New Course Structure (Fall 2014)

Curriculum Framework with 9 Periods, Key Concepts, Skills, and Learning Objectives

**HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS**

The revised AP U.S. History course is dedicated to developing strong historical thinking skills among AP students. These skills are tremendously important to grasp and develop throughout the course of the year. If you don’t understand what is listed below, be certain to set up a conference so we can review these skills.

**Skill type I - Chronological Reasoning**

**Learning Objective:** Student demonstrates ability to reason about causality, continuity and change over time, and periodization in the context of U.S. history.

**Skill 1: Historical Causation**

Historical thinking involves the ability to identify, analyze and evaluate the

relationships between multiple historical causes and effects, distinguishing

between those that are long-term and proximate, and among coincidence,

causation and correlation.

***You should be able to…***

* Compare causes and/or effects, including between short term and long term effects
* Analyze and evaluate the interaction of multiple causes and/or effects
* Assess historical contingency by distinguishing among coincidence, causation, and correlation, as well as critiquing standard interpretations of cause and effect.

**Skill 2: Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time**

Historical thinking involves the ability to recognize, analyze and evaluate the

dynamics of historical continuity and change over periods of time of varying

length, as well as relating these patterns to larger historical processes or themes.

***You should be able to…***

* Analyze and evaluate historical patterns of continuity and change over time.
* Connect patterns of continuity and change over time to larger historical processes or themes.

**Skill 3: Periodization**

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, analyze, evaluate and construct

models of historical periodization that historians use to categorize events into

discrete blocks and to identify turning points, recognizing that the choice of

specific dates gives a higher value to one narrative, region or group over another

narrative, region, or group; therefore, changing the periodization can change a

historical narrative. Moreover, historical thinking involves being aware of how the

circumstances and contexts of a historian’s work might shape his or her choices

about periodization.

***You should be able to…***

* Explain ways that historical events and processes can be arranged within blocks of time with key turning points.
* Analyze and evaluate competing models of periodization of U.S. history.

**Skill Type II: Comparison and Contextualization**

**Learning Objective:** Student demonstrates ability to compare and contextualize historical developments across chronology and geography.

**Skill 4: Comparison**

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, compare and evaluate multiple

historical developments within one society, one or more developments across or

between different societies, and in various chronological and geographical

contexts. It also involves the ability to identify, compare and evaluate multiple

perspectives on a given historical experience.

***You should be able to…***

* Compare related historical developments and processes across place, time, and/or different societies, or within one society.
* Explain and evaluate multiple and differing perspectives on a given historical phenomenon.

**Skill 5: Contextualization**

Historical thinking involves the ability to connect historical events and processes to

specific circumstances of time and place, and to broader regional, national or

global processes.

***You should be able to…***

* Explain and evaluate ways in which specific historical phenomena, events, or processes connect to broader regional, national, or global processes occurring at the same time.
* Explain and evaluate ways in which a phenomenon, event, or process connects to other, similar historical phenomena across time and place.

**Skill Type III: Crafting Historical Arguments from Historical Evidence**

**Learning Objective:** Student demonstrates ability to create a plausible and persuasive historical argument supported by analysis of relevant historical evidence.

**Skill 6: Historical Argumentation**

Historical thinking involves the ability to define and frame a question about the

past and to address that question through the construction of an argument. A

plausible and persuasive argument requires a clear, comprehensive and analytical

thesis, supported by relevant historical evidence — not simply evidence that

supports a preferred or preconceived position. Additionally, argumentation

involves the capacity to describe, analyze and evaluate the arguments of others inlight of available evidence.

***You should be able to…***

* Analyze commonly accepted historical arguments and explain how an argument has been constructed from historical evidence.
* Construct convincing interpretations through analysis of disparate, relevant historical evidence.
* Evaluate and synthesize conflicting historical evidence to construct persuasive historical arguments.

**Skill 7: Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence**

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe and evaluate evidence about the

past from diverse sources (including written documents as well as works of art,

archaeological artifacts, oral traditions and other primary sources), with respect to

content, authorship, purpose, format and audience. It involves the capacity to

extract useful information, make supportable inferences and draw appropriate

conclusions from historical evidence, while also understanding such evidence in its

context, recognizing it limitations and assessing the points of view that it reflects.

***You should be able to…***

* Analyze features of historical evidence such as audience, purpose, point of view, format, argument, limitations, and context germane to the evidence considered.
* Based on analysis and evaluation of historical evidence, make supportable inferences and draw appropriate conclusions.

**Skill Type IV: Historical Interpretation and Synthesis**

**Learning Objective:** Student demonstrates ability to interpret and synthesize analyses of historical events and patterns.

**Skill 8: Interpretation**

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, analyze, evaluate and create diverse interpretations of the past — as revealed through both primary and secondary historical sources — through analysis of evidence, reasoning, contexts, points of view and frames of reference. The particular circumstances and contexts in which individual historians themselves work and write shape their interpretation and modeling of past events.

***You should be able to…***

* Analyze diverse historical interpretations
* Evaluate how historians’ perspectives influence their interpretations and how models of historical interpretation change over time.

**Skill 9: Synthesis**

Historical thinking involves the ability to arrive at meaningful and persuasive new

understandings of the past by applying all of the other historical thinking skills, by

drawing appropriately on ideas and methods from different fields of inquiry or

disciplines, and by creatively fusing disparate, relevant (and perhaps

contradictory) evidence from primary sources and secondary works. Additionally,

synthesis may involve applying insights about the past to other historical contexts

or circumstances, including the present.

***You should be able to…***

* Draw appropriately on ideas and methods from different fields of inquiry or disciplines
* Combine disparate, relevant (and perhaps contradictory) evidence from primary sources and secondary works in order to create a persuasive understanding of the past.
* Apply insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances, including the present.

7 overarching big ideas to structure the course

**Themes capture "big ideas" in American history, The exam will assess students' understanding of them.**

Identity

Peopling

Work, Exchange, and Technology

Politics and Power

Environment and Geography

America in the World

Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture

9 periods organized into 3 key concepts per period, defining essential events and patterns that students must know.

**Instructional Time AP Exam % of the exam**

 1. 1491–1607 5% 5%

 2. 1607–1754 10%

 3. 1754–1800 12% 45%

 4. 1800–1848 10%

 5. 1844–1877 13%

 6. 1865–1898 13%

 7. 1890–1945 17% 45%

 8. 1945–1980 15%

 9. 1980–present 5% 5%

**Redesigned Exam (Spring 2015)**

**By reducing the number of multiple‐choice and adding**

**short‐answer questions, the exam now assesses thematic understanding and application of historical thinking skills**

**content knowledge**

36 Multiple-choice questions

* 35 minutes (organized in sets of 2-6)

4 short-answer questions:

* 50 60 minutes.

1 document-based question:

* 60 minutes

1 long-essay question:

* 35 minutes

**20%\***

Key

Topic Concepts

Outline

Historical

Thinking