

Road to American Revolution LEQ

Sample Responses – AP United States History



Evaluate the extent to which the American Revolution was caused by disputes over economic policy in the period from 1754 to 1776.

*This prompt targets **causation** but students may apply **comparison** and **continuity and change over time** to earn the historical reasoning point.*

SAMPLE RESPONSE A (6/6)

ECONOMIC POLICY (Prompt Cause)		MILITARY POLICY (Additional Cause)
<p><u>Taxes</u></p> <p>Sugar Act Stamp Act Townshend Acts</p>	<p><u>Trade</u></p> <p>Mercantilism Navigation Acts Tea Act Intolerable Acts</p>	<p>Quartering Acts Boston Massacre Intolerable Acts (Martial Law) Lexington and Concord</p>
<p>EFFECTS</p> <p>After the Revolution, the Articles left the states to regulate their own trade Hesitance to maintain a large standing army in the United States after the Revolution</p>		

<p>Before the French and Indian War, the Thirteen Colonies were mostly left alone. Although Parliament passed the Navigation Acts that regulated trade and taxed imports (this was known as mercantilism), these policies were not strictly enforced and the colonies traded with whoever offered the lowest prices. This policy was known as salutary neglect. The massive debt that the British government took on defending the colonies in the French and Indian War brought an end to salutary neglect and caused tension between Britain and its North American colonies. Economic policies governing the regulation of trade and taxation without consent were major factors leading to the American Revolution, but were not sufficient to explain why the Revolution happened. In the end, British military policies pushed the colonies toward independence.</p>	<p>CONTEXTUALIZATION presents useful background, focusing on the policy of salutary neglect before the French and Indian War in order to set the stage for conflicts that began after the war ended.</p> <p>Note the salutary neglect is thoroughly explained. The contextualization is informed – not vague.</p> <p>Contextualization is relevant and leads the reader to the thesis.</p> <p>A THESIS is present that makes multiple historically defensible claims that are supported by a line of reasoning. This thesis foreshadows complex understanding because an additional cause is offered other than the cause given in the prompt.</p>
<p>After the French and Indian War, Parliament passed a series of controversial taxes that angered colonists. The Sugar Act taxed imported sugar. Although it was technically a tax cut, it angered colonists because the tax was actually collected when it had not been collected before the French and Indian War. Although colonists were upset, no one disputed Parliament’s authority to regulate trade. It was the Stamp Act, which raised revenue internally in the colonies through taxing legal documents and paper products, that made the colonists especially irate. “No Taxation Without</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes it clear that this paragraph will address the conflicts over taxation.</p> <p>The Sugar Act is presented as supporting evidence and the colonists’ reaction is explained, strengthening the causation element of the argument.</p> <p>The Stamp Act is also presented as supporting evidence, with its purpose explained and the colonists’ reaction to it, again</p>

<p>Representation!" was the rallying cry as colonists boycotted British goods and intimidated tax collectors. Colonists felt that the Stamp Act was illegitimate because it had not been ratified by their colonial legislatures. Parliament eventually repealed the Stamp Act but followed with the Townshend Acts, which taxed paper, paint, lead, glass, and tea.</p>	<p>developing the causation argument.</p> <p>I'm finding that responses to causation-driven prompts are friendlier to narrative approaches, but the narrative is still divided into topical paragraphs and supports the claims in the thesis.</p>
<p>Parliament also regulated colonial trade with the Tea Act, which forced colonists to buy tea from the British East India Company. The Sons of Liberty retaliated with the Boston Tea Party, throwing tens of thousands of dollars of tea overboard. Parliament responded with the Intolerable Acts, which included the closure of the Boston Port, which was a blow to Britain's economy. The First Continental Congress was called as a result of the Intolerable Acts.</p>	<p>This paragraph focuses on the regulation of trade and its effect on the relationship between Britain and its colonies. While largely narrative-driven, the presented narrative outlines clear cause and effect relationships between the Tea Act, the Boston Tea Party, the Intolerable Acts, and the First Continental Congress.</p>
<p>While economic disputes brought about mass protests, in the end, it was British military policy that pushed the colonies to Revolution. In the 1760s, Parliament passed a Quartering Act that required the colonies to provide housing for British troops whose presence in the colonies was no longer necessary after the French were defeated. In 1770, a squad of these British troops fired upon an unruly crowd in Boston in what became known as the Boston Massacre. Although the British troops were just defending themselves and were found not guilty, this incident created a lot of animosity in Boston. The Intolerable Acts included a stricter Quartering Act and the appointment of a military governor to impose martial law in the colony. It was martial law in Massachusetts that led to the battles of Lexington and Concord. The rebellion had officially begun.</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes it clear that this paragraph will focus on discussing military policy as an additional cause of the American Revolution.</p> <p>The thorough presentation of an additional cause helps to demonstrate COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING of the topic.</p> <p>The writer demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the Boston Massacre that incorporates the British perspective, contributing further to COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING.</p> <p>The Boston Massacre and the Intolerable Acts are presented as supporting evidence for military policy as a cause of the American Revolution.</p>
<p>So while economic policies played a large role in the American Revolution, military policies pushed the colonists over the edge toward a Declaration of Independence. After the Revolution, the Articles of Confederation did not contain any trade regulations – leaving the states to set their own trade policies – and for decades, the new nation kept minimal military forces since the idea of a standing army was frowned upon after the experience of the Revolution.</p>	<p>The THESIS is restated in different language than the first paragraph (without looking back at the first paragraph) in case the Reader was not convinced by the first attempt at a thesis.</p> <p>In discussing the effects of the American Revolution, the writer further demonstrates COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING of this topic.</p>

SCORING SUMMARY (Sample Response A)

Contextualization	1	The explanation of salutary neglect prior to the French and Indian War provides useful and relevant background information.
Thesis	1	The thesis includes a valid and defensible line of reasoning and brings in an additional cause (additional cause not required to earn this point)
Specific Examples	1	Several examples are specific, accurate, and relevant.
Supporting Evidence	1	The evidence in the essay is plentiful and organized to support arguments for both economic and military causes of the American Revolution.
Historical Reasoning	1	This essay is full of cause and effect relationships that demonstrate how one thing led to another.
Complex Understanding	1	The prompt cause is thoroughly developed and supplemented not only by an additional cause (which was, in itself, sufficient to earn this point) but also by effects. The complex thesis and the nuanced understanding of the Boston Massacre also contributed to this point.
TOTAL	6	

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SAMPLE RESPONSE B (6/6)

<p>Secondary Causes</p> <p><u>Movement Restricted</u> <u>Taxation</u> (Prompt Cause)</p> <p>Proclamation of 1763 Sugar Act Stamp Act Townshend Acts</p>	<p>MILITARY POLICY (Primary Cause)</p> <p>Quartering Act Boston Massacre Intolerable Acts (after Boston Tea Party) Lexington and Concord</p>
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<p>The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was a victory for British constitutional government. The king recognized the authority of the British Parliament to take the lead in making law and promised not to interfere with Parliament or its elections. The liberties of the British people were also listed and they included the right of law abiding subjects to bear arms and a prohibition of standing armies during peacetime. Before 1688, many colonists had left Britain seeking new opportunities and greater freedoms. These colonists expected the English Bill of Rights to apply to them, too. In the end, it was British military policy and restrictions on the colonists' movement and liberties that sparked the American Revolution. By comparison, economic disputes were relatively insignificant.</p>	<p>CONTEXTUALIZATION presents useful background, focusing on the Glorious Revolution and the colonists' expectations that the guarantees of the English Bill of Rights applied to them, as well. This contextualization is informed and thoroughly explained – not vague.</p> <p>Contextualization is relevant and leads the reader to the thesis.</p> <p>A THESIS is present that makes multiple historically defensible claims that are supported by a line of reasoning. This thesis foreshadows complex understanding because an additional cause is offered other than the cause given in the prompt.</p>
<p>Restrictions on migration and movement caused tension between the colonists and the British government. Following the French and Indian War, which began with British colonists coming into conflict with the French as they went west into the Ohio River Valley, the British government issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763. While the British government saw this as a way to ensure tranquility with the Indians and avoid future rebellions like Pontiac's Rebellion, the colonists felt insulted and deprived of the fruits of victory in the French and Indian War. After the American Revolution, these restrictions were lifted and all western lands were opened to white settlement.</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes it clear that this paragraph will address the conflicts over migration.</p> <p>The Proclamation of 1763 is presented as supporting evidence and the colonists' reaction is explained, strengthening the causation element of the argument.</p> <p>Note several cause and effect relationships in the narrative here.</p> <p>A reference to an effect of the American Revolution contributes to COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING but is not enough to earn this point by itself.</p>
<p>The Proclamation was followed by a series of taxes passed by Parliament that upset colonists but did not go to the point of causing a revolution. All of the taxes were designed to pay</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes clear that the paragraph will focus on the cause mentioned in the prompt (economic policy), which is presented as a minor cause.</p>

<p>down Britain's debts from the French and Indian War. The Sugar Act taxed imported sugar and the Townshend Acts taxed imported paper, paint, tea, and other products. The Stamp Act was the most controversial tax because it taxed the colonists directly. Although colonists protested against taxation without representation and harassed tax collectors, that's about as far as it went before Parliament repealed it. Taxes cause protests but seldom cause revolutions on their own.</p>	<p>The Sugar Act, Stamp Act, and Townshend Acts all provide supporting evidence of conflicts over taxation.</p>
<p>What does cause revolutions is when people who are accustomed to certain liberties find themselves being disarmed and shot at by their own government. After the French and Indian War, Britain passed a Quartering Act that required the colonies to provide housing for British troops that they did not want to house. A conflict between British troops and colonists in Boston led to the "Boston Massacre." Even though the colonists who were shot were harassing and threatening British soldiers and the soldiers were acquitted, it didn't help relations between colonist and the British – especially after Paul Revere, a member of the Sons of Liberty, published a visual account that made the incident look like a planned execution of colonists. After the Boston Tea Party – another economic protest – the British government overreacted and passed the Coercive Acts – known in the colonies as the Intolerable Acts – which not only closed Boston's port, but also subjugated Massachusetts to martial law and protected British officials who were accused of crimes by having their trials in Britain. The colonists found themselves treated like conquered people and when the British tried to confiscate their weapons at the arsenal at Concord, they were met by colonial militia known as "Minutemen." The Minutemen defended their arsenal with force and continued to shoot at the British while they retreated back to Boston. The British followed up with an attack on Bunker Hill. The American Revolution had begun thanks to British acts of violence against their own subjects.</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes it clear (albeit somewhat implicitly) that this paragraph will focus on discussing military policy as an additional cause of the American Revolution.</p> <p>The thorough presentation of an additional cause helps to demonstrate COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING of the topic. It's especially impressive that the writer chose to emphasize a cause other than the cause given by the prompt.</p> <p>The writer demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the Boston Massacre that incorporates the British perspective, contributing further to COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING.</p> <p>The Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, the Intolerable Acts, and Lexington and Concord are presented as supporting evidence for military policy as a cause of the American Revolution.</p>
<p>Although tensions between Britain and the colonies began with conflicts over taxation and trade, it was the British military policy that was the biggest factor leading to the American Revolution. If the British had not used violence against the colonists, the Revolution probably would not have happened.</p>	<p>The THESIS is restated in different language than the first paragraph (without looking back at the first paragraph) in case the Reader was not convinced by the first attempt at a thesis.</p>

SCORING SUMMARY (Sample Response B)

Contextualization	1	Since the essay is focused on military policy and the loss of basic English rights as the primary cause of the American Revolution, the Glorious Revolution provides helpful context even though it happened almost a century before the American Revolution.
Thesis	1	The thesis includes a valid and defensible line of reasoning and brings in an additional cause (additional cause not required to earn this point)
Specific Examples	1	Several examples are specific, accurate, and relevant.
Supporting Evidence	1	The evidence in the essay is plentiful and organized to support arguments for both economic and military causes of the American Revolution.
Historical Reasoning	1	This essay is full of cause and effect relationships that demonstrate how one thing led to another.
Complex Understanding	1	The prompt cause is supplemented by two additional causes (westward movement and military policy). The argument about military policy as a cause for the American Revolution is thoroughly developed. The complex thesis and the nuanced understanding of the Boston Massacre also contributed to this point.
TOTAL	6	

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SAMPLE RESPONSE C (5/6)

TAXES	TRADE REGULATION	
Sugar Act Stamp Act Townshend Acts	Tea Act Boston Tea Party	Intolerable Acts First Continental Congress

<p>The French and Indian War placed the British in a desperate financial situation. In order to try to pay down debts from the war, the British government abandoned the policy of salutary neglect and began to enforce the Navigation Acts, which taxed imports from foreign countries in accordance with mercantilism. The colonists, who were used to being left alone, were stirred up by this change in policy and placed on the road to the American Revolution. Disputes over economic policy played a major role in causing the American Revolution because of Parliament's taxes, regulation of trade, and granting trade monopolies to British companies.</p>	<p>CONTEXTUALIZATION presents useful background, focusing on the policy of salutary neglect before the French and Indian War in order to set the stage for conflicts that began after the war ended.</p> <p>Note the salutary neglect is thoroughly explained. The contextualization is informed – not vague. Contextualization is relevant and leads the reader to the thesis.</p> <p>A THESIS is present that makes a historically defensible claim that is supported by a line of reasoning, previewing three distinct points that will support the thesis.</p>
<p>In the 1760s, Parliament taxed the colonies in order to pay for the French and Indian War, causing mass protests. The Sugar Act taxed imported sugar, which angered the colonists because they were used to taxes not being collected. The Stamp Act especially infuriated the colonists because it placed a direct tax on legal documents and paper products. The colonists believed the Stamp Act to be illegal because it had not been approved by their colonial legislatures. They protested, declaring “No Taxation without Representation!” and boycotted British goods. The British government relented and repealed the Stamp Act but replaced it with the Townshend Acts – another import tax that placed taxes on paper, paint, and tea. These taxes placed the British government and the colonists at odds with each other.</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes it clear that this paragraph will address the taxes that Parliament passed after the French and Indian War.</p> <p>The Sugar Act, Stamp Act, and Townshend Acts are presented as supporting evidence and the colonists’ reaction to the Stamp Act is explained, strengthening the causation element of the argument.</p>
<p>Another aspect of economic policy that infuriated the colonists was when the British went beyond taxing their trade to trying to control it. In 1773, Parliament granted a trade monopoly on tea to the British East India Company. This began the chain of events that directly led to the</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes clear that the paragraph will focus on British attempts to control trade.</p>

<p>American Revolution. Members of the Sons of Liberty, dressed like Mohawk Indians, threw tea overboard into the Boston Harbor. This resulted in the Intolerable Acts, which closed the Boston Port in addition to placing Massachusetts under military rule just because a few people protested an economic monopoly with vandalism. The Intolerable Acts resulted in the First Continental Congress and a period of unprecedented cooperation between the Thirteen Colonies. The American Revolution began only a few years later.</p>	<p>The Tea Act, Boston Tea Party, Intolerable Acts, and First Continental Congress all provide supporting evidence of conflicts over taxation.</p> <p>Cause and effect relationships are clearly explained throughout the paragraph.</p>
<p>Economic disputes were a major cause of the American Revolution because of unfair taxation, mercantilist trade policies, and granting an economic monopoly to the British East India Company.</p>	<p>The THESIS is restated in different language than the first paragraph (without looking back at the first paragraph) in case the Reader was not convinced by the first attempt at a thesis.</p>

SCORING SUMMARY (Sample Response C)

Contextualization	1	The discussion of mercantilism and salutary neglect prior to the French and Indian War provides helpful context for an essay that focuses solely on economic policy.
Thesis	1	The thesis includes a valid and defensible line of reasoning. The preview of points is especially clear.
Specific Examples	1	Several examples are specific, accurate, and relevant.
Supporting Evidence	1	The evidence is sufficiently explained and used to support the thesis and the arguments in the body paragraphs.
Historical Reasoning	1	This essay is full of cause and effect relationships that demonstrate how one thing led to another.
Complex Understanding	0	This essay is better than average, but not sufficiently complex to earn this point.
TOTAL	5	

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SAMPLE RESPONSE D (3/6)

TAXES	TRADE REGULATION	
Sugar Act Stamp Act	Tea Act Boston Tea Party	Intolerable Acts First Continental Congress

<p>Disputes over economic policy played a major role in causing the American Revolution because colonists were upset about unfair taxes and their trade being regulated by the British.</p>	<p>A THESIS is present that makes a historically defensible claim that is supported by a line of reasoning.</p>
<p>After the French and Indian War, Parliament passed new taxes that enforced mercantilism. The British wanted colonists to trade only with British ports, so they passed the Sugar Act, which taxed imported sugar. Parliament also passed the Stamp Act, which taxed documents. Colonists were upset about the Stamp Act because it was passed without their consent. They chanted “No Taxation Without Representation” and boycotted British goods. This caused a lot of tension between Britain and its colonies.</p>	<p>A TOPIC SENTENCE makes it clear that this paragraph will address the conflicts over migration, though it reads as more of a narrative-driven than argument-driven.</p> <p>The Sugar Act and Stamp Act are presented as specific and relevant evidence and the cause of Parliament’s taxation policies is explained, as well as the effect of the Stamp Act on the relationship between Britain and the colonies.</p>
<p>The Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party also caused problems between the colonists and the British. After the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed the Intolerable Acts, which closed the Boston Port and brought more British troops into the colony. The colonists were very upset and convened the First Continental Congress.</p>	<p>There’s no attempt at a topic sentence here. This paragraph is completely narrative-driven but includes specific and relevant evidence and documents cause and effect relationships.</p>
<p>The British attempts to tax the colonies and control their economy played a major role in driving the colonies toward independence because it caused the colonies to work together to resist British rule.</p>	<p>The THESIS is restated in different language than the first paragraph (without looking back at the first paragraph) in case the Reader was not convinced by the first attempt at a thesis.</p>

SCORING SUMMARY (Sample Response D)

Contextualization	0	<i>Not Attempted</i>
Thesis	1	<i>The thesis makes a historically defensible claim that is supported by a line of reasoning focusing on unfair taxation and the regulation of trade.</i>
Specific Examples	1	<i>Multiple examples are specific, accurate, and relevant.</i>
Supporting Evidence	0	<i>The evidence is somewhat limited and presented more often in narrative than in argumentative form.</i>
Historical Reasoning	1	<i>The narrative emphasizes multiple cause and effect relationships that demonstrate how one thing led to another.</i>
Complex Understanding	0	<i>Nothing about this essay is especially complex or sophisticated.</i>
TOTAL	3	

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SAMPLE RESPONSE E (2/6)

Stamp Act	Tea Act Boston Tea Party
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<p><i>Economic disputes were definitely a major cause of the American Revolution.</i></p>	<p>This attempt at a thesis makes a definitive claim but lacks a line of reasoning to support the claim.</p>
<p><i>When Parliament passed the Stamp Act, colonists protested because they were being taxed without representation. Because of the Stamp Act, colonists boycotted British goods. This hurt the British economy and led to the repeal of the Stamp Act.</i></p>	<p>There is no attempt at a topic sentence or any argumentative structure here.</p> <p>The Stamp Act is presented as specific and relevant evidence and includes a reference to its effect in creating tension between Britain and the colonies.</p>
<p><i>The Boston Tea Party was a protest against the Tea Act that said that the colonists had to buy tea from the British East India Company. After the Boston tea Party, Parliament passed the Intolerable Acts, which closed Boston's port. The Intolerable Acts angered colonists and led more of them to support independence from Britain.</i></p>	<p>There is no attempt at a topic sentence or any argumentative structure here.</p> <p>The Tea Act is presented as specific and relevant evidence and includes a reference to its effect in leading more colonists to support independence.</p>

SCORING SUMMARY (Sample Response E)

Contextualization	0	<i>Not Attempted</i>
Thesis	0	<i>The attempted thesis lacks a line of reasoning.</i>
Specific Examples	1	<i>Multiple examples are specific, accurate, and relevant.</i>
Supporting Evidence	0	<i>This essay lacks even a coherent narrative – much less any substantive argumentation.</i>
Historical Reasoning	1	<i>Intentional references are made to cause and effect relationships.</i>
Complex Understanding	0	<i>This essay is below average and nowhere close to being complex.</i>
TOTAL	2	

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