victory, Ferdinand declared an “Edict of Restitution” which took back lands for the Catholic Church that had previously been overtaken by Protestants. Ferdinand also limited worship in the HRE to only two groups: Catholics and Lutherans.

Phase Three: The Swedish Phase (1630-1635)

Here’s where it gets interesting! In this phase, we look at how Sweden’s Protestant king, Gustavus Adolphus, decided to get involved in defending the Protestants in the HRE. However, France’s Catholic chief minister and Catholic Cardinal Richelieu were getting nervous about the increased power of the Hapsburgs. He, therefore, aided the Swedish Protestants in their fight against Habsburg Catholicism! Gustavus Adolphus was killed in battle in 1632, weakening the Protestants after two successive victories.

Phase Four: The French Phase (1635-1648)

Though Gustavus Adolphus death had dealt a blow to the Protestants course, Cardinal Richelieu was actually more afraid of the threat of the Habsburgs, who were gaining more and more power as they racked up victories, than he was of the Protestants. He believed the Hapsburg rulers could become a rival to the French absolute kings he had worked so hard to strengthen. As a result, Richelieu funded and sent the military to Spain to make war on the weaker side of the Habsburg clan.

Thirty Years War Cont.

Why does this War Matter?

Don't let all of the detail about the Thirty Years War distract you from the larger point in your AP Euro History Review. Now that you know how the war was fought, keep reading to understand the war's significance in European history!

The war that had dragged on for three decades resulted in deaths of between 30% and 66% of the entire male population of many German territories. These figures seem hard to believe, but you must consider that not all of the deaths came from battle. Disease, which was far more likely to kill the soldiers in their war-weakened states, and starvation, also played huge roles in the body count.

Europe had fought itself into exhaustion by 1648, and all of the countries were devastated by their losses. Religiously, there was still a great divide between Catholics and Protestants, but Europeans began to believe that the religious differences could not be solved by war. The rise of stronger absolute rulers meant that political power would soon replace the power of the church as the great prize.

The Peace of Westphalia

Finally in 1648, the countries agreed to stop the religious conflict in the Peace of Westphalia. In it, over 300 German princes were given the right to decide which religions would dominate in their principalities. Because of this independence, the leader of the Holy Roman Empire's influence, and the goal of Christendom, – a huge tract of Europe to be dominated by Catholic rulers and the Catholic faith – would never be realized. With Catholicism, Calvinism, and Lutheranism now permitted, Northern Germany would remain Protestant and southern Germany Catholic.

As you continue to work through your AP European History Crash Course, you will find that the Northern Protestant and Southern Catholic division in Germany persisted into modern times, affecting the actions and approaches of future German leaders such as Otto von Bismarck and Adolph Hitler. This gives you an indication of just how important the Thirty Years War is to your study!

Thirty Years War Cont.

The Thirty Years War on the AP European History Exam

A new format for the AP European History exam was administered for the first time in 2016. However, a look at past, released exam questions is still helpful. In fact, today's exam requires more writing than the previous one, and therefore more chance you will be asked to recall the events and effects of the Thirty years War. In 2009, [one of the essays was entirely dedicated to the war](#): *"Analyze the various ways in which the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) represented a turning point in European history."*

Even if you do not get a question as narrowly focused as the above, it is likely that you will be asked about religious conflicts in European history, or about the rise of political power over religious power in time. Studying the Thirty Years War in your AP Euro Review is a perfect way to ensure you will be ready for the exam!

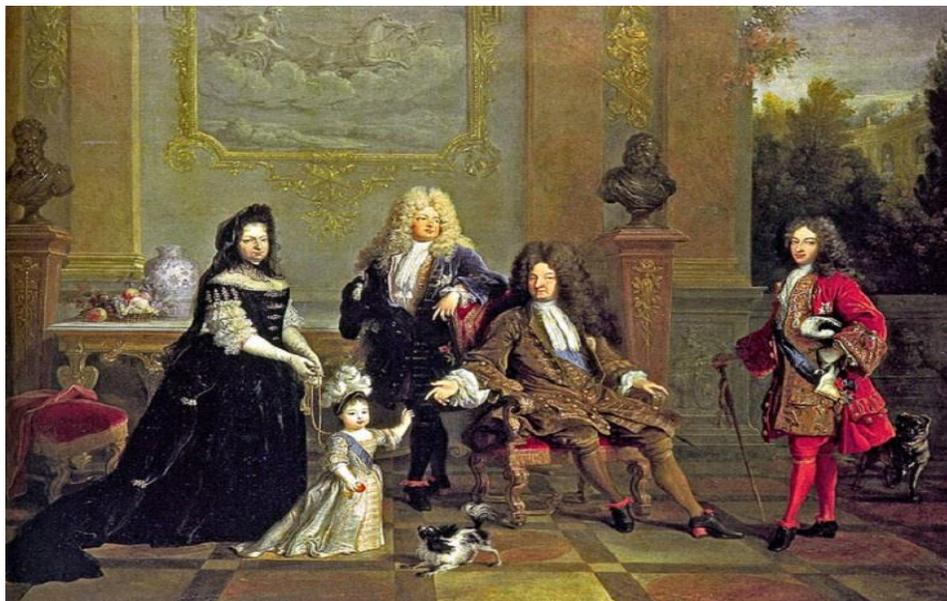
The Thirty Years War: The Bottom Line

You should know that the Thirty Years War was a direct result of the reformation, and originated as a fight between Protestants and Catholics, but evolved into a highly political conflict. A big theme of this time of war was the question of authority for individual states. The Thirty Years War also marks the last major war to be fought over religious issues, as European rulers were cementing their power and became serious rivals to the influence of the church.

If you can remember these important themes and ideas, you will be ready to answer any question you might have about the Thirty years War on the AP Euro Exam.

AP European History is full of big and memorable wars that shaped the direction of Europe and the world at large. One of these wars is the Thirty Years War. Perhaps your course did not emphasize this war, or maybe you just don't remember it! In this AP European History Crash Course Review, you will learn when the Thirty Years War happened, who it involved, and in this case, most importantly what its end meant for Europe.

Age of Absolutism



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Even though we live in a world where kings and queens typically hold more symbolic power than actual political authority, we still seem to be a little obsessed with the monarchical system. Whether it's the next royal wedding in Great Britain or Lewis Carroll's character The Queen of Hearts, screaming "off with her head!" we still keep our eyes fixed on the happenings of those wearing crowns. But if you think we are a bit fascinated by royalty in today's day and age, wait until you hear about the Age of Absolutism. Monarchical rule was all the rage during this era and you can bet your crown jewels that it is a time period that will show up on the next AP European History exam.

The Age of Absolutism did sweep through Europe like a political wildfire, so it can be a bit tough keeping track of all the royal lineages out there. Can you differentiate between all eighteen King Louis' of France? If you can't, that's ok. We've created this AP European History Crash Course on the Age of Absolutism to provide you with the tips and tricks so you don't have to memorize every single monarch in all of European history. This AP Euro review will go over the most important details that characterized the Age of Absolutism and put them in relation to the AP Euro exam itself.

Age of Absolutism Cont.

What was the Age of Absolutism?

The Age of Absolutism was the period around the 17th and 18th centuries when Europe (kind of) was ruled by very powerful monarchs. Monarchs with absolute control. Thus, the Age of Absolutism.

Absolute monarchs were rulers who held all the power in a country. Under their rule there were no checks and balances on their power, and there were no other governing bodies they shared the power with. These monarchs also ruled by divine right or the belief that their power came from God. To oppose them was to oppose God.

Hopefully you noticed our “*kind of*” disclaimer next to the word Europe up there. We put that in there for two reasons. First, despite its name the absolute monarchy system of political control was not necessarily as powerful as the name implies. The system was never uniform nor did it exist without struggle. We will discuss these issues in further detail later in this AP European History Crash Course, but for the purposes of the AP Euro exam always keep in mind that this was still a complex era of political control.

Second, the Age of Absolutism typically refers to Europe roughly around 1550 to 1800. But absolute monarchs have ruled outside of Europe and during different periods in human history. Just think of the Egyptian Pharaohs. They ruled with absolute control and under the belief in a divine right. Again, chances are that the AP European History exam will reference Europe, but the people at the *CollegeBoard* love it when you understand the complexities behind the terms they are examining you on.

Age of Absolutism Cont.

Who Ruled During the Age of Absolutism?

As we mentioned above, the Age of Absolutism occurred over a diverse cross-section of Europe during several hundred years. We also mentioned that there were quite a few monarchs that reigned during this era, including those that implement non-absolutist policies in order to create even more control.

Since we cannot cover every single aspect of this era, we will go over four different places of rule that represent the Age of Absolutism in its entirety. These nations include Spain, England, France, and Prussia. By examining the histories of these four monarchies, we can show the rise and fall of the Age of Absolutism.

England

The English monarchy was one of Europe's oldest and most complex systems of royal rule (and remains so to this day). Monarchical rule began on the island around the 12th century, well before the Age of Absolutism. But since the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, the rule of the British monarchy was limited.

Ever since the Magna Carta, royalty on the island engaged in a push and pull between royal authority and civil rights. Queen Elizabeth I, for example, became an incredibly popular leader because she showed relative religious, social, and political tolerance. She also turned to mercantilism, including the colonization of the New World, as a way to retain political power and control.

Her successor, James I, was a bit different, however. James I, as many of the English kings after him, constantly fought with Parliament for more power. It was no secret that he strongly supported absolute monarchy, especially the belief that his divine right permitted him to ignore Parliament in order to get things done. In the end, this kind of infighting between the royal houses and Parliament led to a civil war (1642-1651), the result of which nearly cut off all political power from the English crown.

Age of Absolutism Cont.

Spain

Spain saw a series of absolute monarchs. Some of the best examples of these were Philip II, Philip III and Charles IV of Spain, who ruled during Spain's heyday as the strongest naval empire coming out of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Remember that Spanish monarchs were extremely Catholic, and so, strongly believed that God gave them the divine right to rule.

Just to put things into a little bit of context, Philip II was the king who tried to invade England during the Reformation via the Spanish Armada because he wanted them to be Catholic. But all three of these monarchs pushed for colonization and established Spain as a world power, using their version of absolute authority to not only rule over the Spanish peoples but those they colonized as well.

They were able to rule with iron fists by extracting gold and other resources from the Americas, while implementing religious conversion through the conquistadors and the Inquisition system. But this ultimately wouldn't last too long, since their many wars (especially with England) proved costly and used up their gold supply. This decline occurred well into the 19th century when Napoleon invaded and forced the Spanish crown to abdicate.

France

Speaking of Napoleon, let's move onto France. The French monarchy has been remembered as perhaps one of the most influential regimes in the Age of Absolutism. This is partially because of the total opulence that French kings and queens lived in. They enjoyed lavish castles, extravagant parties, and fine jewelry.

In other words, they lived the high life and in complete decadence. Henry IV started the whole French royalty experience off in the 16th century. He helped to put France on the map as a global and economic power largely due to the wealth the country gained due to the colonization of North America. These colonization efforts also helped French monarchs from Henry IV and onward to fund their rich tastes and pay for their powerful regime.

Age of Absolutism Cont.

King Louis XIV was perhaps the most opulent and memorable of the absolute monarchs in French history. He called himself the “Sun King” and famously said, “L’état, c’est moi!” Or, “I am the state!” In other words, he wanted everyone to know that he ruled France with absolute power. He made France the capital of luxury in Europe, from building the Palace of Versailles to keeping complete control of the feudal nobility. But his expensive habits also led to terrible economic crisis and poverty amongst his people.

The next two Louis kings kept up the French grandeur, until King Louis XVI found himself in the middle of a revolution. The more the French people began demanding civil rights and privileges (built from Enlightenment ideals), the less the French monarchy became absolute and eventually faded under the new French Republic.

Prussia

France would not be the only country hit by the Enlightenment, however. Beginning in the 17th and 18th centuries, monarchs throughout Europe were realizing the absolute control was becoming more difficult since their populations began asking for their own rights and privileges.

What is different about the absolute monarchs of Prussia and others like it was that they reigned under a new form of absolute monarchy—enlightened absolutism. These monarchs were influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment, and so these monarchs better supported the arts, tended to be more supportive of religious toleration and were more prone to follow the laws.

And if the Enlightenment Absolutists had a leader, it would have been Frederick the Great. He was the King of Prussia between 1740 and 1786, smack-dab in the middle of the Enlightenment movement in philosophy and science. He believed in modernizing the Prussian state by improving the lives of his subjects. But he also encouraged religious toleration more so than any monarch before him.

Age of Absolutism Cont.

He would not be the only one either. Leaders like Catherine the Great, Joseph II of Austria, and Frederick VI of Denmark were all known for including the tenets of the Enlightenment in their monarchical rule. Despite these advances, though, these rulers were still monarchs and what they said was still law. So, ultimately, the absolute monarchs used Enlightenment ideas as a way to further assert their control and avoid the types of revolutions that were occurring in France and North America.

The Age of Absolutism and the AP European History exam

The AP European History exam loves a topic like the Age of Absolutism because it hits so many of the Learning Objectives laid out by the CollegeBoard. During your AP Euro History review periods, you've probably started to notice that a major theme of the course itself has to do with States and Other Institutions of Power (Theme 4, to be exact). If you want to catch up on your AP European History course Themes, go ahead and take a quick look at the [AP European History Course and Exam Guide](#) from the CollegeBoard website.

This course theme covers all sorts of political power throughout European history, including the ways that the royalty during the Age of Absolutism justified their own power and authority, how they maintained control, and those challenges that arose against them.

Luckily for you, we have covered all of these things in this AP European History Crash Course on the Age of Absolutism. But just in case, let's take a quick look at an example from the AP Euro exam itself and see how the topic might pop up in future editions.

Let's take a look at an example from the [AP European History exam from the year 2004](#):

"Analyze the shifts in the European balance of power in the period between 1763 and 1848."

Age of Absolutism Cont.

Granted, this was one of the Free-Response Questions from a few years ago, but you can easily see how this question (or one similar to it could show up on next year's AP Euro exam as a Long-Essay Question. Either way, this is a perfect example of how the term Age of Absolutism might actually pop up as topic on the AP European History exam.

Like we discussed above, the era in question here comes right at the tail end of the absolutist monarchy movement that was the central political platform in Europe. You already know that monarchs believed their rule to be absolute, but others always found a way to challenge their authority. Events that occurred in places such as France, like those revolutionaries turning towards the values of the Enlightenment helped to spark a shift towards Enlightened Absolutism, but ultimately the monarchies would give way entirely to republics and liberal politics.

No matter, how the topic comes up on your AP Euro exam, just remember everything we've covered in this AP European History Crash Course on the Age of Absolutism and you're bound to dominate the exam like the best European despotic monarch!



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The Enlightenment



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Note: This article was released prior to the 2015-2016 revision to the AP European History exam. In order to see what is still in the Course and Exam Description, explore the course framework [here](#).

The Enlightenment, otherwise known as the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason, took place from the 1650s through the 1780s. The Age of Enlightenment is characterized by social, economic, and political advancement of thought through reason, science, and an increase in literate skill. This AP European History crash course on The Enlightenment will cover the core concept, explore the purpose of this age in European history, and review eventualities in which you might encounter The Enlightenment on the AP Euro test. Continue reading for an AP European History review of the Enlightenment!

The Enlightenment Cont.

The Enlightenment: What is it?

Perhaps the best way to unpack and examine the information presented here about this time period is to understand the great German Philosopher Immanuel Kant's interpretation of The Enlightenment: this time period was about obtaining the freedom to exercise your own intelligence. With that in mind, read through this AP European History crash course on the Age of Enlightenment understanding that this time period was pivotal in the development of modern thought.

As previously stated, The Enlightenment took place from the 1650's through the 1780's throughout Europe. This time period is earmarked by an increase in literacy, scientific breakthroughs, and a willingness to challenge the long-standing institutions of European society, namely the Catholic Church.

Literacy

During The Enlightenment, much of Europe experienced an increase in the availability and, subsequently, the publishing of texts that covered philosophical concepts rather than theological concepts. Increased literacy as well as the availability of non-religious texts aided in the spread of new ideals and belief systems. Some of these texts include d'Alembert and Diderot's *Encyclopédie* and Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* as well as *Letters on the English*.

Science

The Enlightenment also coincided with a scientific revolution that saw Isaac Newton's rise to prominence. Newtonian physics highlighted the scientific and mathematical patterns in the natural world, which inspired certain intellectuals to attempt to apply the logic and reason found in the natural world to the society of Europe. The empirical principles of Newtonian scientific analysis bled over to works of philosophy, such as John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which sought to explain the world empirically, utilizing an analysis of experience rather than Christian morality.

The Enlightenment Cont.

Religion

Before this time period, religious entities were entrenched in many European states. Throughout the Enlightenment, however, the standing of these ecclesiastical traditions and institutions within the state was questioned. With the rise of scientific inquiry and the pursuit of empirical analysis of the natural world, religious fanaticism and intolerance were questioned, thus weakening the standing of most religious traditions in Europe.

A Brief Survey of Enlightenment Topics

Use this section to guide your study on the AP European History exam. The following topics are of great importance to your understanding of the Enlightenment and its role in the development of subsequent European societies.

The Philosophes

Due to the rise of the print culture during the Enlightenment, the Philosophes rose to prominence as writers and critics. They lead the way toward acceptance of Enlightenment ideals. Voltaire is considered to be one of the first philosophes.

Toleration

Religious tolerance, though not really extant outside of England during the Enlightenment, was vitally important to the entire movement. The point, so to speak, of the Enlightenment was to allow for divergent points of view on the natural world that were not bound by religion. Learn the basic thoughts of authors like David Hume, Voltaire, Edward Gibbon, and Immanuel Kant to maximize your understanding of tolerance's place in Enlightenment-era thought.

The Enlightenment Cont.

Society

One of the greatest contributions of Enlightenment thinkers was the Encyclopedia. Diderot and d'Alembert's 1751 publication of the Encyclopedia spoke to the Enlightenment ideals of empirical study of the natural world, freedom to express one's self, and criticism of ecclesiastical entities and authoritarian governments.

Other societal themes are criminal law reform, economic freedom and growth, and social progress.

Rousseau and The Social Contract (1762)

Understand Rousseau's 1762 book *The Social Contract*. Rousseau explores themes of personal freedom and the improvement of society. This book reconciled these themes and taught Europeans how to be personally free while remaining loyal to a larger society.

Enlightened Criticism

Understand the works of Kant, Herder, and Diderot insofar as they were critics of imperial systems.

Women of the Enlightenment

Though most philosophes could not be considered feminists, many advocated broadened education for women. Read and analyze Rousseau's *Emile* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* to gain an understanding of two opposing points of view on the role of women in Enlightenment-era Europe.

The Enlightenment Cont.

Enlightened Absolutism

Know these names and the roles of these monarchs. They all championed religious tolerance, freedom of speech, and the right to private property.

Frederick the Great of Prussia: the best example of enlightened absolutism.

Joseph II of Austria: concerned with centralization and the improvement of his people's lives.

Catherine the Great of Russia: expanded Russian land holdings and economy.

The Enlightenment on the AP European History Exam

The AP European History exam has undergone a redesign for the 2015-2016 school year. Luckily, most Enlightenment-era Free Response Questions will still be viable study aids because the new FRQs will be, by design, less in-depth than the older versions. The purpose of this redesign is to allow for more pointed and expansive analysis of fewer topics. That being said, consider the following FRQ from the 2014 AP European History exam's response section.

In about 35 minutes, "Analyze the differences in the ideas held by various Enlightenment figures concerning the roles of women in European society" in an essay with a relevant thesis, that addresses all parts of the question, that supports the thesis with specific evidence, and that is well organized.

Any of the topics discussed in this AP European History crash course could conceivably work in your favor while studying for the FRQ section. These are all macro-level, important topics that align with the new goals of the redesigned exam.

The Enlightenment Cont.

The Enlightenment—The Bottom Line

The Enlightenment was a key period in the development of modern thought. Understand the ideals involved, freedom of expression, individuality, rationality and scientific inquiry as an understanding of the natural world, and you should be in good shape if you encounter questions over this time period on the AP European History exam. After this crash course in AP European History, how do you plan to continue studying?

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Enlightened Absolutism may come across as almost an oxymoronic term, and you wouldn't be too far off assuming this. It was one of those bizarre instances of historical contradiction, where an era that was concerned with freedom and individual liberty crashed into one simultaneously obsessed with despotic rulers concerned with their absolutist political control. Oxymoronic or not, the AP European History Exam loves to test on complicated topics such as this one. But don't worry; we've created this AP Euro review on the Enlightened Absolutism movement to make this seemingly complex topic far simpler.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

It's true that Enlightened Absolutism sits at an odd point in the AP European History curriculum, but this AP Euro review contains everything you'll need to know for your upcoming exam. Not only do we lay out the details that characterized the movement, but we place it in the appropriate historical context.

On top of that, we will be covering all of the key figures that comprised the Enlightened Absolutism movement. And finally, we will finish this AP Euro review off with a detailed explanation of the ways that this term and its associated historical figures will most likely show up on your upcoming AP European History exam.

So, put on your Enlightenment-era thinking caps and think like a despot, so you can dominate over your upcoming AP Euro exam.

What is Enlightened Absolutism?

Before we get into the key figures of Enlightened Absolutism in this AP Euro crash course, let's go over a quick recap of what these people actually believed in.

Enlightened Absolutism is basically the belief in Enlightenment-era rationality and the concern for social problems, but intermixed with the belief in an absolute monarchy or despotism. FYI, it's also been called Enlightened Despotism and Benevolent Absolutism.

What this means is that monarchies were justifying their absolute governing power through 18th and early 19th century concerns about education, health, legal order, individual rights, and tolerance. Rather than finding their authority in religious autocracy, these rulers (particularly in Europe) looked thinkers like Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Hobbes.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

Frederick the Great actually said it rather well in a letter to Voltaire:

Let us admit the truth: the arts and philosophy extend to only the few; the vast mass, the common peoples and the bulk of nobility, remain what nature has made them, that is to say savage beasts.

Now that's quite the statement. But it does accurately represent the ways that Enlightened Absolutists felt about the monarchy (or in this case, about themselves). They often articulated the belief that the common people required a benevolent absolute leader, someone to care for their needs and provide order to a world that was defined by chaos.

But it was also about so much more. These Enlightened Absolutists often encouraged more democratic participation in the states that they were running. They often did this by implementing laws for the benefit of their people, funding education, and even encouraging production of the arts and sciences. The idea was to benefit their subjects, but it was often done so according to the ruler's belief and the ruler's belief alone.

In fact, Frederick the Great was probably the most vocal supporter of the movement itself. But more on that later. First, let's put Enlightened Absolutism into context.

Putting Enlightened Absolutism into Context

Why was this taking place? Doesn't it seem a little odd that monarchs were turning to Enlightenment ideas as a way to justify their authority? You would be right to ask these types of questions. And yes, it was a bit odd. But it also makes a lot of sense in a way too.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

As you may be aware from your other AP Euro studies, absolute monarchies were all the rage before the 18 century. This type of all-encompassing political authority was embodied in kings and queens like James VI of Scotland, Peter I the Great of Russia, and King Louis XIV of France. In fact, King Louis XIV once said, “L’état, c’est moi!” Or, “I am the state!”

This quote embodied the absolute monarchies. They believed in total control, and justified that control in religious terms. They believed they were religiously chosen to rule the people.

In particular, they believed that their power was absolute. It was ordained by God, basically. That meant it could not be challenged and that if the people were suffering, well that must be the will of God then.

But the Enlightenment came along in the 18th century that began to question the role of religion in human relations. Instead, Enlightenment thinkers began to believe in rationalism, the people in a people-oriented government, and a reliance on science rather than religion.

A Quick Review of the Enlightenment

Before we delve too deeply into the most important historical figures of the Enlightened Absolutism movements, let’s go through a quick recap of the Enlightenment itself. You hopefully already know a bit of this from your AP Euro History studies, but it never hurts to have a recap.

The Enlightenment was an 18th century intellectual, political, and social movement that characterized much of European thought across the continent. Everyone was into this, from kings to philosophers to peasants. With the help of revolutionary thinkers like Voltaire, Descartes, Montesquieu, Spinoza, etc., a movement swept through Europe that challenged the religious and monarchical rule on almost every aspect of life.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

This included the religious dominance of morality and ethics, the Church's stance on the natural world, and the absolutist monarchical rule and governance. New ideas about freedom, tolerance, progress and especially liberal governance began to form.

It became so powerful that the ruling elites of Europe began spouting Enlightenment thought even if their power and control oftentimes seemed to contradict what these thinkers were trying to say.

Key Figures in the Enlightened Absolutism Movement

In the 18th century, the question for kings and queens became, how do we justify our rule in the wake of these enlightened ideals? Enlightened Absolutism became the solution. It incorporated the beliefs in liberty, progress, and tolerance into the all-encompassing rule of its despots.

Now, let's go ahead and take a look at a few of the most important figures in the Enlightened Absolutist movement:

Frederick the Great of Prussia

If the Enlightenment Absolutists had a leader, it would have been Frederick the Great. He was the King of Prussia between 1740 and 1786, smack-dab in the middle of the Enlightenment movement in philosophy and science.

Frederick the Great had befriended French philosopher Voltaire and became a lover of French thought and philosophy, in general. He believed in modernizing the Prussian state by improving the lives of his subjects. Ideas like these were expressed in his letters to Voltaire and quickly became a symbol of the Enlightened Absolutist movement.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

During his reign as monarch, he tried to create a sophisticated state bureaucracy that was capable of managing the people's he governed over. He also implemented a number of religious policies that encouraged tolerance and acceptance of religious minorities. On top of this, he allowed for the freedom of the press, encouraged the arts, and favored scientific and philosophical endeavors. All of these things would have brought fear into the previous generations of Prussian monarchs.

Catherine the Great of Russia

Catherin the Great was a contemporary of Frederick the Great, ruling the Russian people until 1762. She has been called “the Great” because she ushered in an era of prosperity for the Russian Empire. Her tenure as monarch was a little shaky, though. Even though she believed whole-heartedly in Enlightened Absolutism, she had a difficult time implementing it in terms of policy. You might have noticed that the sheer size of Russia has made this a theme throughout its history.

Anyway, Catherine made it a priority issue to modernize the cities that bordered the rest of Western Europe, even creating new ones to compete with them. She treated religion indifferently, using church lands to help fund the state. On top of this, she attempted to implement new legal rights to the serf class, even though many landowners refused to comply.

Her most important contributions, however, were in the arts and education. She helped to propel the Russian Enlightenment by encouraging music, painting, and architecture. She also created the first state-funded higher education institution for women in all of Europe. But then again, she was also somewhat indifferent to the plight of the serf class, which resulted in a variety of rebellions throughout her rule.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

Joseph II of Austria

Joseph II, along with Catherine the Great and Frederick the Great, have been deemed the three most influential Enlightenment Absolutist monarchs. So, if you study no one else in this AP European History Review, make sure you pay attention to these three.

Like Catherine, Joseph II believed rather wholeheartedly in the ideals of the Enlightenment but had a hard time implementing those thoughts into practice and policy. He ultimately wanted to make his subjects happy, but only according to his own ideas and beliefs.

He attempted to do this by restructuring much of the state bureaucracies, abolishing most brutal punishments for breaking the law, and made basic education a compulsory requirement for all boys and girls. On top of this, he severely reduced the role of the Catholic Church in everyday affairs. But like his contemporaries, Joseph ran into trouble when older notions of monarchical control challenged his ideas.

Frederick VI of Denmark

Frederick VI was a lesser-known advocate of Enlightened Absolutism. He ruled Denmark from 1808 to 1814—a relatively short reign compared to many of the others. But his policies and much of his ideas were Enlightenment related through and through.

The most important of these was the institution of the democratic Assemblies of the Estate. This state bureaucracy gave ordinary citizens a more active voice in political affairs. On top of this, Frederick was a massive supporter of the sciences, and astronomy in particular.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

King Carlos III of Spain

King Carlos of Spain had the unfortunate luck of inheriting an empire in shambles from 1759 to 1788. But despite the odds being stacked against him (or maybe because of them), he turned to the values of Enlightened Absolutism as a way to garner control in a country that was being thrown into the modern world.

After Spain's Golden Age, the country was having a hard time. It's military was weak and the money was running short. SO, when Carlos III gained control, he turned to some pretty big changes to try and turn things around.

He attempted to distance the Catholic Church from all political affairs, weakening the role of monasteries in everyday life. On top of that, he pushed for education in the sciences, the arts, and in philosophy by encouraging university research. He even managed to stay away from any serious war. All of this helped to earn significant respect from the people that he governed over.

Unfortunately for Carlos II, his reforms did not last too long. While they were in place, they did actually provide for the betterment of the lives and health of the average Spaniard, they his efforts would mostly be eroded following his death. Spain

Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon may seem like an odd choice to go along with these others, since he isn't really remembered for his role in the monarchy. But he was actually one of the most important figures in the Enlightened Absolutist movement. His rule as Emperor of France between 1804 and 1814 would be remembered as both despotic, but definitely enlightened at the same time.

What you really need to know for the AP Euro Exam is his Napoleonic Code. These are hugely important to remember for your AP European History course since it influenced almost every corner of the continent.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

When Napoleon expanded his empire, he needed to keep it orderly somehow. So, he created a legal code that covered the entire French Empire and made the laws somewhat similar across regions. Ultimately, he unified a bunch of different bureaucracies, creating a rational legal system based upon Enlightenment values.

Despite the importance of the Napoleonic Code in helping to push for Enlightenment legal systems and bureaucracies across Europe, Napoleon was still a tyrant. He definitely would not relinquish his control throughout Europe without a fight.

Voltaire

Not only was Voltaire a key figure on the Enlightenment, he was also a fan of Enlightenment Absolutism. Being one of the founders of the movement, he was around a little earlier than the other AP European History figures we've covered thus far. He lived from 1694 to 1778.

Like many Enlightenment thinkers, Voltaire believed in the freedom of expression, the freedom of religion, and the separation of church and state. He was known for his sharp satires, which got him into a bit of trouble in France. He was eventually banished to England, where he grew a fondness for the British constitutional monarchy. France was still absolutist at this time.

Because of this, he befriended monarchs themselves, including Frederick the Great. They both commiserated on the importance of a benevolent despot in governmental rule. He even moved into Frederick's palace for a bit of time, since the two of them agreed so much on political rule and power.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

Enlightened Absolutism and the AP European History Exam

So, these are some of the key figures that you are going to need to know for your upcoming AP European History exam. But dates and names aren't good enough to get that 5 on the test. And we aren't going to leave you hanging by ending this AP European History review here. Don't worry; we've got you covered.

You need to ask yourself, what are the patterns here?

There are a few big picture ideas you need to think about for the AP Euro exam. First, what connects all of these people? When looking through these snippets of information, you should be able to glean that most Enlightenment Absolutists had a few things in common. They each wanted to see religion sharply reduced in political affairs and in society writ large. They each wanted to transform their state bureaucracies into modern institutions that were capable of caring for most of the population. They each believed in Enlightenment-era values like the importance of education, the sciences, and philosophical rationalism. This often resulted in the creation of state-funded schools and the formation of new legal systems like the Napoleonic Code.

Second, think of this as a transitional point in history. These leaders and thinkers were around in the middle of absolutism and the liberal revolutions. The peoples of Europe were just starting to think about things like freedom and legal rights at the same time the monarchs were trying to maintain their control. You can see the conflict of these eras just in looking at the profiles of key figures of the Enlightenment Absolutists like we've done in this AP European History Review.

And finally, one thing to consider is the complicated narrative here. It should seem a bit contradictory that an Emperor like Napoleon believed in the Enlightenment. That's because many of these Enlightenment Absolutists had a hard time implementing their policies. In certain instances, like that of Catherine the Great, she simply could not get to everyone in her empire. The serfs suffered far more than any other social group and they themselves used the values and tenets of the Enlightenment to start revolutions against Catherine's rule.

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

But what better way to think about an AP Euro test prep than to look at an example of how it might work itself? Let's analyze this Free-Response Question from the [2003 AP European History Exam](#):

“Describe and analyze the influence of the Enlightenment on both elite culture and popular culture in the eighteenth century.”

Although, by reading through this AP European History review on the Enlightenment Absolutism movement, we may not be able to speak to concretely on popular culture, we should at this point have a few ideas about how to prove and answer for this question regarding the elite cultures of Europe. Monarchs and Emperors are inherently elite and by looking at the experiences, policies, and beliefs of individuals like Catherine the Great or Napoleon Bonaparte, we should be able to see an answer forming.

First, we already know that the Enlightenment encouraged the separation of church and state, it encouraged rationalism in the state (particularly through a concrete legal order), it encourage values like the freedom of press, and it highlighted the importance of the sciences and individual thoughts.

From the Napoleonic Code to the compulsory education of young children in Joseph II regime, there are plenty of examples of how and why the Enlightenment penetrated the elitist circles of 18th century Europe.

Let's take a look at another example. This one comes from the [AP European History exam from the year 2004](#):

“Analyze the shifts in the European balance of power in the period between 1763 and 1848.”

The Ultimate Guide to Enlightened Absolutists for AP Euro History Cont.

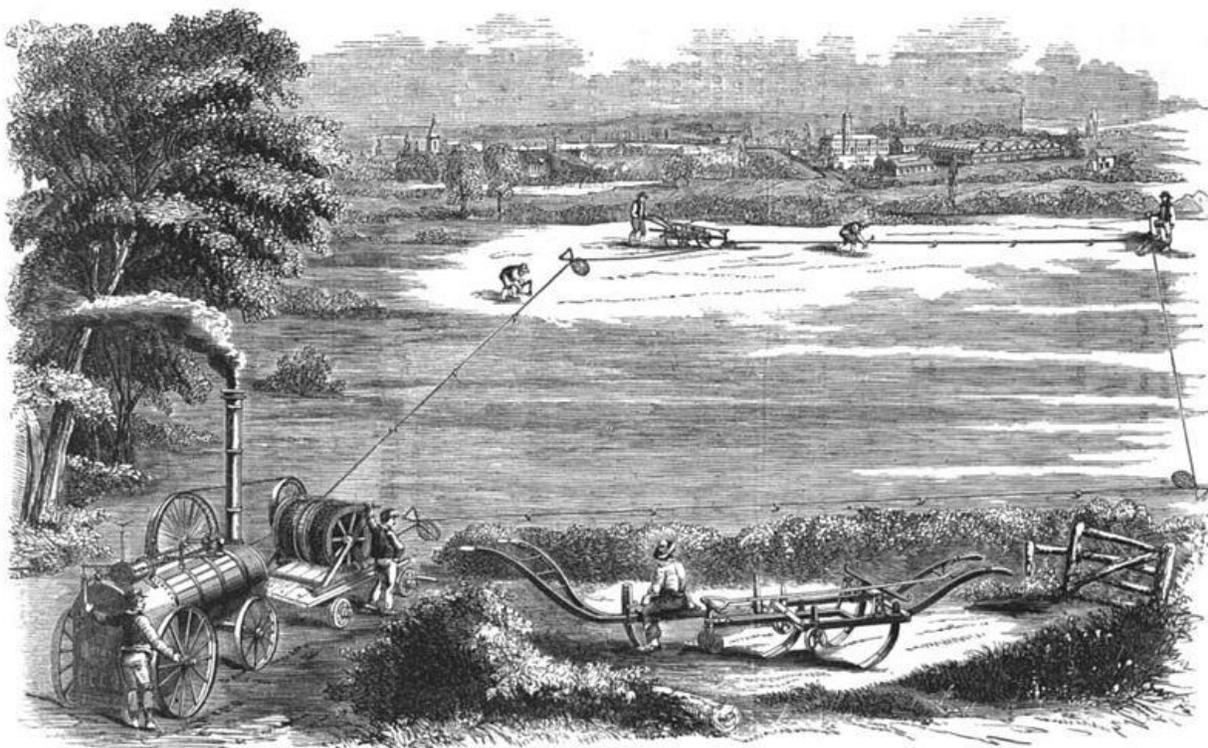
This is a perfect example of how the term Enlightened Absolutism might actually pop up as a sort of tangential topic on the AP European History exam. Like we discussed above, what we've been covering in this AP Euro review was actually a little bit of a transition point in European history. This AP Euro exam question is fundamentally asking about the age of liberal revolutions (i.e., the French Revolution, the Haitian Revolution, etc.), but by showing those who are grading your exam that like all histories, this one was too on in transition.

You can begin an essay like his with a short but sweet discussion of how Enlightenment Absolutists were the compromise between the absolutist monarchies and the great liberal revolutionaries. The figures that we have discussed in this AP Euro review actually characterize the "shift" perfectly.

So, for your upcoming AP European History exam, make sure that you take a good look at what we've covered in this AP European History Review on the Enlightened Absolutists of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Remember to think about the big picture and the relationship between Enlightenment-era thought and the policies that these key figures implemented.

Do this, and you'll be that much closer to getting a five on your upcoming AP European History exam. Good luck!

Agricultural Revolution



Smith's Steam Cultivator at Work. By Howard

[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Note: This article was released prior to the 2015-2016 revision to the AP European History exam. In order to see what is still in the Course and Exam Description, explore the course framework [here](#).

AP European History crash course on the Agricultural Revolution, we will explain the concept of the British Agricultural Revolution.

This period of history is considered pivotal in the development of modern Europe because it allowed for the rapidly growing population to thrive in England. The actual time period over which the British Agricultural Revolution took place is debated.

Agricultural Revolution Cont.

However, the accepted interpretation on the time period is that the revolution began in or around 1500 and continued up through the middle to the end of the 19th century. For the purposes of this AP European History crash course on the Agricultural Revolution, we'll focus on the most important developments of the entire revolution but mostly on the hundred and fifty years or so from about 1700 to 1850.

Keep reading for an overview of the Agricultural Revolution!

The Agricultural Revolution: What is it?

The Agricultural Revolution, from 1750 on to 1850, can best be explained as a massive success in the development of European populations. In pre-revolution England, the population was basically capped by the ability of the British to provide homegrown food. Some scholars believe that the English population had reached the near-1750 levels before, but, for a multitude of reasons not least of which the inability to feed more people, the population would never exceed these levels. England had a population of around 5.7 million people in 1750.

By 1850, England's population reached 16.6 million. This is the direct result of the British Agricultural Revolution.

Developments in Agriculture Throughout the Revolution

The Norfolk Four-Course Rotation System

Probably the most important development throughout the Agricultural Revolution was the intensification of agricultural output through new farming techniques, namely the development of crop rotation systems that involved turnips and clover.

This system is known as the Norfolk four-course rotation. Before 1750, many farmers had used other systems that left at least one field fallow to recover from the harvest of previous years. The new four-field system left no fields fallow and, yet, still allowed the soil to recover from harvests of taxing crops.

Agricultural Revolution Cont.

Farmers alternated growing Turnips, Clover, Wheat, and Barley in their fields in successive years. Turnip greens fed more animals, which did away with the need for dedicated pasture land, as well as helped control weeds in off years. Clover replenished nitrates in the soil more efficiently than the legumes of the Middle Ages. Wheat production increased by a quarter during the 18th century and then increased by about half from 1800 and 1850. Barley provided another high-yield cereal that would inevitably help increase the overall food supply.

More Food, Fewer Workers

The Agricultural Revolution was legitimized by the fall of the total percentage of England's working population that was actively involved in Agricultural Industry.

After 1750, each British agricultural worker produced more food on average than before. As is expected in this situation, the agricultural workforce sharply fell thereafter, giving rise to the industrial workforce and service industry. In short, the British Agricultural Revolution made the Industrial Revolution possible.

In 1850, roughly 22% of the British workforce was employed in agriculture. This was the smallest portion of total workforce in agriculture of any country in the world in 1850.

Animal Husbandry

Selective breeding was introduced in England by Robert Bakewell and Thomas Coke in the mid-18th century. The purpose of this scientific practice was to stabilize certain desirable traits in animals and to increase the yield on livestock.

Bakewell's greatest achievement in breeding was probably in sheep. The Lincoln Longwool was improved by Bakewell and, eventually, became the New (Dishley) Leicester sheep. Bakewell was also the first to breed cattle exclusively for beef yield. He bred long-horn heifers with Westmoreland bulls to create the Dishley Longhorn, which dramatically increased in size.

In 1700, the average weight of a slaughtered bull was 370 pounds. By 1786, the weight of a bull at slaughter doubled and then some at 840 pounds.

Agricultural Revolution Cont.

The Agricultural Revolution: Year by Year

One area that can help you get the scope of the Agricultural Revolution is to study it year by year. Let's learn more about the impact of certain inventions and developments during the Agricultural Revolution:

1701: The seed drill is invented by Jethro Tull, allowing crops to be sown in rows.

1703: The Rotherham Plow is invented and revitalizes planting.

1773: The Inclosure Act of 1773 allows land owners to fence land and remove the commoners' right of access.

1786: The threshing machine is invented by a Scot, Andrew Meikle.

1808: The first all-iron plow is created by Robert Ransome.

1827: The first reaping machine is invented by another Scot, Dr. Patrick Bell.

1850s: Steam power was adapted to be used in plowing.

The Agricultural Revolution on the AP European History Exam

First and foremost, the AP European History exam is undergoing a redesign for the 2015-2016 school year that effectively limits the scope of knowledge you'll need to possess going into the exam. The College Board wants you to understand key concepts in-depth, rather than everything there is to know in a superficial fashion.

Let's look at some previous examples of what we've seen of the Agricultural Revolution on previous AP European History exams.

Agricultural Revolution Cont.

The most recent example we can find on the Agricultural Revolution on the AP European History exam is a series of multiple-choice questions over a graph that compared European wheat and barley yields from 1600 to 1800. It would be good to examine the factors that contributed to and the results of British Agricultural advancement. Many of the questions on this section of the test deal with the application of the data in graphs and not necessarily the hard facts that surround the Agricultural Revolution.

In the most basic terms, you need to understand the context of the Agricultural Revolution in history, as well as the causation and the effects. Finally, you should make sure to be able to interpret graphs and evidence provided through the lens of what you've learned in this AP European History crash course on the Agricultural Revolution.

The Agricultural Revolution—The Bottom Line

The bottom line on the Agricultural Revolution, as a part of your AP European History review, is that the British advancement of agricultural techniques and technology reformed European agriculture. In a larger way, however, the British Agricultural Revolution made way for the subsequent Industrial Revolution.

This AP European History crash course on the Agricultural Revolution in Britain should help you begin to understand the ways that agriculture was advanced during this time period, from 1700 or so to 1850, and determine the effect that these advancements had on Britain and the rest of Europe.

If you tailor the remainder of your AP European History review toward the economic, industrial, and social effects of the Agricultural Revolution, you will be well-prepared for the College Board's redesigned AP European History exam.

The French Revolution



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

The French Revolution

This AP European History Crash Course will prepare you for questions about the French Revolution on your upcoming AP European History Exam. Though the French Revolution itself lasted only about a decade, its influence on European politics, culture, economics, and thought is hard to measure. You will encounter questions about the French Revolution on your AP Euro Exam, so let's get started on the review!

The French Revolution Cont.

Origins of the French Revolution: Why did it Happen?

The French Revolution began in July of 1789. Though its roots were political, the Revolution incited economic, religious, and social change that permanently altered France and sent shock waves through Europe.

Every AP European History student must remember that pre-Revolutionary France was divided into three estates: the clergy, the nobility, and the third estate, which included everyone else in the land, from the urban poor and rural peasants to the on-the-rise upper-middle-class bourgeois. The first and second estate, combined, represented only two percent of the population of France. The third estate, though representing the other 98 percent had little to no representation in government.

Traditionally, when French Kings needed money or support, they allowed meetings of the Estates-General. Here, the three estates would be represented, but since each was given only one vote, the first and second joined, and the demands of the third estate were defeated.

France's many wars had emptied the treasury. Significant drought, poor agricultural and cattle yields, and rapidly inflating food prices (especially regarding the price of bread), brought the situation in France to a crisis.

The French Revolution Begins

Two key crisis events took place in the summer of 1789:

- On July 14, 1789, Paris revolutionaries stormed the Bastille, a fortress that contained only about seven prisoners at the time, yet represented the oppression of absolutism, since these were prisoners held without a trial. The revolution was marked by violence at the outset, as the successful revolutionaries paraded through the streets with the murdered prison governor's head on a pike.

The French Revolution Cont.

- Meanwhile in the countryside, a peasant revolt had begun. The revolt was the result of rumors that the King was preparing to use his army to slaughter the peasants en masse or starve them to death, in order to reestablish his authority and put an end to unrest. Known as the Great Fear, the revolt dominated July and August of 1789, and was only quelled when feudal contracts were invalidated by the National Assembly.
- Desperate for support, King Louis XVI begrudgingly called for a meeting of the Estates-General and asked for each of the estates to arrive with proposals (Cahiers) that explained their complaints against the government. Though Louis did this in hopes of strengthening his rule and securing the tax revenue he needed to pay the bills, what happened next would lead to the end of his rule and change history.

France's Constitutional Monarchy

When Louis XVI became nervous about the meetings, he attempted to lock the third estate out of their meeting place. Unwilling simply to return home, the representatives of the third estate moved their meeting place to a local tennis court and vowed not to leave until they had written a constitution for France. The promise the National Assembly, as they now called themselves made with each other is known as The Tennis Court Oath.

Tip: You should note that at this point, the leaders of the third estate were largely upper-middle-class lawyers, and the new constitution was their product and did not involve the urban poor or peasants. Their direct role in the Revolution would come later, as we will explore below.

On August 4th, 1789, the National Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which recognized the rights of life, liberty, and property and called for the King to recognize the sovereignty of the people.

In October, the poor women of Paris march on the King's palace in what is known as the Bread Riots. They demand a fair price for bread, a staple of the diet of poor.

The French Revolution Cont.

It doesn't end here! Keep reading to find out how, only two years later, Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette would be executed by guillotine in Paris.

The Beginning of the End of Louis XVI

As the National Assembly continued to draft a new constitution, competing factions began to develop:

- Royalists were those who supported Louis XVI's right to absolute rule. Many royalists began to leave the country as they saw their political fortunes coming to an end and began to fear for their lives.
- Girondists were at first the majority group. They called for a new Constitution and were revolutionaries in the sense of calling for change, but came to be viewed as moderates as the revolution radicalized.
- Jacobins were a more radical group. They allied themselves with a new power base —the sans-culottes. The sans-culottes, literally, those who could not afford the fashionable breeches of the day and were “without pants”, were the poor working class of Paris. The Jacobins became the new majority as the revolution radicalized. The most radical members of this group became known as The Mountain.

Louis XVI could see the writing on the wall, and attempted to flee France with his family in June of 1791, but they were caught and returned to Paris. Left with little choice Louis agreed to sign the new Constitution and in September of 1791, France became a Constitutional Monarchy.

The story doesn't end here! Unlike in Britain, where the emergence of a Constitutional Monarchy allowed the country to develop largely free of bloody revolution, in August of 1792 French history took a violent, bloody turn. Months of rioting and mass executions of accused counterrevolutionaries resulted in the replacement of the National Assembly with the more radical National Convention.

The French Revolution Cont.

During this period, French culture underwent a radical change in the name of patriotism and revolution. Citizens, as people now referred to one another, were to wear the tricolor (a red, white, and blue pin, for example) to show their support of the Revolution. France rejected old ways and instituted a new French calendar, a system of measurement (the Metric system), new holidays, and new styles of clothing. The Revolution began to persecute Catholics, and to close churches throughout Paris as they established a new Cult of Reason worshiping the goddess of reason. Though in many ways, France was uniting in a new, secular culture, there were deep political divisions. Read on to understand the political rivalries that divided Revolutionary France!

The Debate Over “Equality”

By this time, the Revolution was divided. The Girondists called for Equality of Opportunity. They believed that France should recognize the equal rights of all, but that free markets and freedom were the promise of what should become new, Republican France.

The Jacobins, to keep the support of the sans-culottes, promised equality in an economic sense. They called for the regulation of prices and wages, promised bread to all, and advocated seizing of property and its distribution amongst the poor. The extreme Jacobins now had control of Paris. Led by Robespierre, they captured King Louis XVI and his wife, Marie-Antoinette, sentencing them both to death by guillotine.

France as a Republic

After the death of King Louis XVI, the new French state went to war with various European powers, including Britain, due to longstanding political and historical grievances and Austria due to the accusation by some radical French legislators that counterrevolutionaries were assembling in Austria and preparing to mount an offensive in France.

The French Revolution Cont.

In June 1793, the Girondists were defeated, and the Jacobins took control. That marked the beginning of the most violent, bloody phase of the French Revolution, known as the Reign of Terror. It was a 10-month span of time wherein thousands were executed on the order of Jacobin leader Maximilien de Robespierre and his Committee of Public Safety.

There was a constant struggle for power within the Committee. Shifting loyalties and regular purges meant that no one was safe from accusations of secretly plotting against the Revolution. In September of 1794, Robespierre himself was executed by the guillotine, effectively ending the Reign Of Terror he had instituted.

What happened next, you ask? Exhausted by blood, on August 22nd, 1795, what was left of the National Convention adopted a new constitution. It created what was known as the Directory, a five-person executive committee. The Directory ruled in a less bloody fashion but was marked by corruption and instability.

The Directory's rule ended on November 9th, 1799, when Napoleon Bonaparte staged a coup d'etat, installing himself as France's leader. This event marks the end of the French Revolution and the beginning of the Napoleonic Era, marked by France's renewed prevalence across the European continent.

The French Revolution on the AP European History Exams

A new AP European History Exam was administered for the first time in 2016. Though the format differs from the previous exam, if you are looking for an AP European History Crash Course you should remember that you will still need to know about the key elements of the French Revolution we discussed in this article. For example, In 2015, students were asked to analyze the ways in which Napoleon Bonaparte both supported and undermined the goals of the [French Revolution during his rule of France](#)." For you to answer this well, you will require knowledge of the goals of Revolution we discussed above.

The French Revolution Cont.

The French Revolution – The Bottom Line

While you are working on your AP Euro Review, be sure to spend a significant amount of time on the French Revolution. Remember, history is a story, not a collection of isolated facts! The information in this article can help you to understand the end of French Absolutism and lay a firm foundation for the study of modern Europe, all of which are important to know for the AP European History Exam.

To check your understanding: Can you recount how France moved from an Absolute Monarchy to a Constitutional Monarchy, a Republic, and finally to autocratic rule by Napoleon regarding the French Revolution?

Imperialism



Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Note: This article was released prior to the 2015-2016 revision to the AP European History exam. In order to see what is still in the Course and Exam Description, explore the course framework [here](#).

This section of our AP European History crash course will cover the important concept of imperialism insofar as it relates to your AP European History review.

Imperialism is closely related to colonialism. Colonialism aptly describes the motivation to create footholds in newly discovered and claimed lands. Imperialism is similar in that it involves creating those same footholds but in a different capacity. Colonialism falls short in accurately describing the motive that necessitates the term “imperialism”.

Imperialism Cont.

Imperialism, as it must be discussed here and for the purposes of your AP European History review, has a bit of a pernicious streak. Where colonialism implies a peaceful settlement, imperialism implies and overtly pronounces an element of conquering the peoples of a certain place, exploiting the economic advantages of a certain place, and creating a colony there in that certain place in order to maintain rule.

This AP European History crash course will help you better understand imperialism by explaining the concept as it relates to your AP Euro review, giving the details on the major imperial states throughout European history, and providing an example of imperialism on the past AP European History exams.

Continue reading for our crash course on imperialism!

Imperialism—What is it?

For your AP Euro review, you should consider imperialism as the literal nominalization of a country's desire to expand its land holdings and increase its wealth. As a term, it describes the desire to *build an empire*. Described in economic terms, imperialism could be called the struggle for limited resources, such as landmass.

In truth, the definition of imperialism will only help you somewhat in your preparation for the AP European History exam. You really should know how imperialism affected European history in specific instances. There's no more effective way to accomplish that than discussing the major imperial states and their impact on European and world history.

The Age of Imperialism

The Age of Imperialism will be an important topic in your preparation for the AP European History exam. This time period, from the 17th through much of the 20th century, is critical to how we recognize the modern world.

Imperialism Cont.

The Age of Imperialism refers to the period of time in which several European powers looked to extend their economic and political power outside of their borders. This led to the annexation of land in Africa, Asia, and the America, which shaped how we currently observe the world.

Your AP European History review will definitely benefit from an understanding of the individual European powers and their respective actions during the Age of Imperialism.

European Empires During the Age of Imperialism

The most active empire-building countries throughout the Age of Imperialism were Britain, eventually the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Spain. Continue reading for a brief overview of each of these empires that should give you the information you need to begin your AP European History review on imperialism.

Britain & the United Kingdom

The British Empire is known as probably the greatest empire in history. For longer than a century, the British Empire was the most powerful, largest, and most populous empire in the world.

The British Empire began in the late 16th or early 17th century with the establishment of trading posts overseas. It continued on until the period of decolonization ended in the later stages of the 20th century. The British Empire is generally divided into two parts.

The First British Empire: The First British Empire included exploration in Africa and America as well as Asia; saw the rise of British conflict with France globally.

The Second British Empire: The Second British Empire included the loss of the American Colonies, further exploration in the Pacific, war with the French, and run ins with the Russians; the late 20th century saw the full decolonization of most of the landmass of the British Empire.

Imperialism Cont.

France

The activities of the French during the Age of Imperialism are also split into two parts.

The First Colonial Empire: The First Colonial Empire began during the 16th century and continued until the early 19th century; it included the colonization of land in Asia and Africa.

The Second Colonial Empire: The Second Colonial Empire began with the conquest of Algiers and ended with Algerian independence in 1962; it became the second-largest empire behind the British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Spain

One of the original global empires, the Spanish Empire is known as one of the largest and most powerful in history. The 16th through the late 19th centuries saw Spanish influence in Europe itself, the Americas, Africa, Asian, and Oceania. As is evident, Spain controlled much of North, Latin, and South America.

Germany

The German Colonial Empire did not actually begin until the late 19th century. Due to Germany's disunity, major colonial projects could not be successfully undertaken.

In the 1880s, Germany began to successfully colonize Africa. Germany's colonial empire was effectively ended by the beginning of the First World War.

Imperialism Cont.

Imperialism on the AP European History Exam

Imperialism is mentioned quite often on the AP European History exam. Because the AP Euro exam and corresponding course are undergoing a redesign for the 2015-2016 school year that limits the scope of knowledge you as students are expected to possess, a general understanding of the Age of Imperialism can help enhance your AP European History review.

Consider the following prompt from a 2009 AP Euro document-based question:

“Analyze attitudes toward and evaluate the motivations behind the European acquisition of African colonies in the period 1880 to 1914.”

A general understanding of the empires mentioned above, and a little bit of independent study on each, will reveal that the main motivation for African Colonialism, basically across the board competition for a finite amount of resources that translated to a finite amount of power.

Imperialism on the AP European History Exam—The Bottom Line

Improve the effectiveness of your AP European History review with this crash course on imperialism. Imperialism is a concept that originated with the ancients, but continued to influence European history through the late 20th century. Even today we see the results of imperial attitudes, which are sometimes good and sometimes pernicious.

Continue your preparation for the AP European History exam by reviewing all of our crash courses. This one on imperialism can help you understand how this one idea helped shape the modern world.



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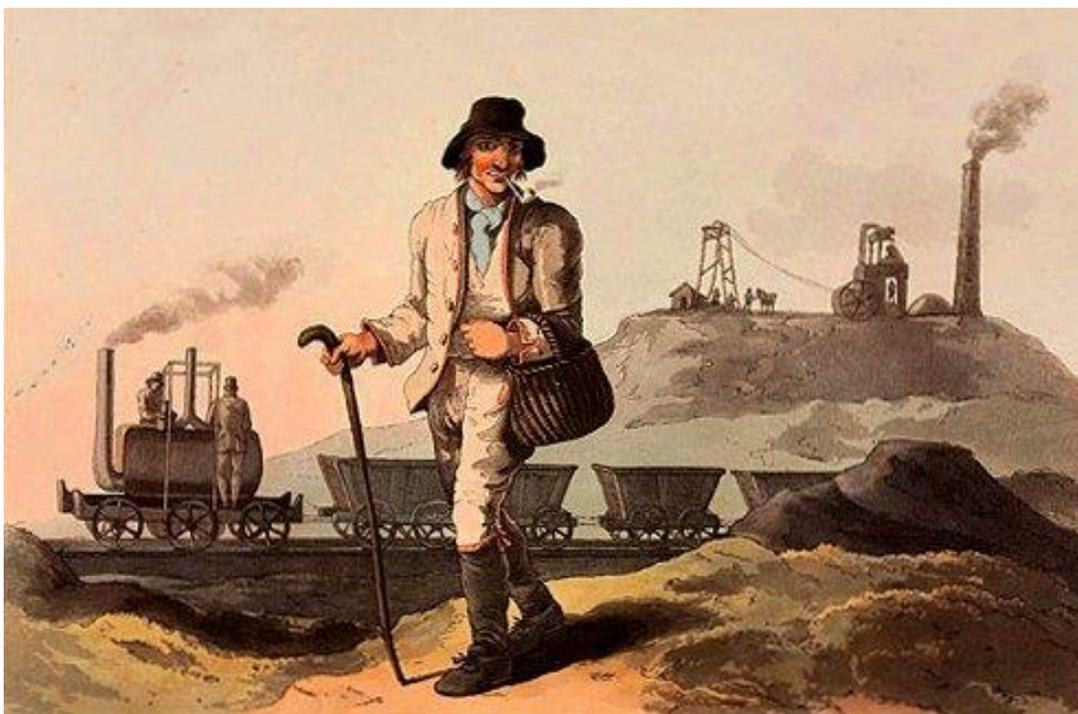
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Industrial Revolution



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Note: This article was released prior to the 2015-2016 revision to the AP European History exam. In order to see what is still in the Course and Exam Description, explore the course framework [here](#).

If you are an AP European History student, you should use the College Board's [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#) as a guide for your AP Euro review. We looked at it and determined that one of the most important topics you should include in your AP Euro review for the AP European History test is the Industrial Revolution.

We want you to get a 5 on your AP European History exam, so we've made an AP European History crash course on the Industrial Revolution just for you. The crash course will summarize how each of the major countries and regions in Europe was involved in the Industrial Revolution. Additionally, we'll spend some time reviewing what the Industrial Revolution did to social life.

Industrial Revolution Cont.

The First Industrial Revolution: 18th Century (1700s) Great Britain

Great Britain was the first country to experience the Industrial Revolution, and enough time passed before any other European countries experienced industrialization that when they did, it was called the second Industrial Revolution (1870-1914).

Why did Great Britain industrialize so much earlier than the rest of Europe? Take a look at the dates. For most of the 18th century, the United States was still a group of Britain's colonies. Great Britain had a constant influx of [raw materials](#) from the colonies that fueled their Industrial Revolution. Britain had a large supply of coal and iron ore, in addition to the raw materials from the American colonies. These were resources that the rest of Europe didn't have or couldn't take advantage of yet due to politics.

Speaking of politics, Parliament also helped push Britain towards industrialization because they gave money to inventors and supported banks that then supported the emerging factories. Between this government support, the raw materials and the new transportation systems that Great Britain also had during this time, the shift to a factory-based economy was easy.

The Second Industrial Revolution: The Rest of Europe (1870-1914)

The second Industrial Revolution was when the rest of Europe began to catch up with Great Britain. One of the reasons the Industrial Revolution is so popular on the AP European History exam is because it lasted for so long and affected every aspect of life: economics, social, political, etc. As we begin to go over the second Industrial Revolution ask yourself how new technology or the increase in factories could have affected different parts of European life.

France

[France](#) was the next country to industrialize, though they moved into it much slower than Britain did. Although like Britain, France received government support to help industrialize the country.

Industrial Revolution Cont.

The College Board notes that the French government built railroads and canals—the transportation needed to support a factory-based economy.

Germany

Next was Germany. Until Bismarck unified the country, [industrialization was impossible](#). As soon as that happened though, Germany raced towards industrialization and became just as industrialized as Great Britain. Germany became a major player in the coal and steel industries, and like Great Britain and France, Germany had government support, such as the installation of better transportation.

The Rest of Europe

The rest of Europe was slow to industrialize. By 1870, France and Germany had joined Great Britain in shifting their reliance to factories, but southern and eastern Europe still clung to serfdom and feudalism. They also had little support from the government and lacked the resources and transportation needed to industrialize. All of these were things Great Britain, France and Germany had used to spark their industrialization.

Europe as a Whole

Over the next few decades, Europe would switch their economy from one based on man-made products to those produced in factories. New technologies and forms of communication and transportation emerged as well. Things like electricity, the telephone, the radio and the airplane were being discovered and invented. Businesses were now monopolies and major corporations.

What did this mean? Europe, through the Industrial Revolution(s), had come to the modern era—the age we know and live in. By 1914, the rest of Europe had started to catch up to Britain, France and Germany. When [World War I](#) broke out, governments across Europe adopted industrialization, preparing each country for war.

Industrial Revolution Cont.

The AP European History exam will not just want you to know how the Industrial Revolution changed economics or how the government got involved in the movement as well. The exam will expect you to be familiar with the major social changes that occurred during the Industrial Revolution as well.

The Industrial Revolution's Social Impact

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, production was done in the home or in the field. Once the work moved to factories, more and more men left the home for work. While some women did work in the factories, married women stayed at home during the day when their husbands went to work outside of the home. This introduced the doctrine of separate spheres.

That sounds complicated, we know. Here's the bottom line.

The women were expected to stay in the home and take care of any domestic work (taking care of the children, cleaning), so their sphere was the domestic sphere. The men operated in the public sphere, since they went out in public to work in the factories. The world of business and politics were also in the public sphere—the man's sphere.

Keep in mind, too, that there was still inequality among classes. The upper class was now mostly made up of capitalists and owners of corporations, while the working or lower class was made up of factory workers.

Do you think we are still seeing the effects of the Industrial Revolution today, a hundred years later?

Industrial Revolution Cont.

What will the AP European History Exam Expect of You?

Like we said earlier, we used the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#) to make this crash course. When we searched for the “Industrial Revolution” in the course and exam description, we had thirty-four hits!

It gets better.

We searched for “industrialization,” and got sixty-nine hits. When we simply typed “industrial,” we got one-hundred-and sixty-eight hits.

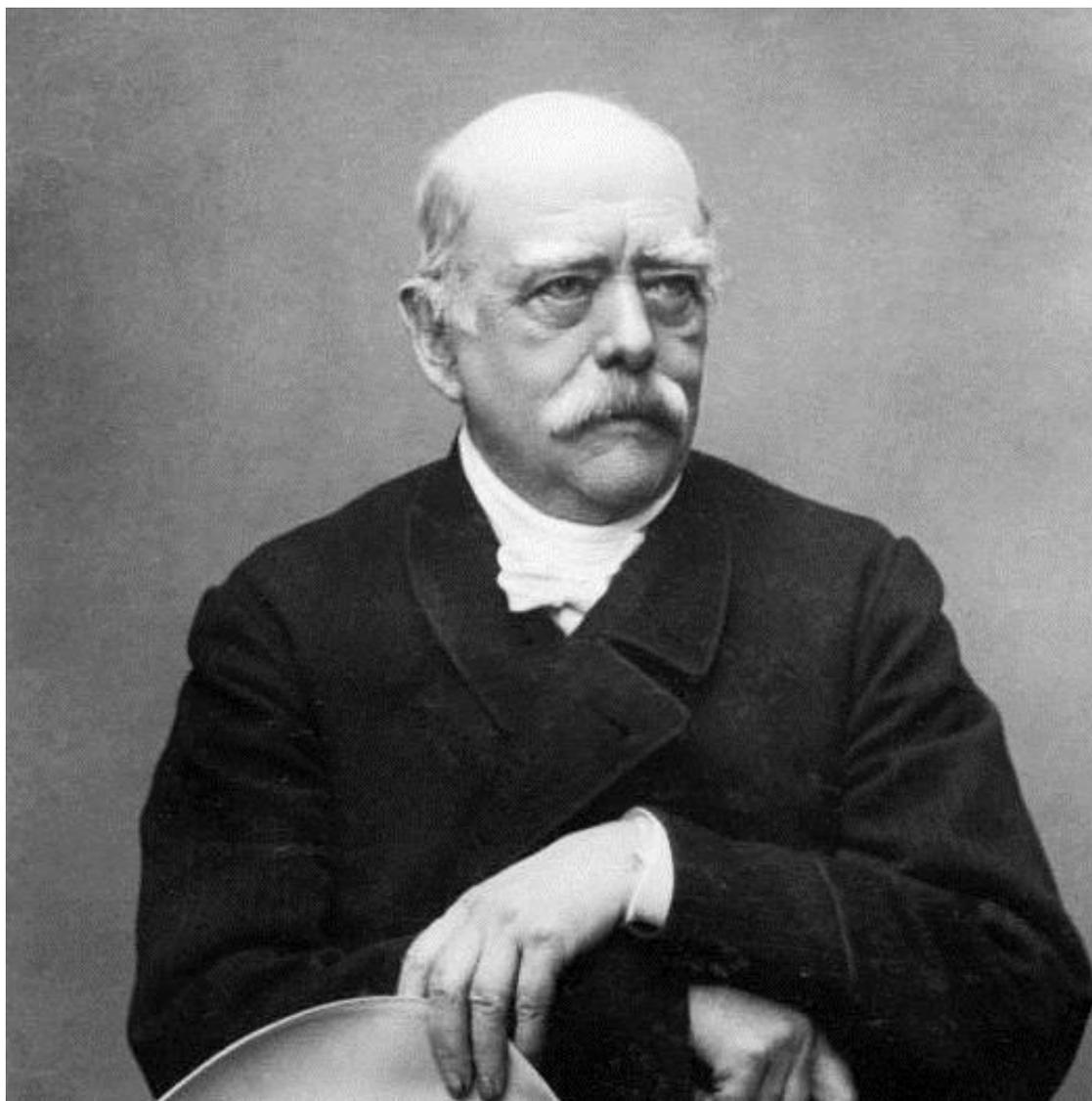
Are you starting to see why we made this AP European History crash course on the Industrial Revolution?

The purpose of the AP European History Course and Exam description is to outline all of the student learning objectives, relevant topics and key concepts for the course. The College Board has basically mapped out the course for you. Well, we’ve read that map, and it’s telling us that the Industrial Revolution is one of the most important topics you need to study for the AP European History exam.

We also know that the Industrial Revolution was used for free-response questions (FRQs) on the 2003, 2005, and 2011 AP European History exams. Even though the FRQ is no longer used for the exam, you should still prepare to write on the Industrial Revolution because one of the new parts of the exam is the short answer section. The College Board has some sample short answer questions in their course and exam description. One of the sample short essay questions is on the Industrial Revolution.

What would you write if the AP European History exam asked you a short answer question on the social impact of the Industrial Revolution?

Bismarck



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Over the course of your studies for the upcoming AP European History exam you've probably come across countless key historical figures and numerous important dates. So much that you may not be entirely certain who or what to focus your studies on.

Bismarck Cont.

Well, one thing's for certain: Otto Von Bismarck is someone you are going to want to get to know during your AP Euro review sessions. He was a central figure in the unification of modern Germany as we know it today. But that's not all. His entire political career represented the ongoing political changes and national unifications swept through the entirety of Europe during the 19th century.

We've built this AP European History Crash Course review around everything you'll need to know for the AP Euro exam. That means we are not only going to cover the most important dates and events of Otto Von Bismarck's life, but we are going to guide you through the ways that the AP exam itself is most likely going to approach this topic.

A Quick Note on Otto Von Bismarck and the AP European History Exam

You're gonna want to use this AP World History Crash Course on Otto Von Bismarck by thinking about him in relation to what else was taking place in Europe at the time.

Bismarck was around in Germany during the 19th century, smack-dab in the middle of growing nationalist movements spreading throughout Europe. Not just the German-speaking lands.

In other words, Bismarck acts as a perfect example of *Key Concept 3.4 How European States Struggled to Maintain International Stability in an Age of Nationalism and Revolutions* from the [College Board's AP European Course and Exam Description](#). But he was not alone. Similar events were taking place in Italy, Austria, etc. So, always remember this information in its historical context.

Bismarck Cont.

Who was Otto Von Bismarck?

Otto Van Bismarck was one of the most influential political leaders in German history. He was born to a wealthy Prussian family in 1815 and very quickly went into the political arena as he grew older. He became an extremely popular political leader who believed in unifying all of the different German states into a single nation.

He was so popular, in fact, that he would be appointed as Minister President of Prussia (kind of like a Prime Minister) by the king in 1862. Eventually he would get his wish and managed to force what had once been the independent states of Germany into a single nation, the German Empire. He accomplished this by 1871. Germany fast became one of the most influential powers in Europe.

But how did he accomplish all of this?

Bismarck and German Nationalism

Bismarck helped to create a unified Germany through two key processes: the exploitation of German nationalism and warfare.

When the Holy Roman Empire collapsed in 1806, the various German peoples formed different states as a way to create political stability. Unification of those different states was often discussed, but ultimately infighting kept them all separate.

But following Napoleon's reign over the region, ideas about national pride kept getting stronger and stronger. That and a growing hatred the German peoples had towards the French. The French kept invading, after all.

Bismarck used these two things to his advantage when he was Minister President of Prussia. He began to start a series of wars with France, Denmark, and with Austria in order to talk all of the German states in to banding together and fighting under one flag.

It actually worked!

Bismarck Cont.

Bismarck used his political smarts to get everyone on the same side. And he was pretty sneaky about it. He constantly fought his own parliament, even illegally collecting taxes in order to fund his growing army. What for? Well, he was preparing himself for war.

The first thing Bismarck wanted was Austria out of the picture. Prussia and Austria both wanted control of the northern German states, which made Bismarck nervous enough to start a war with Austria.

Ultimately, he got both Prussia and Austria to invade Denmark but instead of sharing the victory, Bismarck created a new Northern German Confederation with Prussia in charge. Instead of working together, he decided to invade Austria. He defeated Austria without too much effort (mostly because he went behind the Parliament's back and was funding the military very early on in his political career).

But Bismarck also knew that a war with France would be a guaranteed way to get the southern states to join the confederation. He also knew that the new king of Spain might end up being a distant relative of both William I of Prussia and Napoleon II of France. This could potentially disrupt the balance of powers, so Bismarck used this as an excuse to start a war with France. This would become known as the Franco-Prussian War.

If this all sounds complicated, that's because it is. Bismarck was a master of using politics and warfare to his advantage.

To make a long story short, the German states all fought together and defeated France in 1871 and to celebrate, they all decided to join one another and create the German Empire in the same year.

Bismarck Cont.

Bismarck and *Realpolitik*

Otto Von Bismarck did more than just help to create a unified Germany. He also helped to start a political philosophy that has been called Realpolitik.

Realpolitik is a word that every AP European history student should associate with Bismarck. This was the form of politics he followed during his time in power. It pretty much means to be realistic in politics. Work on the task at hand. That sort of thing.

Basically, he did what was practical for the German states not necessarily what was moral or what followed a certain ideology. Most often, this meant putting the state before all else. But it also meant that he could be a bit of a brutal and stubborn leader.

Ultimately, Bismarck's used the Realpolitik political philosophy to make and break alliances throughout Europe in the late 19th century. But he also helped to create some very powerful alliances, including

- **The Three Emperor's League**: An alliance between Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary.
- **The Triple Alliance**: An alliance between Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary.
- **The Reinsurance Treaty**: An alliance created with Russia after a war broke the Three Emperor's League.

His version of political pragmatism defined the entire political landscape of Europe during his time in office. The continent had a new powerhouse to deal with: Germany.

Bismarck Cont.

But he wasn't the only one to use this style of political thinking. It was very much in fashion during turn of the 20th-century European political affairs. In particular, Conte de Cavour in Italy used similar tactics of practical militarism, nationalism, and even exploitation to help unify the Kingdom of Italy.

But the alliances that Bismarck and others worked to create actually served to create both unity and anxiety in Europe's international affairs.

Bismarck's Legacy

In 1871, the southern states joined with the northern ones to create a unified Germany. This new country had a terrifyingly powerful army, and the nationalist feelings inspired by the Austro-Prussian and the Franco-Prussian wars was unshakable.

Bismarck, and everyone else in Europe, knew that Germany was among the strongest countries between them all. This conflicted with the balance of power throughout Europe, and Bismarck tried hard to uphold the balance. He succeeded in doing this through a complex system of alliances, including the Three Emperor's League, the Triple Alliance, and the Reinsurance Treaty.

The alliances Bismarck created to maintain the balance of power were key to keeping peace throughout Europe. In 1890, Wilhelm II, the new German Emperor, dismissed Bismarck from his role as the Chancellor of Germany. When Bismarck left, so did his foreign policy. After Bismarck's dismissal, Germany grew more hostile with their alliances and provoked tension between the great powers of Europe.

This tension eventually led to what has been termed the "Powder Keg" and the beginnings of World War I.

Bismarck Cont.

Bismarck on the AP European History Exam

As we have mentioned throughout this AP European History Crash Course, Otto Von Bismarck can stand in for a series of very significant events in the modern history of Europe. That also means as a key historical figure in European history, he can pop up on the AP European History Exam in a number of contexts.

When studying for the AP European History Exam, it's going to be necessary that you understand Bismarck's role in a greater European context. For example, he was not the only leader enacting political change and national solidification in the 19th century. Think about him in relation to what's going on in Italy at that point in time. The creation of these two modern European nation-states shifted the political environment—an environment that's been feeling effects to this day.

Speaking of political environments, keep in mind all of the political maneuvers that we've covered in this AP European History Crash Course. Always remember the ways that Bismarck used the *Realpolitik* system to manipulate and maneuver the state's power.

Just remember Key Concept 3.4 from the [College Board's AP European Course and Exam Description](#) and you'll be golden.

These are the types of things you're going to want to keep in mind when studying for the AP World History Exam. But why take our word for it? Let's take a look at an example from the [College Board's AP European Course and Exam Description](#). On page 171, you can find this question:

The political condition of Germany described in the passage did not change until

1. A) 1789
2. B) 1815
3. C) 1871
4. D) 1945

Bismarck Cont.

The *passage* in question is the one on page 168:

“Assume, O men of the German lands, that ancient spirit of yours with which you so often confounded and terrified the Romans and turn your eyes to the frontiers of Germany...”

Just by glancing through the quote, two major ideas should be popping up in your head. First, it was written in 1492 and that it’s generally discussing German feelings towards national identity.

We already know that this was an era of intense national pride throughout Europe at this time, but that did not indicate national unity. That came later. We do know, however, after reading this AP World History Crash Course that Otto Von Bismarck helped to unify the German peoples into a single nation beginning in 1871. This is why the answer should most clearly be C.

Even if you aren’t entirely sure about when Bismarck took over the German political scene, your general knowledge concerning not only the history of German nationalism, but that of Italy, Hungary, Austria should tell you that the late 19th century comes out as the most realistic answer.

Remember this and the other advice provided to you in this AP World History Crash Course review on Otto Von Bismarck and you will definitely be one step closer to scoring that 5 on your upcoming AP World History Exam.

Good luck!

The Russian Revolution



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Note: This article was released prior to the 2015-2016 revision to the AP European History exam. In order to see what is still in the Course and Exam Description, explore the course framework [here](#).

This AP European History crash course, covering the Russian Revolution of the early 20th century, will briefly introduce you to the concept and how it will relate to the AP European History exam, as well as explain the background, the conflict, and the effects of this seminal moment in the development of European and, on a grander scale, World history.

Continue reading for an overview of the Russian Revolution. This crash course should be a good place for you to start your AP European History review.

The Russian Revolution Cont.

The Russian Revolution: What is it?

First off, the “Russian Revolution” is a little bit of a misnomer. Strictly speaking, the *first* revolution, starting in 1905 and ending in the summer of 1907, was the beginning of the entire Russian Revolution. True to form, the Russian Revolution of 1905 was the result of a confluence of major issues that, considered separately, were not at all insurmountable by the people of Russia. However, when the problems of poor agriculture, nationality, labor, and education descended in concert on Russian society, revolution was necessitated.

Again, true to form, the revolution of 1905 resulted in the Russian Constitution of 1906. This constitution and the resulting empire did not last. In truth, both were doomed from their mutual start. By late 1917, Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks, in a peaceful manner, formed the first Marxist state that the world had seen.

The first stage of the Russian Revolution of 1917, which eventually resulted in the installation of the Marxist government, began in February of the Julian calendar (the Russian calendar at the time), March on the Gregorian calendar. This is known as the February Revolution due to the peculiar calendar situation. Growing civil unrest due in part to dissatisfaction with the imperial system and Czar Nicholas II, combined with persistent food shortages, resulted in the establishment of a provisional government and the abdication of the Czar.

The citizenry of Russia was in upheaval by 1917. Czar Nicholas II frequently dissolved parliament whenever it disagreed with him. Corruption in the government was flagrant and growing. Russia’s economy was impotent at best. However, the true, cardinal cause of the revolution was Russia’s devastating involvement in World War I. Russia had sustained disastrous losses; Rough estimates of total casualties hover between 2.8 million and 3.3 million. About a quarter of the lives lost in WWI were Russian. The war effort was costly, both monetarily and spiritually. The Russian economy was in flux. Citizens could not afford not to act again. These circumstances led to the October Revolution, the second stage of the Russian Revolution of 1917, on November 6th and 7th (due to the Julian/Gregorian calendar issue). The Bolshevik Revolution, the October Revolution, resulted in the installation of Lenin and the beginning of the Marxist state.

The Russian Revolution Cont.

The Russian Revolution: The Sequence of Events

March 8th, 1917: Protesters take to the streets of Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) over food shortages and clash with police.

March 10th, 1917: The strike spreads to the workers of Petrograd, and the Petrograd Soviet (council) of workers is formed.

March 11th, 1917: Russian soldiers are called in; some protesters are killed.

March 12th, 1917: The revolutionaries succeed when Russian soldiers defect to the cause of the revolution.

March 14th, 1917: The Petrograd Soviet issues its first order, which instructed soldiers to obey only those orders that come from the Soviet.

March 15th, 1917: Czar Nicholas II abdicates the throne; his brother, Michael, refused the crown, resulting in the fall of the czarist autocracy.

March-October 1917: The provisional government appointed by the Duma (parliament) and the Petrograd Soviet share power. However, more radical, leftist parties were not pleased by their governance.

November 6th and 7th, 1917: Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik party launch the Bolshevik Revolution, a near bloodless coup that resulted in the installation of Lenin as the new head of the government.

1918-1920: Russia experiences civil war between Bolsheviks and the White Army (anti-Bolsheviks). The Bolsheviks defeated the White Army forces.

1922: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is established.

The Russian Revolution Cont.

The Russian Revolution on the AP European History Exam

The AP European History exam has undergone a redesign that limits the scope of the knowledge test-takers are expected to possess concerning any given event or concept that will appear on the AP European History exam. Luckily, it's relatively easy to define the core principles that the College Board expects you to know when preparing for the AP Euro test.

Continue reading for an overview of these concepts.

Pre-Revolution Social Classes

Nobles: The Nobles made up the majority of the government pre-Russian Revolution. They held the majority of power from the 12th century until the revolution and largely wished to keep it that way through the revolutions.

Middle Class: Up until the revolution, there actually was little opportunity for the educated middle class in Russia. Most of Russian economic activity was centered on military production, leaving no prospects really for the middle class.

Workers: The Russian working class was made up of the factory, mine, and production workers. They were disillusioned with their inability to gain a legitimate voice in government by 1917.

Peasants: The peasantry had no voice in representation. They were poor and their needs were subordinated by the needs of the war effort. As the majority of the population, the cost of the war became a great problem for them.

Pre-Revolution Political Parties

You will need to also understand how these social classes identified themselves politically. You can find information on the most important political parties for you to study in preparation for the AP Euro exam, Nationalists, Octobrists, Constitutional Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks, [here](#).

The Russian Revolution Cont.

The February Revolution

This concept is discussed above, but, in short, this was the first stage of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The Provisional Government

Made up of the remainder of the Duma, the parliament, and the Petrograd Soviet, this government lasted only a few months in 1917 before the Bolshevik Revolution.

Lenin's April Theses

Lenin's April Theses were issued on April 4th, 1917, a month after the February Revolution. You can find them [here](#).

The October Revolution

This concept, like the February Revolution, is discussed above. In summation, this was the second and final stage of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The Civil War

The civil war between the ruling Bolsheviks and the anti-Bolshevik White Army took place between 1918 and 1920, as discussed above.

The Russian Revolution—The Bottom Line

The bottom line for your AP European History review, insofar as the Russian Revolution relates to it, should be that the Russian Revolution mirrors many other revolutionary time periods that you've studied in AP European History.

We recommend having, at the very least, a solid understanding of how this revolution relates to others that you've studied. What's different about this revolution? What is the same?

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

So you want to know what it takes to get a 5 on the AP European History Exam? I'm going to tell you that it's going to take time and dedication, but in the end it will be worth it. When you hold that 5 in your hands after you've finally taken the test then you will know that it will have paid off. Still it won't be easy; there is a large amount of time that the AP European History covers. Don't worry though; lucky for you we've compiled key terms and concepts that frequently appear on the exam.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

But we will do even better. Not only have we listed the top 35 frequently tested history terms for the AP Euro exam, but we've also included a description of how they apply to the larger themes and concepts that the College Board wants you to know for the whole AP Euro History course. Right next to each flashcard item, we will define which Key Concept each term hits for AP Europe course. AP Euro teachers use these Learning Objectives, so shy not use them in your studying, right? Let's get started on these AP Euro flashcards and get you that much closer to a 5 on your upcoming exam!

Medieval Period to Age of Exploration

Columbian Exchange

(Key Concept 1.4 Europeans explored and settled overseas territories, encountering and interacting with indigenous populations)

This was the period of "Ages." These include The Age of Enlightenment, the Industrial Age, and also importantly, the Age of Exploration. The Columbian Exchange played a massive role in the spread of European culture, goods, disease, and people across the globe. Named after...you guessed it, Christopher Columbus, this term refers specifically to the increased transportation of all of these things between the newly "discovered" Americas with Europe and Africa. For the AP Euro exam, you're going to want to remember that this process hugely changed both sides of the Atlantic. Take two instances. First, Europeans brought parasites and disease to the New World, like smallpox, which decimated the indigenous populations. Second, the slave trade pops up after exchange routes are established, completely altering labor and production in both Africa and the Americas. This process defines the Age of Exploration to the T, and hits

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Conquistadors

(Key Concept 1.4 Europeans explored and settled overseas territories, encountering and interacting with indigenous populations)

The Conquistadores of Spain and Portugal brought Western Europe face-to-face with the New World and beyond. During the Age of Exploration it was they who opened up Europe to what lay beyond the horizon. They opened trade routes and conquered natives, from which they got their name, and started colonies wherever they went. They essentially made Spain and Portugal into sea-faring empires during the Age of Exploration. Conquistadors also decimated the native populations of the New World through slavery and genocide, but mostly through the proliferation of diseases that were foreign to the New World. Diseases like smallpox and typhus spread from Europe to the rest of the world and killed millions of people. In fact, you could say that the Conquistadors jumpstarted the Age of Exploration from which stemmed the Colonial Era. But remember your AP Euro history—not all empires were created equally. This was a very Spanish and Portuguese way of doing things. The conquistadors were the military and dominated in the name of religion and the monarchy. Domination was the central theme to this imperial vision, not quite the colonialization which the Dutch and British would excel at a few years down the line.

Council of Trent

(Key Concept 1.2 The struggle for sovereignty within and among states resulted in varying degrees of political centralization.)

The council was basically meeting was called together by Pope Paul III. The Council of Trent was one of the major movements of the Counter-Reformation which was a reaction of the Catholic Church to fight against the growth of the Protestant Reformation. The Council re-affirmed the teachings of the Catholic Church, clarified doctrine, and decried the heresy of Martin Luther. One of the main sticking points between the Catholic Church and the Protestants was the concept of transubstantiation.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Catholics truly believed that the Eucharist was transformed in the body and blood of Christ and Protestants believed that it was a transformation of spirit. This council failed to bring the Protestants back into the fold of the Catholic Church and only exacerbated the growth of Protestantism in Europe. The Council of Trent was a defining moment for the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation and the Protestant Reformation is something you must know for your exam. Distrust towards the Catholic not only led to new forms of religion, but the spread of those religions during the Age of Exploration as many tried to flee persecution.

Defenestration of Prague

(Key Concept 1.3 Religious Pluralism challenged the concept of a unified Europe.)

The Defenestration of Prague may sound silly but it directly led to the Thirty Years' War in Europe. A calm had recently settled over the land as the Holy Roman Empire came to the decision, *cuius regio, eius religio*, meaning that whoever owned the land decided what religion would be practiced there. The Kingdom of Bohemia, which was part of the Holy Roman Empire at the time, was ruled by the Habsburg Dynasty who was primarily Catholic. The Habsburgs however did not force Catholicism on their Protestant subjects. Then Ferdinand of Styria, a hardline Catholic, was elected King of Bohemia. He began taking away Protestant rights and dissolved primarily Protestant assemblies who objected to this infringement upon their rights. Ferdinand sent several of his Catholic lords to announce his intent at the Bohemian Chancellery and the lords, angry at their mistreatment, unceremoniously threw them out the window. This is so massively important because the thirty years after this incident the Holy Roman Empire would be embroiled in conflict that would eventually drag the rest of Europe into fighting as well. The fall of the Roman Empire allowed for the rise of other empires, like those of the English and Spanish which spread their visions of the world across the globe.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Diet of Worms

(Key Concept 1.2 The struggle for sovereignty within and among states resulted in varying degrees of political centralization.)

Basically, the Diet of Worms was a deliberative assembly called by Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. He convened the diet in order to figure out what they would do with Martin Luther. Historically the Holy Roman Empire had been Catholic, granted their name from the pope himself. But most people remember the one in 1521 after Martin Luther's writings had begun the Protestant Reformation and the subjects of the Holy Roman Empire found themselves questioning the reliability of papal interpretation of Scripture. Martin Luther was then summoned to Worms, Germany in order to either explain his perceived heresy or recant them and return power back to the Catholic Church. Martin Luther did none of these things and merely stated that he would not take back anything he said for he could not do so in good conscience and that in itself would be sacrilegious in God's eyes. After he had finished speaking he simply said, "Here I stand, I can do no other." Luther's actions would further fan the flames of the Protestant Reformation and act as a sign of things to come. The College Board loves this kind of event for two reasons. First, the diet was a kind of institutional power, very specific to the Roman Empire—but that power was fading and in transition. Second, it showed that the western world was looking for alternatives to the Catholic Church. Religious and state authorities were clashing in historically significant ways, sparking the Protestant Reformation.

Edict of Nantes

(Key Concept 1.3 Religious pluralism challenged the concept of a unified Europe.)

The French Wars of Religion had torn France apart for decades and left it wracked by disunity. On one side of battle were the Huguenots, Calvinist Protestants living in France, and on the other side were the Catholics, the majority religion at the time. Henry IV saw the damage done to his country by the French Wars of Religion and tried to broker a peace between both belligerents.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

This came in the form of the Edict of Nantes. The Edict made clear that French Huguenots were no longer to be treated as second-class citizens or heretics. They were to have the same rights as Catholics and tolerated as a separate religion from the majority. The Edict freed France from the wars that had ravaged it for the second half of the 16th century and eventually allow for the growth of secularism in later periods. Once again, this is the era of religious reformation and the College Board knows this. This edict serves as another example of religious disunity under an absolutist monarchy; it also shows how a social/religious group like the Huguenots fought for a place in the French monarchical system.

Feudalism

(Key Concept 2.1 Different models of political sovereignty affected the relationship among states and between states and individuals.)

When you think of Feudalism you probably think of knights and the middle ages, but it goes so much further than that. Feudalism was a means of social order during the turmoil and uncertainty of the middle ages. It was an institution that affected the political, cultural, and military spheres. Within feudalism serfs, lords, and kings were bound to each other. Lords owned the land and serfs were bound to them, they were to raise crops and provide food and goods for the lord who would in turn protect them from harm. The lords owed allegiance to the king and the king was in charge of marshaling the army in times of war and providing justice. Feudalism was the primary form of society for centuries. And because AP Euro history is a fan of connectivity and transition: the feudal system declined due to a variety of complex reasons. One, economics were shifting as exploration led to commercial contacts, the religious authority of the pope was being challenged, and peasants began revolting for personal and social rights.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Little Ice Age

(Key Concept 1.5 European society and the experiences of everyday life were increasingly shaped by commercial and agricultural capitalism, notwithstanding the persistence of medieval social and economic structures.)

Believe it or not, but it's not just the history of humans that change over time. Weather patterns shift in large and small ways as well, ultimately affecting human history. The Little Ice Age refers to the cooling off of general temperatures in Europe from 127 -1455 and also 1770-1850. The fact that there was a cooling off period between these two sets of years is in itself not important for any Learning Objective for the AP Euro course, but you are going to want to remember the repercussions. Because of the shifting weather crops died off, leading to severe famines in 1315-1375 and throughout the late 17th century. The cold, the lack of food, and shifting ice patterns all affected European history. People started having less children because they couldn't feed them, nutrition went down, bread riots occurred, and communities became isolated.

Mercantilism

(Key Concept 1.4 Europeans explored and settled overseas territories, encountering and interacting with indigenous populations)

The dominant economic theory in Europe during the period lasting from the 16th to the 18th century was known as Mercantilism. The key requirements of mercantilism came from a nation's drive to establish colonies quickly and efficiently, anything the colony produced was to be shipped and sold only in the home country, all efforts must be made for a nation's exports to be greater than its imports, and all gold and silver that the nation encounters must be hoarded and kept within the domestic money supply. This policy was the framework of the English, Spanish, and French when forming colonies in the New World. It's important to note here that this was an *extremely* profitable system, helping to push Europe out of the Middle Ages and into the dominant region of world affairs. It's also the predecessor to capitalism, which is a topic too huge to not remember.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

The Ninety-Five Theses

(Key Concept 1.2 The struggle for sovereignty within and among states resulted in varying degrees of political centralization.)

That's probably how many thesis statements you've written for your AP European History class thus far, huh? Anyways, this is Martin Luther's (not Martin Luther King, Jr.) famous arguments against the Catholic Church that helped to spark the Protestant Revolution. In 1517, Luther published this tract in what is now Germany, listing a series of complaints about the abuses of Catholic power, including the use of indulgences, the intimacy between the Church and state, and corruption that was taking place across Europe. It's important to remember that without Gutenberg's printing press, this may not have been that big of a deal, but because printing made the document much easier to spread, it caught on across Europe, which was growing tired of the Catholic Church.

Peace of Westphalia

(Key Concept 1.3 Religious pluralism challenged the concept of a unified Europe.)

Through the Peace of Westphalia the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire was brought to an end and Spain could no longer deny the authority and freedom of the Dutch Republic. The Peace of Westphalia fundamentally changed Europe in that it forced the acceptance of the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church would no longer be able to bully Catholic monarchs to interfere in the domain of Protestant rulers and effectively allowed religious freedom and tolerance for all Europeans. It also forever changed the power dynamics of Europe. Formerly might made right but with the Peace of Westphalia balance was maintained in Europe through a complicated set of alliances, if one nation went to war it brought the strength of its entire alliance to bear. This shift in power led to growth of nationalism in Europe as nations solidified and contributed to the impending First World War. Just seeing the word "nationalism" should sound off your AP Euro alarms. This is need-to-know subject, so this event in European history is essential.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Spanish Inquisition

(Key Concept 1.3 Religious pluralism challenged the concept of a unified Europe.)

Did you know that the Spanish Inquisition was actually only one of several? Inquisitions were set up in order to enforce orthodoxy of Catholic subjects. The Spanish one began in 1478 by the Spanish monarchy in order to take a certain amount of control away from the papacy. It consisted of a Grand Inquisitor (the most famous being Torquemada) who headed a council that was meant to guarantee that Catholic practices were being done by all subjects, including newly converted Jews and Muslims. The entire process led to mass censorship, the expulsion of Jews, and trials of heresy across Spanish territories. But remember, this is about the enforcement of religious and political authority at a time when religious pluralism did exist.

Renaissance to Industrial Age

Absolutism

(Key Concept 2.1 Different models of political sovereignty affected the relationship among states and between states and individuals.)

Absolutism was a style of governance in Europe that lasted from the early 17th century to the late 18th century. It was characterized with a monarch that sat at the top of the government. Primarily male, he wielded his unrestricted authority over the state and the people. Power within an absolutist government was hereditary usually passing from father to son. All political, cultural, and economic activities stemmed from the will of Louis the XIV. In reality however the absolutist ruler was offset by the power of the clergy, aristocracy, and eventually the middle class. Why exactly is this important? Europe was dominated by absolutist governments for centuries that were eventually torn down by fiery revolutionaries fighting for democracy.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Bourgeoisie

(Key Concept 3.2 The experiences of everyday life were shaped by industrialization, depending on the level of industrial development in a particular location.)

From the end of the Middle Ages and up to the French Revolution there were three social classes that one could be a part of: the aristocracy, the clergy, or the commoners. During the middle ages there was normally a wealth disparity along with the titles associated with the first two classes that separated the commoners from the aristocracy and the clergy. However within the commoners rose a different class of people, these were the bourgeoisie. They were characterized as merchants who made their livelihood from business as opposed to hard labor. They would often amass wealth that rivaled that of the aristocracy and the clergy and began to search for ways to improve their social status as well. It is the bourgeoisie that would act as the main instigator of the French Revolution and inspired others throughout Europe. Since, Karl Marx is a favorite on the AP Euro exam, remember that Marx applied these events to argue that Bourgeois revolutions led to the creation of capitalism (they were merchants, after all).

Deism

(Key Concept 2.3 The popularization and dissemination of the Scientific Revolution and the application of its methods to political social, and ethical issues led to an increased, although not unchallenged, emphasis on reason in European culture.)

The Age of Enlightenment saw the rise of rationalism and a trust in empiricism. This also coincided with the effects of the Protestant Revolution and specifically a scrutiny of organized religion that left many disenchanted. This resulted in the growth of Deism. Deism is the belief that you don't need religion to see that the universe was designed by a single omnipotent creator; instead you just have to study and observe the natural world to see that its complexity must have been designed by an all-powerful being. Deism became a prominent belief system among French philosophers like Rousseau and Montesquieu whose writings would contribute to the expansion of the French Revolution.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

And even more, political philosophers that helped to spark the French and American revolutions were hugely influenced by deist thinkers, since they believed that religion no longer had to be the center of politics.

Industrialization

(Key Concept 3.2 The experiences of everyday life were shaped by industrialization, depending on the level of industrial development in a particular location.)

Industrialization heralded the beginning of the pre-modern age. Many new inventions appeared as a result of industrialization that would change the economies of many countries in Europe. Industrialization was the process of incorporating machines to produce goods especially textiles. Also industrialization brought about the growth of steam power to transport goods and power these new machines this came about with the transition from wood to coal as a fuel source. Industrialization affected all levels of society as income levels for all people rose as well as quality of life. Also many things came to be produced in mass with all the new technological advances. But even though incomes rose and products increased, there would still be discontent. Socialism sprouted up in the 19th century in an effort to take on the industrial system, where money disparity between the wealthy and the poor appeared to be increasing. This economic system became an institution of power in itself sparking instances of class warfare.

Laissez-faire

(Key Concept 3.2 The problems of industrialization provoked a range of ideological, governmental, and collective responses.)

Laissez-faire was an economic policy in which the government took a hands-off approach. Prior to laissez-faire most of Europe's governments took control of the economy, especially during times of famine or war. However laissez-faire preached against the intervention of the government.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Originating in France laissez-faire as economic policies were tested during the reign of Louis XV and the policies worked for ten years. However when a food shortage hit France merchants would distribute and sell their grain abroad for a better price. Laissez-faire was one of the many policies that contributed to the proliferation of hatred for the aristocracy and the clergy and would help bring about the French Revolution.

Napoleonic Code

(Key Concept 3.4 European states struggled to maintain international stability in an age of nationalism and revolution.)

Although Napoleon spread his French empire across Europe in the early years of the nineteenth century, he also spread some rather revolutionary laws as well. The Napoleonic Code refers to the French laws that Napoleon's empire enforced upon their own citizens and those that they conquered. Revolutionary for the time, the laws created a uniform system that spread throughout Europe, replacing the patchwork of feudal laws that dominated Europe from several generations. It was revolutionary because it did not allow for class-based privileges (everyone was basically equal), the state could not force religion, and that the government should not be created by the most powerful politician, but it should be filled with people who were actually qualified for their jobs. As countries throughout the 19th and 20th centuries increasingly tried to get rid of colonization and feudalism, they turned to these ideas for a model on how to do that.

Realpolitik

(Key Concept 3.4 European states struggled to maintain international stability in an age of nationalism and revolution.)

Realpolitik is a German word that means a practice of international relations that focused on what is practical for the nation instead of making decisions based on ideological lines. The most famous practitioner of Realpolitik was the statesman Otto von Bismarck.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Through Realpolitik Otto von Bismarck was able to leverage Prussia into a position of power while simultaneously keeping the rest of the European nations aggressive against one another thus maintaining a balance of power in Europe. Realpolitik would bring the Prussian state to the forefront of European politics and would allow it to dominate for decades with Otto von Bismarck at the helm. This pragmatic view of politics led Bismarck to adopt several socialist policies in order to prevent uprisings from the working classes, even though many in the government at the time didn't agree with the policy on an ideological level. Decisions like these would help to create a number of modern nation-states like Germany, Italy, etc.

Reign of Terror

(Key Concept 2.1 Different models of political sovereignty affected the relationship among states and between states and individuals.)

The Reign of Terror was the bloodiest portion of the French Revolution. During the Reign of Terror as many as 30,000 French citizens were executed by the Committee of Public Safety led by Maximilien Robespierre. The reason for the Reign of Terror was because the leaders of the French Revolution had promised the commoners and sans-culottes equality for all under the law and no more economic abuse by the government. When these promises were reneged upon the masses felt cheated and there was a cry for blood. No one was safe from the National Razor, or the guillotine, which had come to symbolize the might of the French Revolution. No one was safe from the National Razor whether you were an aristocrat, clergyman, or commoner. The significance of the event lies in that the rest of Europe's aristocrats began to fear a revolution within their own country and began to tighten the restrictions on their own people which ironically would lead to more revolutions.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Social Darwinism

(Key Concept 3.6 European ideas and culture expressed a tension between objectivity and scientific realism on one hand, and subjectivity expression on the other.)

Ever heard of the phrase, “survival of the fittest?” Well, it originates from the evolutionary arguments made by naturalist Charles Darwin in the late 19th century. It originally applied to the natural world, after Darwin (an Englishman) spent some time around the Galapagos Islands off the West coast of South America observing the variations of animal species between the islands. Social Darwinism came into play when people across Western Europe (the United Kingdom and the United States, in particular) began applying Darwin’s theories to human society. Those who supported it claimed that the strongest people inherit the most wealth, while those who are weak will stay weak and poor, eventually to die off. They also believed in specific ways to reward strength and discipline weakness. It became a particularly popular theory in the first half of the twentieth century, as fascism, eugenics, and imperialist racism took hold throughout Europe.

The Three Estates

(Key Concept 1.5 European society and the experiences of everyday life were increasingly shaped by commercial and agricultural capitalism, notwithstanding the persistence of medieval social and economic structures.)

The Three Estates refers to the socioeconomic classes of France up till their abolishment during the French Revolution. They consisted of the French clergy which made of the first estate. The second estate was the French nobility, and the third estate was the French commoners. The importance of the Three Estate sociopolitical system lies in how the estates were taxed. The first and second estates were exempt from the *corvée*, *gabelle*, and the *taille*. All of these terms respectively refer to mandatory labor on state roads, a salt tax, and a direct land tax. As a result the burden of taxation mainly fell on the third estate.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

This unfair taxation policy irritated the French commoners and especially the growing French bourgeoisie who had comparable wealth to the first and second estates but simply did not have the social rank. This aggravation would in turn lead the people to revolt and begin the French Revolution.

World War I to Cold War

Balkan Powder Keg

(Key Concept 3.4 European states struggled to maintain international stability in an age of nationalism and revolution.)

The Balkan Powder Keg was the name given to the Balkans during the early 20th century. The reason for this title was because it had become a major point of contention between the preeminent powers of the time. In addition to this, the local people of the Balkans had an upsurge in nationalism and eventually felt they should govern themselves instead of either the western or eastern imperial powers which lay on either side of them. Examples of Balkan states at the time were Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro. The Balkan Powder Keg would explode forcing western and Eastern Europe against each other and lead to one of the bloodiest conflicts the world had seen up to that point, World War I. In other words, this was the world of empires coming towards its eventual demise. This is one of the most significant series of events in modern European history because it indicates the shift away from the imperial system and towards the systems of sovereign nation-states that we are familiar with today.

Berlin Wall

(Key Concept 4.4 Demographic changes, economic growth, total war, disruptions of traditional social patterns, and competing definitions of freedom and justice altered the experiences of everyday life.)

The Berlin Wall was the iconic representation of the ideological struggle between Western Europe and the Soviet Union.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

It came to represent the clear divide between Western Europe and the Soviet Union because you could see clearly through the checkpoint to either side of the wall. The Berlin Wall divided East and West Berlin from each other and was originally designed to prevent illegal immigration from the Soviet Union into Western Europe. However the wall began to grow in size and took extreme measures in the form of guard towers along its length and anti-vehicle trenches when people kept crossing over into Europe illegally. The Berlin Wall became a tangible manifestation of a continent divided and stood for decades after World War II until the late 80's and early 90's.

Containment

(Key Concept 4.1 Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational unity.)

Containment was a policy coined by U.S. Diplomat George F. Keenan during the presidency of Harry Truman during the Cold War in an attempt to contain communism's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and Asia. This was in response to a series of actions on the part of the Soviet Union to enhance its influence in Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam and Korea. Containment is a middle ground between the mild policy of détente and the hostile policy of rollback. The Truman Doctrine, which vowed to support people who were resisting communism, marked the beginning of the implementation of containment as the official U.S. policy. In terms of European history, this is important due to the vast amounts of money and aid coming from the United States into regions that fought against the Soviet Union. US support meant that rebels in countries like Greece, Romania, etc. would have economic support in their efforts to overthrow Soviet power.

This would only serve to fan the flames of the Cold War.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Decolonization

(Key Concept 4.1 Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational unity.)

This is a *must know* word and concept. Decolonization basically describes the post-WWII era in global history. The World Wars proved devastating to the imperial system. Empires were out, while liberal democracies were in. Europe could no longer rely on their system of international empire (after all, imperialism really sparked WWI and WWII, right?), so they increasingly relied on decolonization efforts, which led to increased national self-determination and sovereignty to Europe's former imperial and colonial holdings. But this also played into the Cold War hysteria. Using the ideas about the spread of democracy, leaders across the world appealed to either the United States or the Soviet Union to help them break away from their imperial overlords and become independent nations. This turned into a massive global tug of war, but still decolonization took place. Egypt, Greece, Vietnam, Israel, Iceland, and most countries around today are around today because of this process. For that reason, this is a must-know process for the AP Euro exam.

French National Front

(Key Concept 4.4 Demographic changes, economic growth, total war, disruptions of traditional social patterns, and competing definitions of freedom and justice altered the experiences of everyday life.)

The National Front was a conservative, right-wing party that emerged in France during the 1970s. National Fronters argued for strict legal rulings and lawbreakers, they were anti-immigrant, favored French nationalism over European unionism, and favored economic protectionism. The National Front remains active to this day in French politics, although it hasn't gained significant political control.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

It was founded as a response to the increasingly diverse populations that immigrated into Europe and France during the 1960's and 1970's, the trend towards decolonization, and increased financial instability due to deindustrialization. France was not alone. Similar groups emerged throughout Europe and the Western world at this time, indicating a social and political trend that responded to the issues of modernity, increased globalization, and market instability.

Glasnost

(Key Concept 4.2 The stresses of economic collapse and total war engendered internal conflicts within European states and created conflicting conceptions of the relationships between the individual and the state, as demonstrated in the ideological battle between liberal democracy, communism, and fascism.)

Have you ever wondered why the Cold War began to thaw? Well you should! Glasnost was a governmental policy instituted by President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. It entailed a more transparent approach to government decisions and policies which contrasted the more restrictive policies of Stalinism. These policies called for less censorship within the Soviet Union. The reduction in censorship allowed Soviet media to tell the public exactly how the Soviet Union was doing and it showed that the nation was suffering from food shortages, pollution, and many other problems. While glasnost was a step in the right direction for a freer Eastern Europe it contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union as its past history and current failure was brought to light.

Leninism

(Key Concept 3.5 A variety of motives and methods led to the intensification of European global control and increased tensions among the Great Powers.)

Is it too obvious to say that this term has something to do with the politics of Russian revolutionary figure, Vladimir Lenin?

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Well, it does. Lenin helped to found a radical group, called Bolsheviks, to overthrow the tsarist system in Russia and create what he believed would be a proletarian dictatorship peppered in with some Marxist ideology. Interestingly, as Lenin struggled to hold onto power in the 1920's, he created his New Economic Policy, which betrayed Marx, and encouraged a little bit of capitalist enterprise in Soviet Russia. He even allowed some people to own private businesses. After Lenin died, however, Joseph Stalin reversed this policy by forcing a process of state-sponsored modernization. Industry would become a central concern under Stalin's strict, state-powered thumb. This Leninism, especially viewed alongside Stalinism, shows a dynamic Soviet history. And the College Board loves dynamism. It shows that even something as rock hard as the Soviet Union had to transition over time in order to deal with the economic realities of the world.

Marshall Plan

(Key Concept 4.1 Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational unity.)

After the end of World War II the continent of Europe was war-torn and the population distraught at the damage done by the conflict. Many of the Allied forces wished to force Germany to pay war reparations that would contribute to the rebuilding of Europe while simultaneously punishing them. The Marshall Plan was suggested by Secretary of State George Marshall. The purpose of the Marshall Plan was to prevent another outbreak of war in the sense that because Germany had been forced to pay war reparations for World War I they had been unable to sustain themselves and fell prey to the lunacy of Adolph Hitler. The Marshall Plan effectively helped Europe get back to its feet after the end of World War II. But the Marshall Plan also did two other things to the geopolitical situation. One, it guaranteed US participation in European affairs for several years to come. American dominance of the global marketplace would emerge from these types of decisions made in the post-WWII years. And second, it split global affairs into two.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

The US had their vision, but so did the Russians, who created their own assistance plan, called the Molotov Plan. Geopolitics was split into two competing factions after WWII and the Marshall Plan helped to make that split even bigger.

NATO

(Key Concept 4.1 Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational unity.)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was signed into effect on April 4, 1949. It was an alliance which promised that one country would defend the other if one was attacked by a third country. The agreement was preceded by the Treaty of Brussels in 1948. This treaty set up a “consultative council” amongst the Western European nations in an attempt to stop the spread of communism. Europe had recognized that it was divided into a western and communism bloc. The communist Soviet Union was a much greater threat than the reemergence of Germany. NATO is still important to this day because of the combination of forces between Europe and North America.

Panslavism

(Key Concept 3.5 A variety of motives and methods led to the intensification of European global control and increased tensions among the Great Powers.)

Panslavism was the ideology that all the Slavic nations, especially those within the Balkans should be united into one nation. During this period the Balkans were a particularly volatile area in Europe, the Austria-Hungarian Empire was collapsing as was the Ottoman Empire and many of the regions that would become future Balkan states were gaining their independence. The importance of Panslavism comes from the ultra-nationalism that it bred among Balkan nations. Nationalism flourished in the Balkans because of Panslavism and gave rise to groups like the Black Hand who were willing to bring about Panslavism by any means necessary.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

Gavrilo Princip was a member of the Black Hand and assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand leading to World War I. This is all about the individual and his/her relationship to society and the government. Remember, this was a time when empires had flourished, but were starting to decline. Ideas about nationalism and sovereignty were popping up and challenging the imperial system, leading to WWI.

Perestroika

(Key Concept 4.2 The stresses of economic collapse and total war engendered internal conflicts within European states and created conflicting conceptions of the relationships between the individual and the state, as demonstrated in the ideological battle between liberal democracy, communism, and fascism.)

Perestroika was a policy initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, often associated with the glasnost reform during the 1980's. Gorbachev's motive behind this was that he recognized that the Soviet Union's technology, as well as Communism was falling behind the capitalist economic systems of the West. Improving situations at home would then, lead to better relation with the West. It involved a restructuring of the Soviet Union's political and economic system from a communist society to a more democratic market-based economy. This policy is often attributed to the termination of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Warsaw Pact

(Key Concept 4.1 Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational unity.)

The Warsaw Pact was the Soviet response to the formation of NATO. It was an alliance between all the central and eastern bloc nations of the Soviet Union that was structured similarly to North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In the event that one of the nations of the Warsaw Pact was attacked by an aggressor all other treaty members were to mobilize their forces in their ally's defense.

35 Frequently Tested AP European History Terms & Concepts Cont.

The main difference between the Warsaw Pact and NATO however was that NATO was an alliance of sovereign nations who cooperated willingly. The eastern bloc nations were mostly coerced by the Soviet Union into the treaty so that the Soviet Union could maintain control of all armed forces within its dominion. The Warsaw Pact virtually placed Russia at the head of the new Soviet Union that stretched all across eastern and central Europe and acted as the opposition to NATO during the Cold War.

Wilsonian Idealism

(Key Concept 4.1 Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational unity.)

Wait, wasn't Woodrow Wilson a US president? Yes, but his political thoughts had a hugely important influence on European affairs following WWI. Ultimately, "Wilsonian Idealism" refers to a certain ideological perspective on foreign policy, a perspective that Wilson argued for following the end of WWI. Ironically, it didn't take off in the US, but it totally exploded throughout the world, literally and metaphorically. Ultimately, proponents believe in the spread of democracy, capitalism, and the intervention of democratic states on the behalf of yet-to-e democracies in order to speed up the process of democratization. Many leaders like Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh used Wilson's ideas about democracy and intervention to argue for help in removing the French empire from the region and asserting Vietnamese sovereignty.

Based on this list you can see that European history was long, rich, and bloody. You could study volumes of literature on the subject and still only scratch the surface. Fortunately this list contains the key points and concepts you need to get that 5 on the AP European History Exam. Once you've studied and are able to explain every term on this list you will be unstoppable and not only will you have gained a better understanding of European History but there will be no doubt in your mind that you will ace the exam.

7 AP European History Multiple Choice Strategies



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Many students struggle with the AP European History multiple choice section, as it is not based on hard facts but on your ability to think like a historian. When you break it down, though, it becomes clear that there are a few AP European History multiple choice strategies that will make the whole test easier.

7 AP European History Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

1. Study up on Your Sources

The way the AP European History exam is set up, each group of questions will open with a stimulus. The best way to do well on the test is to be familiar with the stimuli.

Take, for example, the [AP European History sample multiple choice questions](#) provided by College Board. These questions open with, in order, a graph, a historical analysis, a poem, an image, a map, and a letter. There are likely to be the main types of stimuli you encounter on the test, though remember that anything could show up.

When studying, you should focus on primary and secondary sources. If your textbook offers excerpts or artwork, pay attention to them and to what your textbook has to say about them. Visit a library or do a Google search for different historical materials to study. If you're lucky, the sources you study will show up on the test. If not, though, you will still benefit from being familiar with the formats you will be tested on.

2. Go to an Art Museum

It is very likely that you will encounter fine art on the AP European History exam. Interpreting art, unfortunately, is not second nature to most of us, and the intricacies of a delicate painting are lost on us. An art museum is the perfect place to learn about how to analyze art and all of its subtleties.

If you've never been to an art museum, check if there are any in your area. It shouldn't cost too much money – in fact many museums are free – but if it does, it is a good investment. As you explore the museum, consider taking a tour, whether a self-guided audio tour or one assisted by a tour guide.

7 AP European History Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

The benefit of taking a tour is that the guide will explain the context and impact of the pieces at hand. You will learn about the artists who created them, but you will also learn about how to analyze artwork, which is your main goal. Don't be afraid to ask tour guides and curators about a piece you don't understand, as they may provide unique input.

You don't have to go to an art museum to pass the AP European History exam, but if you have the time and ability to do so, it will be a great experience that could change the way you view historical artwork. When you see the artwork on the multiple choice section – or the DBQ for that matter – it will look less like a picture and more like a road-map to the answer.

3. Focus on the Stimuli You Best Understand

More likely than not, you will be presented with a range of material on your exam. If you find yourself struggling with the first source, skip it and come back. Find the source you are most comfortable with and start with that.

If you are good at math, look for graphs and charts. If you are a great English student, the poems or prose may be your best bet. You may even be able to incorporate knowledge and skills learned from another class. For example, you will be much more equipped to analyze Brunelleschi's "Adoration of the Magi" if you've taken an advanced art class, or you may be able to better pick apart a population growth chart after a Statistics class.

Look through the examples linked in tip one and find the ones you best understand. Know before you take the AP European History exam what you are most comfortable with so that when the time comes you are prepared to find the easiest section.

7 AP European History Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

4. Hone in on Perspective

Just as with the DBQ, the AP European History multiple choice section requires you to be able to analyze a document's point of view. What influenced the author to write so negatively about the Peasant Rebellions, or what in the artist's experience could have caused them to cast the king in such darkness?

Understanding the perspective of a piece is crucial to passing the AP European History multiple choice section. If you struggle with this, try making a chart for every passage. Look at the date the passage was created, and list what religious, social, and political events happened near that time frame. List what you know about the author or artist, and what biases they could have. Even if you don't recognize the name, there should be a short bio that will give you the information you need.

When you have this chart written, reference it any time a question asks about the author's perspective. Look for similarities between your chart and the given answers. If you still don't know the answer, eliminate any answers that are obvious misinterpretations and guess from there.

5. Know Your Satire

One of the most important parts about reading through the documents for the AP European History multiple choice section is making sure that you don't misinterpret a satirical piece. If you take a passage that is meant as a joke to be literal, you will have no chance at getting the questions right.

It's easy to spot satire if you know what you're looking for. The best way to do this is to get to know different types of satire. We recommend reading *Candide*, *Don Quixote*, or *1984* for good historical satire, but if you want something more modern you can just turn on any mock news program or read articles from [The Onion](#).

7 AP European History Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

Remember, images can be satirical as well. This is especially true of political cartoons, which are very likely to pop up on the AP European History exam. Look for exaggerated or humorous features and think about what they mean. Why would the cartoonist give Louis XVI an enormous belly? Is it merely gluttony and obesity they are criticizing, or is it Louis's greed and self-centeredness that inspired the artist? Being able to pick apart political cartoons, and all types of satire, will impact your grade for the better and ensure you don't trip up due to misinterpretation.

6. Study Movements Before Events

When taking the AP European History multiple choice section, it is more important for you to understand broad social, political, intellectual, and religious movements than the events they are tied to.

It's all good and fine to know that Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg Chapel in 1517, but if you don't know what impact these theses had on Christianity then you won't be able to dissect the questions on the multiple choice section. Start with the broadest periods of change in European thought – the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, or the Industrial Revolution, for example – then study their causes and effects, as well as the core principles on which they were based.

Once you feel that you have a good understanding of these movements, you will need to be able to apply them to your sources. As you study a primary or secondary source, pay attention to what the social, political, intellectual, and religious climates were like when it was written. Think about how all of this may have impacted the events described as well as the author or artist describing them.

Knowing how to contextualize a source will be very useful to you when you are answering questions about how the stimuli fit into the broader picture of the time-frame, which can be difficult if you do not understand the movements that led to the piece being created.

7 AP European History Multiple Choice Strategies Cont.

7. Don't Over-analyze

We know that we've been drilling the concept of analysis into your head, but don't waste time analyzing more than you have to. Take, for example, the second passage of the [AP European History sample multiple choice packet](#). The passage deals with the French Revolution and Marxism, but it was written in 1984 by Lynn Hunt.

What is important to keep in mind is that the questions following the passage are all about how a Marxist would interpret the passage. You could outline in your mind how the political climate of 1984 might influence Hunt's ideas about how Marx thought about the French Revolution, and it might be correct and interesting, but it would be a total waste of time. As much as we encourage you to think deeply about the passages, make sure you know what you're supposed to be answering before you dig too deep.

Take Away!

At the end of the day, the best way to be successful on the AP European History exam is to study sources, learn to analyze, and be a smart, alert test taker. The more you work on these AP European History multiple choice strategies, the easier it will be. Is there any tip you would like to see on this list? Tell us in the comments, and while you're there let us know which of these strategies worked for you!



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3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs



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Every AP European History student struggles with the DBQ section of the exam. This is a simple reality of the AP coursework. Despite this, the DBQ section of the exam is not impossible to conquer. If you are feeling a little anxious about your DBQ skills, don't worry. There have been scores of students that came before you, and many of them have succeeded in acing their exams. That's why we've created this AP Euro review—to let you in on the best 3 Ways to Tackle the AP European History DBQ.

These three methods to approaching the most daunting section of the AP Euro exam have been used by AP students throughout the years and they are the most successful techniques around.

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

What is the AP Euro DBQ?

The DBQ has been seen as the bane of the AP Euro student's existence. The more you work on it, however, the less mystical the whole DBQ section of the exam seems. So, make sure you allot serious study time out of your day just for the DBQ section of the exam.

Before we go straight into the 3 Ways to Tackle the AP Euro DBQ, we wanted to get the nuts and bolts out of the way.

Like we stated above, the DBQ, which stands for Document-Based Question, is arguably the most difficult part of the AP Europe Exam. You will have 55 minutes to answer a single question. Your answer is going to revolve around 6 to 7 primary-source documents that range between photographs, letters, legal cases, etc.

Unlike the multiple-choice section of the exam, however, the answer you provide is going to have to be in a concise essay format with a thesis that covers nearly every single document. The point of the DBQ is for you to show that you understand the complexities of the historical narrative being discussed. That means structure and argumentation matter nearly as much as the evidence you use.

The first thing you'll need to do is look through the [CollegeBoard Website](#) and the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#) for information on how the DBQ is structured and the expectations that the CollegeBoard has for students taking the AP Euro exam.

Once you've gotten a good feel for how this part of the exam works, read over the [CollegeBoard's DBQ rubric](#).

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

You'll notice that the DBQ is broken down into these four sections:

Thesis and Argument Development

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.*

1 Point. *Develops and supports a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.*

Document Analysis

1 Point. *Utilizes the content of at least six of the documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.*

1 Point. *Explains the significance of the author's point of view, author's purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least four of the documents.*

Using Evidence Beyond the Documents

1 Point. *(Contextualization)*

Situates the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the questions.

1 Point. *(Evidence beyond the Documents)*

Provides an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument.

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

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).
- C) A different discipline or field of inquiry (such as economics, government and politics, art history, or anthropology).

No matter how you decide to tackle the DBQ section of the exam, you will need to make sure that you nail each of these requirements in order to ace this section of the exam.

Each of our 3 Ways to Tackle the AP European History DBQ takes these requirements into consideration, providing you with the best routes to achieving that perfect score. Try all of these ways to approach the DBQ out when you study, but use whichever method that works best for you when it comes to exam time. They are all tried and true techniques and each will definitely work with whatever learning style you prefer.

3 Ways to Tackle the AP European History DBQ

1. The Standard 5

At this point in your intellectual endeavors, you've probably come across the standard five-paragraph essay. This is the true blue method of essay writing that primary school teachers typically use when first introducing students to essay writing. However, there's some magic in its simplicity.

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

Five Paragraph essays are easy to follow, they tend to flow logically while staying on point, and they are the perfect tool for timed essays like the AP exam.

According to the five-paragraph format, essays should be broken down according to this structure:

1. Introduction
2. Supporting Evidence 1
3. Supporting Evidence 2
4. Supporting Evidence 3
5. Conclusion

First, the introductory paragraph. This paragraph does so much more than introduce the topic. This is where the crux of your argument lies, i.e. your thesis. Your thesis is what holds the entire essay together. But it is also where you show off your understanding of historical complexity and knowledge of the topic. Think of the thesis as the glue that holds your entire essay together; without it, your ideas begin to unravel.

The middle three paragraphs contain all of the supporting information that backs up the claims you make in your thesis. In other words, this is where you discuss the documents. The difficulty of the five-paragraph format can be found in these paragraphs. Since the DBQ section of the AP exam typically asks you to analyze 6 to 7 primary-source documents, you are going to have to lump them into three categories. Lucky for you, history is commonly broken into categories.

For these overarching categories, you need to think along the lines of the course themes that you read about in the [***AP European History Course and Exam Description***](#). For example, you could have a paragraph that discusses the role of economics (Theme 4), one that centers on a discussion of class (Theme 2), etc.

No matter what categories you choose, you need to make sure that each paragraph connects directly with your overarching thesis. The conclusion also acts as a perfect spot for you to reiterate the ways that your three themes in your body paragraphs fully support that argument that you've made in the thesis.

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

2. The Grouping Plan

Another tried and true method of AP European DBQ success centers on grouping the documents together before you write out the essay.

Unlike the process that takes place during the five-paragraph essay outlining, the grouping plan places the center of attention on the documents. Once you've figured out how to put the documents into a relationship with one another, you create a thesis around those groupings.

Let's take a look at the DBQ prompt from the [2016 AP Euro Exam](#):

“Evaluate whether the policies of Otto von Bismarck’s government represented traditional conservatism or a new kind of conservatism in nineteenth-century Europe.”

As with any AP DBQ, once you've read over the requirements you'll want to read through the documents. When reading the documents, take notes on their qualities.

You'll notice, for example, that Document 7 represents a criticism of von Bismarck for being too leftist (i.e., socialist) in his policies. Similarly, Document 2 was written by a socialist who thought that von Bismarck was too conservative. Document 5 also shows how von Bismarck's negotiated the demands of socialists with those of conservatives by emphasizing the ways that working-class benefits were used to help get anti-socialist laws passed in the legislature.

With these perspectives in mind, these three documents could be grouped together as representations of the ways that von Bismarck used his ideas about *Realpolitik* to create a new form of conservatism: one that combined socialist policies but remained politically conservative.

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

Some documents overlap in theme as well. Document 5, for example, represents both socialism and legal reform in von Bismarck's political career. Because of this, Document 5 can be used alongside Documents 1 and 6 under the subject of legal reform and freedoms.

Once you've grouped your documents together according to their similarities and/or differences, a thesis can be constructed.

According to the CollegeBoard, an appropriate thesis for this DBQ would be,

“Essentially, von Bismarck’s government policies represented a new kind of conservatism in nineteenth-century Europe in which he valued traditional ways but also pushed for open-minded, idealistic reforms that were aligned with socialism and helped the nation as a whole.”

A thesis such as this can be constructed perfectly through the grouping plan that we have just covered. Once the thesis has been hammered out, you can commence writing the rest of the essay with your argument, paragraph groupings, etc. ready and well-thought out

3. The Time Traveler

The final example of the 3 Ways to Tackle the AP Europe History DBQ is the most straightforward one: go in chronological order. Some DBQs will ask you to think about a time period that extends over a century, perhaps even longer. This DBQ from the 2012 AP Euro Exam represents this type of question perfectly:

“Analyze various arguments that emerged over the course of the nineteenth century about how to improve the lives of European workers.”

Note: This DBQ was written before changes in the AP European History course became effective for the 2016 exam. When you are using previous exam questions in your studies, make sure that you are all caught up on the rules and expectations for this year's exam by reading the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#).

3 Ways to Tackle AP European History DBQs

If you're lucky, the documents will even follow in chronological order just like the 2012 DBQ. The way to best approach this method would be to think about how each document represents change over time.

The 2012 DBQ documents begin with the words of an English economist, who argued that social class has no relationship with government. By Document 6, however, we see the words of Karl Marx who argued that politics, economics, and historical change were all interrelated. By the last document, we see evidence that socialism became a viable political party in France by the end of the 19th century.

Your job as the essay writer would be to use the evidence provided in these document to explain how and why these shifts occurred over time.

No matter your thesis, there is a clear historical narrative here about the changing views of economics, politics, history, and social change over a period of about 100 years. This type of chronological historical narrative may not be the perfect fit for every type of DBQ asked, but if you come across one that's similar to the 2012 exam you can't go wrong with this essay style.

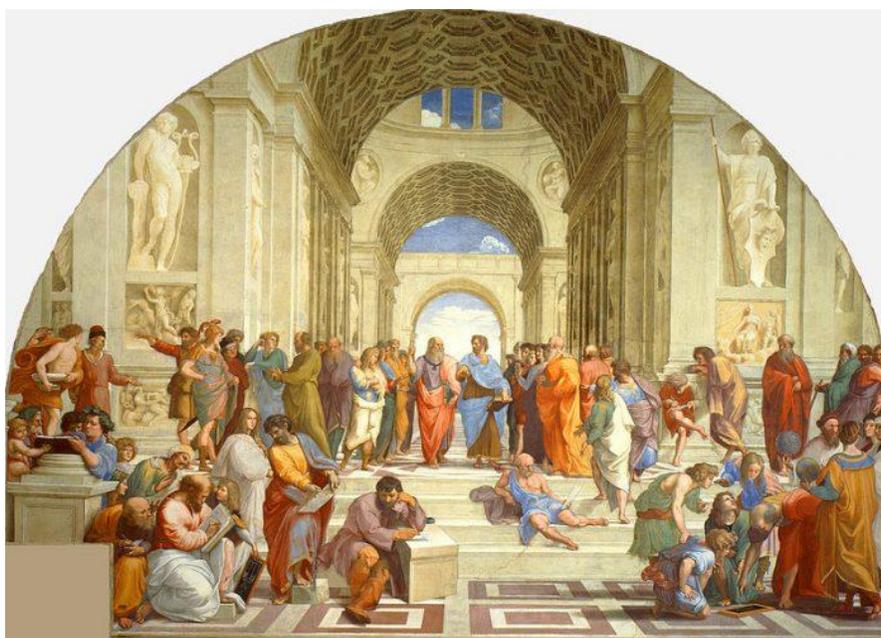
Don't Limit Yourself!

Our final piece of advice would be to not limit yourself in your AP Euro studies. You're going to want to practice all three of these essay-writing methods and become proficient in each one. That way, you've got an arsenal of essay-writing styles to use to your advantage when it comes to test day.

We have covered 3 Ways to Tackle the AP European History DBQ in this AP Euro review. Each are tried and true approaches to the AP Euro DBQs.

Which ways to tackle the AP Euro DBQ have worked best for you?

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

You're starting to study for your AP European History exam and you come across your first document-based question (DBQ). You freak out. Don't worry, that reaction is completely natural. After all, AP Euro is aimed at students interested in earning a first-year college credit for History. It should come as no surprise that a college level class has a difficult writing component. However in order to excel in AP Euro, you're going to need to confront the DBQ head on.

The DBQ can be very intimidating at first. However, once you understand what the objective of the DBQ is, it gets easier. That's why this AP European History review is going to give you the most beneficial 9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

What is the AP Euro DBQ?

Just in case you are fairly early in your AP Euro review sessions, we wanted to start by going over exactly what the DBQ is. And if you haven't heard of it yet, trust us, you will. The DBQ has been seen as the bane of the AP Euro student's existence. But it's really not all that bad when you break it down. You will have 55 minutes to answer a single question. Your answer is going to revolve around 10 to 12 primary-source documents that range between photographs, letters, legal cases, etc.

But the answer you provide is going to have to be in a concise essay format with a thesis that covers nearly every single document and shows that you understand the complexities of the historical narrative provided. That means structure and argumentation matter nearly as much as the evidence you use.

If this sounds like a lot, don't worry. This AP Euro History review should demystify the whole DBQ thing. Just follow these 9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ and you'll be golden.

1. Familiarize Yourself with how the AP European History Course Works

This one may seem like a bit of a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised how helpful it can be to get to know the AP Euro History course and exam.

First, you are going to want to thoroughly go through the [CollegeBoard Website](#) and the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#). These two resources are going to be jam-packed with useful information. By looking through these resources, you are going to get a feel for how the *CollegeBoard* wants teachers to approach the class.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

This includes the eras/topics that are going to be focused on the most in the classroom and the significance of everything covered. But perhaps most importantly, it will lay out how every piece of information covered in the AP Euro course relates to the exam itself.

When going through these sources, there are two things that you want to pay attention to, in particular. First, read through the AP European History course Themes and Learning Objectives. These are the central nerve of what you will be tested on in the DBQ section, so familiarize yourself with them. Second, you will want to become best friends with the practice questions they provide, so make sure you have easy access to all of those. More on that later.

2. Get to Know the CollegeBoard's Expectations for the DBQ

After you've read through all of the *CollegeBoard* materials, you should already be getting a clearer image of the task laid out ahead of you. Next, you are going to want to delve a little bit deeper into the DBQ section itself and get to know how the examiners are going to score the section.

Here's how the scoring on the AP European History Exam DBQ breaks down:

BASIC CORE: 1 Point Each to a Total of 6 Points

1. Provides an appropriate, explicitly stated thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question. Thesis must not simply restate the question.
2. Discusses a majority of the documents individually and specifically
3. Demonstrates understanding of the basic meaning of a majority of the documents (may misinterpret no more than one).
4. Supports the thesis with appropriate interpretations of a majority of the documents.
5. Analyzes point of view or bias in at least three documents.
6. Analyzes documents by explicitly organizing them in at least three appropriate groups.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

EXPANDED CORE: 0-3 Points to a Total of 9 Points

- *Has a clear, analytical, and comprehensive thesis*
- *Uses all or almost all of the documents (10-11 documents)*
- *Uses the documents persuasively as evidence*
- *Shows understanding of nuances of the documents*
- *Analyzes the documents in additional ways (e.g. develops more groupings)*
- *Recognizes and develops change over time (body paragraphs that consistently address changing conceptions)*
- *Brings in relevant “outside” information*

Get to know these expectations and always keep them in mind when you are going through your AP Euro review sessions. This way, you are bound to hit every single point here when it comes to the DBQ section of your exam.

It’s always a good policy to get to know what your examiners are thinking when they test you on a subject. So, make sure you read through these to get into the heads of those at the *CollegeBoard*. And this is true of any exam, not just the AP European History DBQ section.

3. Practice, Practice, Practice

You are probably tired of hearing this at this point in your AP Euro studies, but *practice, practice, practice*. The more you work on example DBQs, the less daunting they will become. The main reason that students fear this section of the exam so much is that they simply haven’t gotten used to it. But practice makes perfect, as they say.

This is also where perusing the [CollegeBoard Website](#) and the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#) will come in handy once more. Like we mentioned above, both the course website and the coinciding description have a number of practice DBQs for you to get your hands dirty with. Plus, many of these practice exams are actually from previous exams, so you know you’re getting the real deal by working with these.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

You are going to want to make sure you set out some of your time every week in order to get your practice sessions in. Try not to slack on this since the more you practice, the more it will become second nature.

4. Become the Master of Time

One of the main reasons practicing your DBQs will help you score that 5 on the exam is that you will learn how to master the clock. Remember, you only have 55 minutes to complete this section of the AP Euro exam. It may seem like a lot of time now, but as you dive into the practice questions, you will soon realize that it's not very much time at all.

The more you practice, the more you will get to know yourself as a test-taker as well. Do you need an extra five minutes to read through the documents thoroughly? Are you the type of essay writer who can blow through the introductory paragraph in a matter of seconds? It doesn't matter what your strengths and weaknesses are. Everyone tests differently.

But the more you work on these practice questions, the more you are going to understand where you will be needing to allot your time and energy. So, as you work on your DBQs, increasingly rely on a stopwatch. This will reproduce a more authentic test-taking experience. When doing this, break down your 55 minutes.

Here's one way to approach the DBQ:

- 10 minutes to read the question and documents
- 5 minutes to outline
- 35 minutes to write the essay
- 5 minutes to review and edit

This isn't a set-in-stone schedule, so tweak it to where it suits you best.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

5. Outline Your Thoughts

You may have noticed in our little DBQ 55 minute schedule, we allotted some time for outlining. Yes, you should outline before writing your essays. This essay-writing technique actually serves a number of purposes and will prevent quite a few headaches when it comes to your AP Euro exam day.

First, and probably most obviously, it's going to help organize your thoughts. You need to juggle the thesis, 10 or more documents, structure, topic sentences, etc. So, do yourself a favor and figure out how all of those things unify with one another in a quick outline before you do your actual writing.

Second, outlines help with fluidity. Nothing irritates a history teacher more than reading an essay that rambles and makes little sense. Spending five minutes or so early on in your DBQ time will help to ensure that all of your thoughts connect to one another and the writing itself is clear and solid.

Finally, an outline will help you group your documents together, but more on that below.

6. Group the Documents Together

After you've read through the question and the documents and you've started working on your outline, the time will come when you need to begin grouping the documents together. Remember that the people at the CollegeBoard chose these documents intentionally; that means they are related to one another somehow. It's just up to you to put those relationships together and make an argumentative case for it.

The best way to approach document-grouping is to think back on the Course Themes and Learning Objectives from the [AP European History Course and Exam Description](#). These are excellent ways to consider when you're at the grouping stage of the outline.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

Let's take a quick look at the DBQ from the year [2015](#):

Analyze changing conceptions of French national identity and culture in the period since 1960.

Many of the documents related to the question actually support state-sanctioned (Theme 4) actions to 'preserve' French culture. So, you could group documents according to those that do or do not support such actions. There are also documents relating to individual subjectivity (Theme 5). And so on.

A couple things to keep in mind while you are doing this grouping: First, make sure that you are using either all or most of the documents. Show your reader that you understand the history well enough to connect all ideas represented. And second, always think about the writer's perspective by putting the document into historical context. Doing these things will get you that much close to scoring a 9 on the DBQ.

7. Appreciate Historical Context

Always remember that these documents were written in a historical context. Plus, historians love it when you show how the documents provided operated in relation to what else was going on at the time. When reading through the previous years' [Scoring Guidelines](#) on the CollegeBoard website, you'll notice that nearly every example of a good thesis indicates a historical trend, but puts those trends into a bigger picture that extends beyond the documents themselves.

Back to the [2015](#) exam. You'll notice that the examples of the stronger theses consider global events/factors like the Cold War, globalization, increased immigration patterns following WWII, etc. That's because those who wrote the essay understood that through a complex history of globalization and modernity, a new French identity was being formed.

9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

In other words, they put the document into context. Nothing in the question specifically reference the Cold War or globalization. But the authors of these essays knew to put what they were reading in relation to the bigger picture. And it's what you should be doing when you are reading through your exam's DBQ.

8. Be Yourself

Be bold, be smart, and be proud of your intellectual vigor.

There's nothing worse than reading a boring cliché argument repeated over and over again. And the examiners at the CollegeBoard feel the same way. We guarantee it.

Show your readers that you have come to your own conclusions about the documents in question. The DBQ questions are intentionally created to be complex and open to interpretation. Remember that historians use primary-source documents to indicate trends and shifts in those trends as they occurred in the past.

Also show your own understanding of how things have changed over time throughout the history of Europe. It's up to you to identify those shifts.

9. Prepare Mind and Body

Our last piece of advice is to take care of yourself. With all that studying you've been doing, you may have forgotten to eat well or get enough sleep. Don't worry. It happens to all of us. But don't let those late study nights take over your good health.

This may actually be the most important of the 9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the European History DBQ. Human brains get sluggish when deprived of enough sleep and quality food. Do yourself a favor and maintain a lightning-fast thought process for the exam.



9 Steps to Scoring a 9 on the AP European History DBQ Cont.

Take care of your body and your mind will follow suit.

As long as you follow these tips, you're sure to rock the DBQ section of the AP Euro exam. Good luck!

What did you think of our review? Let us know how we did!

How to Study for AP European History



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

In 2016, thousands of students took the AP European History Exam. This number, however, represents only about 2.7 percent of all AP tests taken! Lots of schools don't teach European history anymore, so you are part of an elite group and need a targeted and tailored AP European study plan. This AP European study guide is sure to give you confidence as you approach exam day.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

What's on the AP European History Exam

The AP European History Exam covers the period of “approximately 1450 to the present” according to the College Board. The course description divides the material into four periods:

- 1450 to 1648
- 1648 to 1815
- 1815 to 1914
- 1914 to Present

Let's consider why some of these dates are used as dividers in the AP European History course.

Period One 1450-1648:

The class begins in what is known as the High Renaissance, about 1450. The end of the first period, 1648, is the year the Peace of Westphalia was signed. This treaty ended the Thirty Years War, but it also marks the end of European wars over religious differences between Protestants and Catholics. After 1648, conflict in Europe would be driven by politics and nationalism, not by competing religious ideas.

Period Two 1648-1815:

During this period, several strong European nations underwent massive internal changes, reform, and revolution. 1815 is an important year because it marks the end of Napoleon dominance over continental Europe.

Period Three 1815-1914:

This period saw the nations of Europe attempt to modernize regarding industry. As the established nations of Europe, England, France, and the Netherlands grew stronger economically and politically, they expanded their markets all over the world. Italy and Germany became modern nation-states during this period. The competition and rivalry led to a series of entangling alliances that resulted in WWI in 1914.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

Period Four 1914-Present:

The final period of study begins with the first World War, moves into the second World War and the rise of totalitarian governments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and concludes with the rise of international bodies such as the European Union.

All four periods are covered equally by the exam. It's important that you don't avoid the period that you know the least about! Honestly assess your knowledge of each period and concentrate your earliest AP European History study plan on that period. This strategy will pay off in two ways. It will help you to feel more confident on exam day, but it will also be necessary for you to relate one period of history to another when the exam calls for synthesis or identifying continuity and change over time.

AP European History Exam Format

In 2016, The College Board used a new format of the AP European History exam for the first time. If you have taken the new version of the AP US History exam (first administered in 2015), good news! The AP European History exam format is the same as the AP US History Exam. The exam has four sections:

Section 1: Stimulus-based multiple choice

In this section of the exam, you will between two and five questions are presented after reading and analyzing a short reading, map, graph, etc. The stimulus for a multiple-choice question might be from a primary source, like an excerpt from a King's proclamation, a secondary source, where you are reading a historian's take on a particular period or issue, or it may be a chart comparing production levels before or after the Industrial Revolution in multiple countries. On the multiple-choice section of the test, you will need to have the ability not only to analyze the stimulus but to use the knowledge you have gained in your AP European history review to put the stimulus in context and answer the question correctly. This section of the exam is weighted most heavily, at 40% of the total AP European History exam grade. See more on the Multiple-Choice Section in AP European History Tips below.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

Section 2: Short-Answer Questions

In the Short Answer Essay section of the test, you will need to answer four questions on topics in AP European History. These questions are also stimulus based and designed for you to show your ability to think about both sides of an issue or proposition. When you answer a short-answer essay question, you do not need to develop a thesis. Instead, your concentration on the SAEs should be answering each part of the three-part question. This section of the exam is pretty weighty, accounting for 20% of the total exam grade. The short answer is scored by giving one point for each successful answer, for a maximum of 12 points in this section. We'll talk more about how to earn all 12 points in this section in AP European History Tips below.

Section 3: Document Based Question

The document-based question also appeared on the previous version of the AP European History exam, but the format has changed. For the DBQ, there are seven documents (which may include primary or secondary sources as well as graphs, maps, charts, political cartoons, etc.). You will use these documents as historical evidence to support a well-developed thesis in answer to the question prompt. The document-based question will always ask you to think about the topic regarding either comparison, causation, change or continuity over time, or periodization (showing that you know why specific events or ideas belong to one era of history rather than another). When you get to the AP European History Tips section below, be sure you carefully read how to construct an answer to the DBQ as it usually proves to be one of the most difficult parts of the exam for the students to master. Since the DBQ counts for 25% of the total exam grade, you'll want to keep reading!

Section 4: Long Essay

The long essay is probably the most straight-forward section of the AP European History exam. Here, there is a choice between two different topics (as opposed to the short answer essays, where you must answer all four questions). Again, as with the DBQ, you must develop comprehensive thesis when answering the long essay question.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

What type of questions might appear in the long essay section? The College Board states “questions will be limited to topics or examples specifically mentioned in the concept outline, but framed to allow student answers to include in-depth examples of large-scale phenomena, drawn either from the concept outline or additional topics discussed in the classroom.” Though the long essay portion of the exam counts for only 15% of the total exam grade, you shouldn’t discount it! This 15% is only one question, so you need to be sure you know what you are doing. We’ll discuss some specific ways to succeed on the long essay in the AP European History Tips later in this AP European History study guide.

The Concept Outline in AP European History

The [concept outline in AP European History](#) is what your teacher should be following in considering the objectives for your AP European History course. All AP European History teachers are required to submit a syllabus to the College Board that shows how their instruction will meet the requirements for presenting the objectives listed in the concept outline. These are also important because, as the AP European History Course Description explains, “the outline details key concepts that colleges and universities typically expect students to understand in order to qualify for college credit and/or placement”. Use the concept outline, then, to make sure you are familiar with the topics listed.

In the rewrite of the exam, the College Board decided to empower teachers to design the specific materials that would be taught in a course, as long as it meets the course objectives. For example, the course requires that you have a knowledge of the visual artists of the Renaissance, but your course may have emphasized the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, or Durer more than Bruneschelli, Donatello, or Jan van Eyck. As long as you can link the concept with specific and accurate examples, you will be prepared for the exam.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

Historical Thinking Skills

Both the AP US History and AP European History exams require you to demonstrate a specific number of historical thinking skills on the test. These thinking skills are not something that you will specifically designate a day or week for in your AP European History Study Plan. Instead, as you follow this AP European History study guide and review the questions from past exams as described below, you will be “forced” to employ and practice the nine historical thinking skill below:

1. Describe, select, and evaluate relevant evidence about the past from diverse sources — Analyzing historical documents and evidence
2. Develop coherent written arguments that have a thesis supported by relevant historical evidence. — Historical argumentation
3. Identify and evaluate diverse historical interpretations. — Interpretation
4. Analyze evidence about the past from diverse sources, such as written documents, maps, visual sources, and quantitative data. — Appropriate use of historical evidence
5. Examine relationships between causes and effects of events or processes. — Historical causation
6. Identify and analyze patterns of continuity and change over time and connect them to larger historical processes or themes. — Patterns of continuity and change over time
7. Explain and analyze different models of historical periodization. — Periodization Compare historical developments across or within societies in various chronological and geographical contexts. — Comparison
8. Evaluate ways in which historical circumstances of time and place connect to broader regional, national, or global processes. — Contextualization

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

9. Recognize and explain disparate, sometimes contradictory evidence from primary sources and/or secondary works about the past. — Synthesis

To be clear: You will not be asked to define or list the historical thinking skills, or even to use these specific terms as part of your exam answers, but rather display your ability to use these skills in building arguments to support your thesis and in analyzing stimuli that appear on the exam. The AP Course description gives a very extensive explanation and a list of examples of how to do this. An explanation that is briefer, and likely more easy to digest, however, can be found [here](#).

An AP European History Study Plan: Gathering Your Resources

As you prepare for your AP European History Review, you will benefit from gathering resources that are specifically targeted to help you succeed. Some students attempt to re-read the entire text for the course, along with reviewing their class notes. While this can work, it is likely not the most efficient use of your time, energy, and efforts —especially as the exam draws near! Instead, consider the following resources as potential help:

- [The AP European History Course Description](#). At 227 pages, it is a long read, but if you are looking for specific information, you can use the pdf's "find" feature to search for a specific term or topic. One of the best things about the course descriptions provided by the College Board is that it includes examples and test-taking tips for each type of question you will encounter on the exam. You'll be able to see a sample multiple-choice question, an example of DBQ documents, instructions, and a prompt, as well as sample short and long answer essay questions. This is also where you will find the concept outline that we discussed above.
- [AP European History Sample Questions](#). This is possibly the most helpful source you can consult in your AP European History review. The College Board houses *18 years* worth of study questions on this page! It is important to note here that the AP European History exam format has changed. This means that when you use the questions located on this page, you should consider the content being tested and the skills you are being asked to use rather than seeing these questions as simulating the conditions of the actual test.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

For example, if you use the DBQs housed here, you will notice that in the previous format of the test, students were asked to consider 10,11, or 12 documents per DBQ, whereas today's exam requires only 7. In the end, these sample questions can be an invaluable help in review and in learning to develop a comprehensive thesis.

Please note that when using this resource, past rubrics are outdated and you should keep in mind that your answers will be scored using [these rubrics](#) instead.

- AP European History Review Books. An old-fashioned book can be a very helpful review tool. It will generally provide information about the test itself, AP European History Tips to help you prepare, a European history study plan to help you best use your time, and sample tests and answers. [Albert Blog's review of several AP European History Review Books](#) should be helpful in selecting a book that will work for you. Most books offer multiple practice tests, but see if you are able to find one that offers an *explanation* of multiple choice answers, not only why an answer is the right answer, but *one that explains why wrong answers are incorrect*. You'll be surprised at how helpful this is in cementing not only the concept that the question covers, but in helping you straighten out your thinking can recall when you make an error.
- Topical reviews. If you missed a specific section of your AP European History class, it's important to make that part of your AP European History study plan. Whether you physically missed class time, mentally checked out for a day or two, or are just having trouble recalling the details about a particular topic, AP review books, videos, and review websites can offer a quick way to review the need-to-know details about particular period or event. [Albert Blog offers review posts](#) on its European History blog on everything from the Commercial Revolution to Otto Von Bismarck, so search the site if you are looking to review a particular topic.
- Videos for AP European History Content . There are several sources for European History videos. Tom Richey, an AP History teacher from South Carolina, has put together [a large collection](#) of topical AP European history review videos, usually between 4 and 20 minutes long. Another website, [onlinecollege.org](#), offers links to [history videos, organized by topic](#).

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

If you need to review a specific type of art, music, or general history topic, this is a good place to search. With over 6,000 videos on YouTube, the [Khan Academy](#) offers reviews on European history topics as well.

Managing Your Time on the AP European History Exam

You won't have unlimited time on the AP European History test, but with practice, you can learn to manage it well. First, let's breakdown the time allotments for each section:

Multiple Choice:

- 55 questions
- 55 minutes

Short Answer Essay:

- 4 questions
- 50 minutes

Document-based Question:

- 1 question
- 55 minutes

Long Essay:

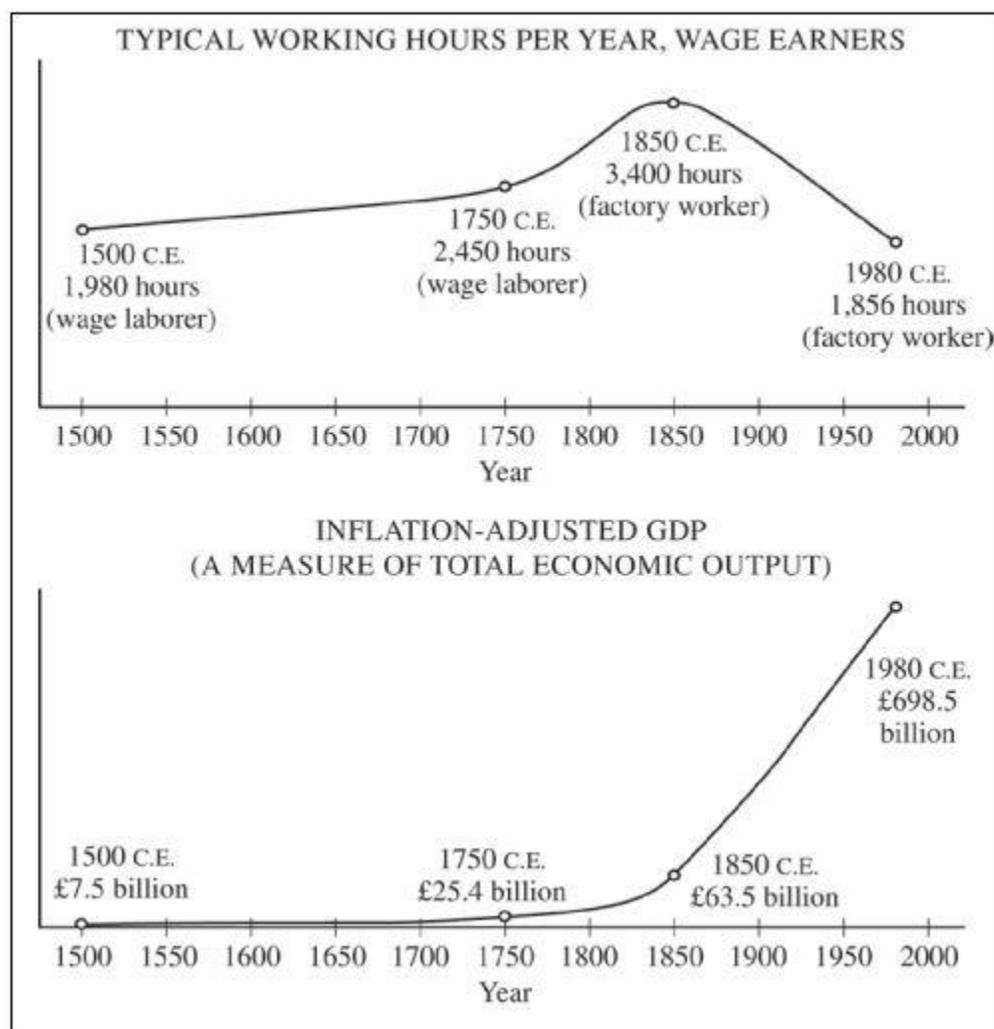
- 1 question
- 35 minutes

Part I of the test includes the multiple choice and short answer questions. You will be stopped after the multiple choice time is up, and again after the short answer essays. Part II is an uninterrupted 90 minute period. You will not be stopped during this time and told to move on to the next essay, so it is important that you pay attention to the clock and leave enough time to select and answer the long essay.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

Another tip for time management involves how to approach multiple choice and short answer questions that include a graph or chart. These types of questions can be huge time-wasters if not approached properly. While you will want to spend some time contemplating your response before you look at the answer selections on regular multiple-choice questions, you can end up using a lot of time in unnecessary analysis if you don't scan the potential answers first. The above can sound unclear, so let's use an example from the course description to illustrate this time management tip.

A series of multiple choice questions follow this stimulus:



How to Study for AP European History Cont.

You could spend 5 to 10 minutes working with the available information in the line graphs above. Rather than try to digest all that the graph can tell you, do to things. First, quickly read the titles and dates of the graphs. By doing so, you will gather that they report first the typical number of hours worked by wage earners between 1500 and 2000, and secondly, the GDP numbers for the same period, adjusted for inflation. Resist the temptation to analyze more right now! Instead, go immediately to the question and answer choices.

A student following this advice on the exam would find out that what he or she needed to know from the graph was — not much. Truthfully, students just needed to use the graph between particular years and see whether the trends were up or down, then offer an explanation as to why based on their knowledge of the period, not on extensive analysis of the graph. Though this will not always be true, spending significant minutes on analyzing this graph in detail would have been a waste of time. It is better to find out (after you have oriented yourself to what the graph is) what the question is asking and then go back and do the analysis to the extent necessary for these types of questions.

This advice also holds true for political cartoons, which intimidate many students. First, ask yourself what the cartoon appears to be advocating, mocking, etc. Then move to the question to see what it is the exam is asking of you.

Answering Exam Questions: AP European History Tips

Anyone who has been watching students take the AP European History exam for years can tell you certain pitfalls that students should avoid, that is, tips to know when taking the exam. Let's look at the following insider tips that can help you score high.

Multiple Choice Question Tips

Use wrong answers to your advantage.

As you prepare for the exam, you will likely get the opportunity to answer many multiple choice questions about AP European History.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

When you take a quiz in class, in a practice book, or on a review website, the tendency is to get frustrated with your wrong answers. Trust me, wrong answers are the ones you can learn most from if you take the right approach. While other AP students crumple up the low quiz, you should take yours home and look at your incorrect answers. For each incorrect answer you put down, search your text or another resource for the right answer. Before you move on, though, you should do one more thing.

Successful students take the time to find out what flaw in their thinking led to the incorrect answer. For each multiple choice answer that you get wrong, write two sentences. They should look like this:

The correct answer to the question is _____. This is because ...

My answer was _____. This answer is incorrect because...

Yes, sometimes the reason for your incorrect answer is simply an error in recall or that you did not know the information. More often, though, you'll find that the error is in the way you reasoned through the question. For example, maybe you answered "B" because you failed to note that the question specifically asked about Protestant countries, southern Europe, or the 19th century rather than something more general. By forcing yourself to review your wrong answers, you will sharpen your test-taking skills as well as compiling additional knowledge for test day.

Improve your success rate on "except" questions.

Questions that feature the word "except" are the most consistently missed on the exam. You can get excited when you see a "right" answer in the list, feel pressured by time, and just want to move on to the next question. Instead, practice by circling the word "except" when it comes up in any multiple choice scenario. Then, when answering the question, say to yourself "I am looking for the answer that isn't...".

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

Here is an example:

18. The trend in typical working hours between 1850 and 1980 was an effect of all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) government social welfare programs
 - (B) the activities of trade unions and workers' parties
 - (C) home-front economic mobilization during wartime
 - (D) the rapid economic growth of the late twentieth century

For this question, mentally say the phrase "I'm looking for something that did NOT affect the trend in typical working hours between 1850 and 1980..." In this case a,b, and d all did have an effect, whereas C did not.

Don't make the mistake of thinking you can skip this simple tip! Build a habit of doing this on every "except" question that you encounter. Under time pressure, even the best test-takers tend to miss "except" questions.

Know what the question is asking!

Experienced AP teachers know that whether or not the student understands the question is the greatest predictor of success on the exam. Even if it sounds silly, you should rephrase every single question on the exam into terms that you understand before you attempt to answer the question. Amongst students who prepare, more students perform poorly on the exam from a lack of understanding what is being asked than from a lack of knowledge. Here's an example of what to do:

23. In the interwar period, educators in which of the following countries would most likely have had a view of geography education similar to that expressed in the passage?
- (A) Germany
 - (B) Great Britain
 - (C) France
 - (D) The Soviet Union

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

After reading the question, reword it as follows:

“So, I am looking for the country’s whose teachers ideas concerning geography education look similar to those in the stimulus passage...which country’s teachers would have thought like this?”

At first, it can take some time (time that you won’t have on the actual AP exam) but as you practice this skill, you will become a better and faster interpreter of questions, or as some people like to call it, “a good test taker”!

Short-Answer Essay Tips

Remember, No thesis here! You need to be sure to earn each point on each question. The best way to do this is to limit yourself to a brief answer and go back and write more on the section if time allows. Many students are excited to have a response and go into far greater detail than the question requires, but will run out of time on this section. The whole point of the short answer section is to see if you can supply points on multiple sides of an issue, so don’t get bogged down. 50 minutes for four questions means 12.5 minutes per question and only 4 minutes for each point to be made!

Long Essay Answer Tips

The long essay answer is the place for your outside knowledge to shine! Since you get to choose your question, pick the one you know most about, develop a thesis and get writing! The long essay allows for the most freedom in constructing an answer, but carries the most responsibility for sticking to the topic and time period and supporting your well-developed thesis. A lot of students want to know just “how long” should the long essay be? The answer to this question is not a word count or a number of pages, but “However long it needs to be to show the AP grader that you can adequately support a well-developed thesis that answers the question being asked”.

How to Study for AP European History Cont.

Now that you've combed through this AP European History study guide, let's put everything into practice. Try this AP European History Exam practice question. After that, check out [Albert.io's AP European History Section](#) for additional practice problems.

"Anno Domini 1618, a great comet appeared in November. To see the thing was terrible and strange, and it moved me and changed my disposition so that I started to write, because I thought that it meant something big would occur, as then really did happen. . . . Anno Domini 1619, Ferdinand became the Holy Roman Emperor, under whom a great persecution happened through war, unrest, and the spilling of the blood of Christians. . . . First, he started a big war in Bohemia, which he then oppressed and subjugated under his religion, then almost the whole of Germany was conquered, all of which I can hardly describe and explain."

*Hans Herberle, shoemaker in Ulm, southern Germany,
personal chronicle compiled in the 1630s*

The conflict that Herberle describes in his chronicle resulted in which of the following?

- (A) The establishment of several religiously pluralistic and tolerant states within the German-speaking regions
- (B) The weakening of the Holy Roman Empire and the strengthening of smaller sovereign states within its boundaries
- (C) The virtual extinction of all Christian denominations except Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism within the German-speaking regions
- (D) The political unification of most of the German-speaking regions under a Protestant, rather than a Catholic monarch

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015

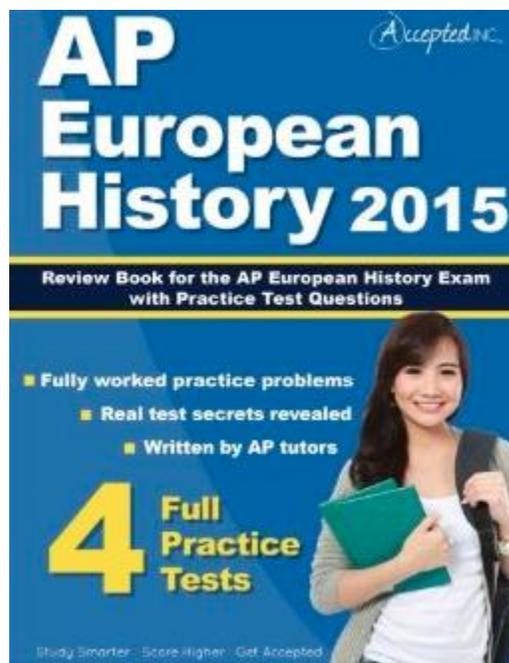


As much as you may have already prepared for the AP European History exam, chances are you are looking for an extra competitive edge to help you ace it. Your textbooks, class notes, online study guides, and flashcards are all going to help you prepare for your AP exam. However, an AP review book will be one of the most helpful things you can use to prepare. They are often more comprehensive, and are specifically geared towards helping you ace the test.

Deciding that you should get an AP European History review book is a no brainer. The tricky part is trying to find the right one. There's a large market for these types of books, and it can be pretty overwhelming trying to choose the right one. Lucky for you, we are here to help. We will break down six of the best AP European History review books of 2015 and tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly of each one (okay mostly just the good and the bad). Let's get started!

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

[AP European History 2015: Review Book for AP European History Exam with Practice Test Questions](#)



The Good:

This book provides a very comprehensive overview of the material covered on the AP European History exam. This book strives to successfully prepare students with varying amounts of knowledge about European history for the test. Essentially, a student could start from scratch with this book and learn enough to ace the test. This book is designed with the goal of getting you some college credit in mind, so you will learn the material in a way that is suited to the test. One of the biggest selling points for this book is the fact it includes 4 FULL practice exams. The other books included here only include 2 practice tests. Many people suggest improving test-taking confidence to be one of the keys to success on the AP test, so getting more experience is going to be incredibly helpful. The more you practice, the more you will understand what kind of questions they are likely to ask, and how to go about answering free response and document based questions.

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

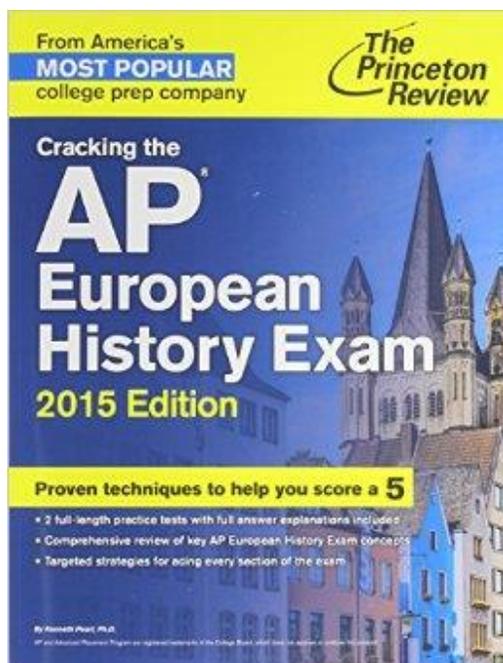
The Bad:

It should be noted that some customers found issue with the practice tests, citing that some of the questions were unrealistically easy or just poorly worded. One other customer noted some grammatical errors and mistakes, although these types of complaints were few and far between. Also, this book is much more geared towards the test, not the actual course, so it is not as comprehensive in its review of the materials as other books.

Overall Rating- 8/10

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

[Cracking the AP European History Exam, 2015 Edition \(Princeton Review\)](#)



The Good:

To begin with, this particular review book has a guaranteed amount of legitimacy to it considering that The Princeton Review created it. This ensures a certain quality standard important to your test preparations. To begin with, this book does an excellent job of covering all of the content material that is sure to show up on the exam. It also provides insights into some of the changes coming to the AP European History exam and how to prepare for them. You also can learn about general themes and broad ideas through the review questions at the end of each chapter. This review book contains comprehensive summaries of the content on the exam, going into just enough detail that students feel prepared but not overwhelmed. Aside from the thorough content review, this book primarily focuses on test-taking strategies, including a guide to proper pacing, and even offers some techniques for making better guesses.

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

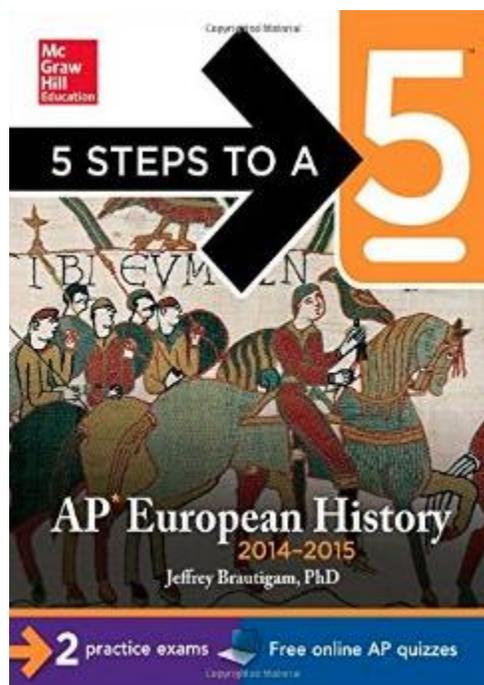
The Bad:

There honestly aren't any screaming red flags with this book. It does feature only 2 practice exams, which seems to be the standard, although it is less than the *AP European History 2015* review book. The only complaint some students have had about this review book is that the content review chapters can be a little bit dense. Given this, if you have already learned the material and are just looking for a summary, you may want to just use this book for its practice exams and tips.

Overall Rating- 9/10

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

[5 Steps to a 5, AP European History 2014-2015 Edition](#)



The Good:

This book is from yet another well respected test prep organization, as they have a large series of “5 Steps to a 5” AP test prep skills. The idea of a 5-step process may seem gimmicky. However, there is something comforting about the way it breaks the overwhelming idea of preparing for such a difficult exam into a few smaller parts.

This book’s emphasis is definitely more geared towards study and test taking strategies. It includes a breakdown of the course syllabus, as well as a summary of how the test is structured and graded. It even includes 3 different plans for studying, so that you can choose the one that fits you best. On top of these helpful features, the book also contains a review of course material so you can brush up on your general knowledge.

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

To practice all the 5 steps suggested by the text, 2 full practice tests are included. This will help you gauge your success and abilities and give you a better idea of how you need to be studying. One of the most useful things about this book is that it can be used throughout the course and is centered solely on getting you what you want: a 5 on the much-dreaded AP exam!

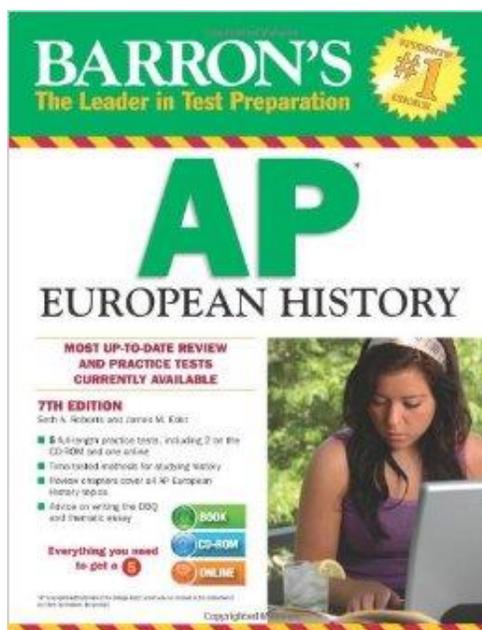
The Bad:

The only downside to this book is a direct result of the positives. Because it is focused more on study and test-taking strategies, it is somewhat light on actual course material. It is not the book you are looking for if you need a comprehensive rundown of European History. Instead, use this book as a supplemental guide for studying the knowledge that you learn from class or other books.

Overall Rating- 8/10

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

[Barron's AP European History, 7th Edition \(Barron's\)](#)



The Good:

Barron's is one of the most prominent names in AP test preparation, producing some of the best AP test books. This one is no different, and it does a fantastic job of providing overviews of historic themes as well as all the little details needed for success in the multiple choice section of the test. This is a great book to use when you need to go back and touch up on areas that you are having difficulties on, or perhaps, studied earlier in the school year.

The Barron's AP European History review book is an excellent choice for students who plan to self-study the exam, as it goes over the material on a similar level of detail to an actual European history course. This review book is perhaps closest to a regular AP European History textbook. However, it is more than just that. It also includes some multiple-choice questions and sample essay questions for you to practice with.

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

A nice touch is that these questions are included at the end of each chapter, so once you finish reviewing a certain period of history, you automatically have a chance to test yourself. To supplement your knowledge of the minute details of European History, this book also contains a chart that summarizes the history of Europe.

BONUS: Although the actual book only contains two practice exams, there is an additional practice test online, and two more included with a CD also available with your book. These practice tests even provide you with instant feedback.

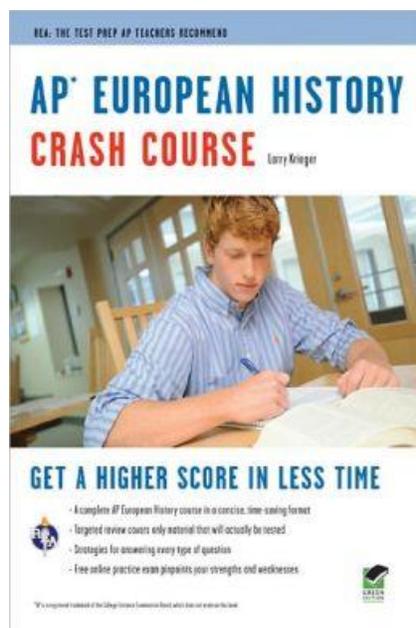
The Bad:

Similar to other listed books, the negatives stem from the positives. It provides a really thorough review of European History, which is helpful, but can also be a little overwhelming for studying. Students have sometimes complained about the chapters being too dense, providing more details than you actually need. The practice exams are also said to be harder than the actual exam, which can be discouraging to students. Lastly, the latest edition, the 7th edition, is geared towards the 2013-2014 year test. While not much content changes, some of the test layout and structure is different and this book does not cover that. If you decide to go with this one, make sure you read up on all of the changes to the AP test for the 2014-2015 school year.

Overall Rating- 8.5/10

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

[AP European History Crash Course \(REA\)](#)



The Good:

The *AP European History Crash Course* review book, made by REA, is one of the most popular choices of AP European History students for short-term exam preparation. We have found that the book is written in a very clear and concise manner, which allows students to better comprehend the material in the days and weeks before the exam.

Instead of writing review chapters in the standard paragraph form, this book contains outlines of the information that you will need to know for each historical period. Based on the exam questions from previous years, it is the shortest book on the list as it only includes the information that you actually must know. This book is excellent to use alongside an AP European History course, or after learning the material from a textbook.

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

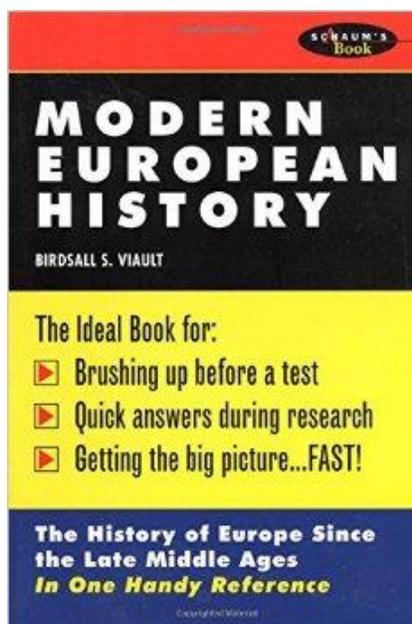
The Bad:

However, those who plan to study for the exam from scratch may want to buy another review book in addition to this one as it is not comprehensive and will not go into details on the topics covered by the exam. This book also does not contain practice exams, although it does allow students access to an online practice exam. Given this, you should make sure to download some from the AP European History exam [website](#), or purchase another review book that does, such as the Princeton Review or Barron's.

Overall Rating – 9/10

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

[Modern European History \(Viault\)](#)



The Good:

Modern European History is very similar to REA's *Crash Course* in the format of its review chapters, and should be used similarly. Students love it for its easy-to-read format, as well as for its generalized but comprehensive review of all of the topics on the exam.

This review book gives the second most comprehensive review of the content on the AP European History exam of all of the review books featured on this article, losing only to REA's *Crash Course*. Having said that, it also manages to keep its review concise, so that students do not have to sift through pages of information to find out what they truly need to know for the exam.

The Best AP European History Review Books of 2015 Cont.

The Bad:

Unfortunately, it does not contain any practice exams, so it is best used in addition to past AP exams from the [CollegeBoard website](#). It is also older than most of the review books on this list, so if you are planning to use it, make sure to find another source of information for topics after 1990. Some students have also found that the review chapters are too general, and have to supplement with another review book. Students who plan to take an AP European History class and do short-term review (six weeks or less) for the exam should use *Modern European History* as a part of their study plans.

Overall Rating – 8/10

The Verdict:

No book is ultimately superior to the others. They each have a purpose that they are better suited for and they each fall short in certain areas. These are, however, some of the best AP Euro review books of 2015, and there is certainly one out there suited to fit your needs. If you are looking to start from scratch and build your knowledge of AP European history, then the *AP European History 2015* review book might be right for you. If you are only looking for some test taking and studying techniques, then you should probably go with the *5 Steps to a 5* review book. It is all about figuring out what you personally need to succeed, and picking the book that works for you. Happy studying!

Have a great review book that's not on our list? [Let us know!](#)

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips



Excelling on the AP European History exam can be a challenge. With only 8.6% of test takers scoring a 5 and another 16.9% scoring a 4 in 2014, AP European History represents one of the most difficult Advanced Placement exams to score high on. But fear not, hopefully after reading this list of comprehensive tips, you'll feel more confident and prepared to rock your AP European History test!

Now to the good stuff... here are 50+ AP European History tips.

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

AP European History DBQ & FRQ Essay Tips & Advice

- 1. Answer the question:** This seems like a no-brainer, yet thousands of AP European History test takers forget about this every year. When you address the question, make sure you answer all parts of the question; AP graders evaluate your essays based on a rubric and award a point if you answer all parts of the question.
- 2. Know the rubric like the back of your hand:** This goes in hand with the last tip. By the time the test rolls around, make sure you know that AP graders are looking for these key components: an answer to all parts of the question, a clear thesis, facts to support the thesis presented, use of all documents, and inclusion of point of view/evaluation of document bias. Here are the [2014 Scoring Guidelines](#).
- 3. Don't be afraid to namedrop/be specific:** When it comes to answering the FRQs, be a test taker who can identify and specify names of certain people who had measurable impact in European History. This means use primary examples! For example, if the question asks you how Louis XIV was able to centralize his government, you should specifically talk about intendants, the Fronde Wars, the Edict of Fontainebleau, etc. Write with *confidence* when citing specific events or people.
- 4. Group, group, group, and did we say group?:** When you read and analyze documents, make sure to group your documents into at least three groups in order to receive full credit. You should group based on the three respective key points you will be discussing in the body of your essay.
- 5. Practice grouping:** Just to hit the nail in the coffin, here are a few starting blocks for how to group documents. Think about how the document works in relation to politics, economics, imperialism, nationalism, humanitarianism, religion, society & culture, intellectual development & advancement. Pretty much every single document the CollegeBoard ever created can fit into one of these buckets.

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

6. Assess the author’s perspective: As you work your way through the documents and group them, keep a few clear questions in mind, “Why is the author writing this? What perspective is he or she coming from? What can I tell from his or her background?” Asking yourself these questions will help you ensure part of your thesis and essay integrates bias and analysis of bias.

7. Read the historical background: The little blurb at the beginning of the document isn’t there for no good reason. The historical background section of AP European History is like the freebie slot on a bingo card—it will reveal to you the time period of the document and allow you to gain a little perspective into the point of view of the source.

8. Connect between documents: The difference between scoring a perfect score on your essays and scoring an almost perfect score can often come down to your ability to relate documents with one another. As you outline your essay, you should think about at least two opportunities where you can connect one document to another. So how do you connect a document? Well one way would be writing something along the lines of, “The fact that **X** person believes that XYZ is the root of XYZ may be due to the fact that he is **Y**.” So in this example, I may pull **X** person from document 1, but use document 4 to support my **Y** of the reason why he thinks a certain way. When you connect documents, you demonstrate to the grader that you can clearly understand point of views and how different perspectives arise. It also is a way to demonstrate your analytical abilities.

9. Start practicing as early as possible: AP European History isn’t quite like AP World History where you can get away with just understanding key trends and patterns. Because the test is much more detailed-oriented, you need to start practicing at least a month and a half prior to your AP European History exam date. Go to AP Central’s [homepage for AP European History](#) and select a few essay questions to tackle for the weeks leading up to the exam. Try to tackle two to five a week. Find a proctor like a sibling, parent, or teacher and have them simulate the test for you under timed conditions.

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

10. Do not blow off the DBQ: In 130 minutes, 50% of your AP European History grade is determined. In case you didn't know the AP European History exam is a 50-50 split between multiple choice and free-response questions. Students often overlook the importance of the DBQ and FRQs. Don't be that student. Did you know if you got 0/80 multiple choice questions right but scored 9s on your FRQs and your DBQ, you would still get a 3 based on the 2009 exam curve? It's crazy, but it's true.

11. Print out your writing: Writing a coherent essay is a difficult task. In order to do this successfully on the AP European History test you want to make sure that you have spent a few minutes in the very beginning of the test to properly plan out an outline for your essay. You may have heard this advice hundreds of times from teachers but the reason why teachers give it is because it really does help. Ultimately, if you go into your essay without a plan your essay will read without a sense of flow and continuation. One of the things you are assessed on is your ability to create a cohesive argument.

12. Organizing with chronological order: One way that you can order some essays is by using chronological order. When you frame your argument around chronological order, you want to look for transition points and use those as an opportunity to start a new paragraph.

13. Compare and contrast: Sometimes on the AP European History test you'll be asked to compare and contrast. In this case a lot of students simply compare but they do not contrast. Make sure that you allocate at least one paragraph for each component.

14. Refine your thesis: Crafting the van Gogh of thesis statements can be difficult when under a time crunch. But don't worry the good thing is that if you create a general thesis statement to work off of, you can go back and refine your thesis statement at the very end.

[Start your AP European History Prep today](#)

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

AP European History Multiple Choice Review Tips

1. Read continuously: Here's the thing about AP European History—it's incredibly detailed-oriented. That means it's not quite like some other AP tests where you can just cram two nights before and get a 5. In order to really understand connections in European History, you need to keep up with your reading throughout the school year. This not only applies to help you in the multiple choice section, but also in the essay portion to understand what time period the prompts are coming from. Vault's Modern European History should be like your bible when it comes to reading about AP European History.

2. Identify and hone in on your greatest weaknesses: When you start practicing multiple choice for AP European History, you'll quickly realize that there are certain time periods and things you know like the back of your hand, and others that are just very hazy to you. After you have had a practice session with [AP European History multiple-choice questions](#), write down the areas where you struggled and review those sections of your class notes. Make flashcards and review 15-20 every night before you go to bed.

3. Supplement your learning with video lectures: While YouTube can be a distractor at times; it can also be great to learn things on the fly! Crash Course has some great videos [here](#) pertaining to AP European History. Use them to affirm what you know about certain time periods and to bolster what you already know; then, practice again.

4. Hank's History Hour: Going along the lines of alternative ways to learn AP European History, you can also learn a great deal from [Hank's History Hour](#), which is a podcast on different topics in history. This is a great way to actually go to sleep since you can listen to the podcast while you dose off. Did you know when you go to sleep you remember what you heard last the best when you wake up?

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

5. Answer every question: If you're crunched on time and still have several AP European History multiple-choice questions to answer, make a solid attempt at answering each and every one of them. With no guessing penalty, you literally have nothing to lose.

6. Create flashcards along the way: After you have gotten a multiple choice question wrong, create a flashcard with the key term and the definition of that term. Think about potential mnemonics or heuristics you can use to help yourself remember the term more easily. One way is to think about an outrageous image and to associate that image with the term related to AP European History.

7. Use the Process of Elimination: When it comes to tackling AP European History questions, the process of elimination can come in handy if you can eliminate just one answer choice or even two, your odds of getting the question right significantly improve. Remember there is no guessing penalty so you really have nothing to lose.

8. Don't overthink things: When it comes to answering easy questions, typically the shortest response is also the right response. Easy questions typically have easy answers. Try not to choose strangely worded answer responses for easy questions. Most importantly, don't overthink things.

9. All questions are the same weight: When it comes to the AP European History test, all multiple-choice questions are weighted equally. That means that you want to make sure that you take your time in the very beginning so that you don't get easy questions wrong.

10. Use common sense: Often times with multiple-choice questions, contextual cues are given that signal the time period that the question is testing you on. Look out for these sorts of clues. Understanding and recognizing when a clue is given is fundamental to helping you understand what concepts you're being tested on.

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

11. Take advantage of chronology: When it comes to answering the multiple-choice questions, the questions are actually grouped in sets of 4-7 questions each. Practice recognizing when you're at the start and end of a group. This will allow you to mentally think about the different time periods that are being tested while also staying alert throughout the duration of the test.

12. Understand the progression of question difficulty: The AP European History test is outlined so that the easiest questions are presented to you at the very beginning of the test. However, as you navigate through the test you'll realize that the questions get harder and harder. Use this to your advantage. Stay aware of how much time you're spending in different sections of the multiple-choice section. While you want to make sure that you allocate enough time at the very end for answer difficult questions, you really want to make sure that you knock the first 60 questions out of the ballpark.

13. Study themes appropriately: Generally speaking, the AP European History test dedicates 20 to 30% of the multiple-choice section 2 testing cultural or intellectual subject areas. The remaining 80% are split relatively evenly between economic and political factors, as well as overall social issues.

14. Use your writing utensil: As you work through the multiple-choice section of the AP European history test, physically circle and underline certain aspects of answer choices that you know for fact are wrong. Get in this habit so that when you go back to review your answer choices, you can quickly see why you thought that particular answer choice was wrong in the first place. This is a technique that you can use for more than just the AP European History test.

15. Circle EXCEPT: EXCEPT questions can often throw students off so make sure that you get in the habit of physically circling every time you see the word EXCEPT.

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16. Go with your gut: You know what I'm talking about...when you're at the end of your test and you go back to that one question that nagged you and you think that you need to change your answer. Don't. More often than not your gut was right. There's a reason why you chose that answer so go with your instinct.

17. Use checkmarks: If you feel confident about your answer to a particular multiple-choice question, make a small checkmark next to that question number. The reason why you want to do this is that when you go back to review your answer choices, you'll be able to quickly recognize which questions you need to spend more time taking a second look at. Also, making this checkmark gives you momentum moving forward throughout the multiple-choice section. If you feel good about an answer, that little bit of positive reinforcement will help keep you alert as you move through the multiple choice questions.

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Overall how to Study for AP European History Tips

1. Do not read your book for straight facts and figures: The way middle schools teach history set up high school students for failure when it comes to tackling challenging history courses. Rather than memorize facts from your book like you've done since middle school, create a framework and general understanding of the core themes from your reading. Believe it or not, knowing the type of bread that XYZ leader liked is not important. A lot of history books go excessively in depth in regards to the nitty gritty. Learn to selectively read the important bits of information and practice summarizing the key points of your reading by outlining 3-5 key takeaways in your notes on your readings. If you cannot connect the dots, then you will simply craft essays with random "name drops" and "date drops"; as a result, your AP score will reflect your inability to create a cohesive argument.

2. Try out the SQ3R method: This is a popular studying technique that can be applied for more than just AP European History. Francis Robinson originally created it in a 1946 book called *Effective Study*.

3. S (Survey): Preview what you are about to read. Look at the beginning of the chapter and look at the end. Look at the main headings of each subsection of the chapter. Read the discussion questions often found at the end of sections. Think about how this section relates to a larger part of history; think about how this may connect to something you've previously learned.

4. Q (Question): Think about questions to keep in mind as you prepare to read. One way to do this is by re-framing the headers of subsections and to pose them as questions. Ask questions such as, "Why is this important?", "What does this reveal to me about the overall time period?", etc.

5. Read (R): Now you can begin to read. After surveying and questioning, you can now read the chapter keeping the prep work you've done in mind. Doing S and Q beforehand helps keep you engaged and active. Make sure you use your pencil to guide yourself as you read. If you can write in your book, circle and underline key things. Active reading helps the content stick with you.

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6. Recall (R): At the end of each major section, take a minute or two to recall the key things that you just read about. Review the bolded key terms, and answer the main questions you posed to yourself earlier. Use your own words to describe what you just read. Think about it like you are telling your best friend about what you read about today. Saying things out loud can help you remember things more easily.

7. Review (R): You can either do this with a friend or by yourself. After you've done SQRR, you want to top everything off with review. Look at the notes you've taken along the way and test yourself on the key bits of information from your reading. The key to the SQ3R method is creating a system of processing information and making that information stick. By reviewing several times at random points of the day, you'll help move the information you've learned from your short-term memory to your long-term memory.

8. Connect, connect, connect: In case we haven't mentioned it enough, AP European History is all about connecting the dots. Whether you're just doing your nightly reading or reviewing for your test, it's helpful and essential that you recognize how events and people in history are interrelated. History is the study of how people interact with one another. One technique to make sure you are connecting the dots is to write key events or terms on flashcards; then at the end of your reading or review session, categorize your flashcards into 5-7 different categories. You may end up doing this by time period, by a significant overarching event, etc. A good way to think about this is you have 5-7 drawers, and a bunch of random things lying around in your room. Each thing represents some event or important person in history and you want to fit all the things into one drawer in order to make your room clean again. If the clean room analogy doesn't work for you, try to think of a way to get in the categorizing mindset yourself and [let us know about it!](#)

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9. Create a cheat sheet: While unfortunately you won't be able to use your cheat sheet on the actual test, you can use a cheat sheet to help simplify your reviewing process as the AP European History test gets closer. Create a cheat sheet that is flexible and can be added on to—then as the year progresses and you do more and more readings, add to your cheat sheet. Before you know it, you'll have a handy and hopefully concise reference guide that you can turn to in those last few weeks before the test.

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Tips Submitted by AP European History Teachers

1. Keep referring back to the question: While writing the essay portion, especially the DBQ, remember to keep referring back to the question and make sure that you have not gone off on a tangent. When students drop the ball on an essay it is usually because they do not answer the question. Thanks for the tip from Ms. N at South High School in MI.

2. Review your vocab: Complete the vocabulary at the beginning of each section of your preferred AP European History prep book. If you do not know the meaning of the terminology in a question you will not be able to answer the question correctly. Thanks for the tip from Ms. O at Northville High in MI.

3. Do lots of point-of-view statements: You don't want to suffer on your DBQ because you only had two acceptable POV's. Do 4 or 5 or 6. And be sure to say how reliable a source is ABOUT WHAT based on their background, audience or purpose. Thanks for the tip from Steve!

4. Complete readings as they are assigned: Chunking material is the best way to learn and then to synthesize material. Look at the primary sources and secondary sources to support textual readings. Think in thematic terms. Thanks for the tip from Ms. J at Trinity High in PA.

5. Supplement your in-class learning with videos: Tom Richey has put together a comprehensive YouTube playlist just for AP European History students. You can check it out at [here](#). He also has a great website you can check out [here](#).

6. Provide context in your DBQ: When trying to write a point of view statement for the DBQ you must include three things: First, state who the author really is. Second, what did he actually say. Third, why is said it.

Are you a teacher? Do you have an awesome tip? [Let us know!](#)

The Ultimate List of AP European History Tips Cont.

Hopefully you've learned a ton from reading all 50+ of these AP European History tips. Remember, AP European History is one of the most challenging AP exams to score high on, so it's crucial you put in the work to get you there. Read actively and review constantly throughout the year, so that you do not feel an incredible burden of stress as the AP exam nears. Approach readings using SQ3R, connect the dots between documents, and understand how you are going to be graded by AP readers. You're going to do great! Good luck.

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