

The Short Answer Question

A step by step walkthrough and analysis

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Exam Overview

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Number of Minutes	Portion of Total Score
I	Part A: Multiple-choice questions (MCQ)	55	55	40%
	Part B: Short-answer questions (SAQ)	3	40	20
	Break			
II	Part A: Document-based question (DBQ)	1	60	25
	Part B: Long Essay Question (LEQ)	1 (from a choice of two)	40	15

Directions

40 minutes to answer three questions

- You will have a little over 13 minutes for each response.
 - You may answer the questions in any order you like, but you will need to label each response.
 - Use complete sentences. An outline or bulleted list is not acceptable.
 - You may plan your answers on the exam page, but only what you write on the free-response answer sheet will be scored.
 - You do not need a thesis statement, but the responses must fully address the question with historically significant details accompanied by an explanation of why these are relevant.
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Scoring Scale and Guide

0-3 points possible

- Score 3: Accomplishes all three tasks set by the question
 - Score 2: Accomplishes two of the tasks set by the question
 - Score 1: Accomplishes one of the tasks set by the question
 - Score 0: Accomplishes none of the tasks set by the question
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Time Periods

Questions 1 & 2

- Both are required
- Both come from periods 3-8

Question 3 & 4

- You get a choice
 - Answer #3 from periods 1-5
OR
 - Answer #4 from periods 6-9
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Question

Using the excerpts, answer parts a, b, and c

- a) Briefly explain ONE specific historical difference between Richards' and Nunn and Qian's interpretations.
 - b) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Richards' interpretation.
 - c) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Nunn and Qian's interpretation.
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Excerpt One

“The Columbian connection had a devastating effect on the indigenous human societies of the Americas. . . . New disease vectors suddenly introduced into the vulnerable populations of the New World began a sequence of horrific pandemics. Rapidly spreading infectious disease devastated indigenous peoples of the New World. It thinned their numbers, destroyed their institutions, and broke their resistance to Spanish aggression.... Demographic recovery after major pandemics was hindered by reduced fertility, stillbirths, and other physical effects, as well as by cultural depression, hopelessness, and malaise resulting from Spanish colonial domination.”

— John R. Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 2006

Excerpt Two

“The New World provided soils that were very suitable for the cultivation of a variety of Old World products, . . . The increased supply lowered the prices of these products significantly, making them affordable to the general population for the first time in history. The production of these products also resulted in large in flows of profits back to Europe, which some have argued fueled the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Europe. The Old World gained access to new crops that were widely adopted.... The improvement in agricultural productivity . . . had significant effects on historic population growth and urbanization.”

— Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian, “The Columbian Exchange,” 2010

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Common Errors

How could you miss earning points?

- Correctly describing the main ideas of each excerpt without explaining how the interpretations differ
 - Giving a vague or highly generalized response that does not demonstrate specific historical knowledge
 - Neglecting to provide the explanation called for in the prompts, such as mentioning historical facts without explaining how the evidence answers the prompt
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Responding to Part a—one historical difference

Possible differences of interpretation

- Richards argues the negative effects, while Nunn and Qian explore the positive effects.
 - Richards focuses on interaction in the Americas, while Nunn and Qian focus more on Europe.
 - Richards examines the more immediate effects, while Nunn and Qian take a more long-term view.
 - Richards looks at social effects, whereas Nunn and Qian have a more economic focused approach.
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Responding to Part b—supporting Richards

Examples of evidence that would *also* need to be explained

- Diseases that killed natives such as smallpox, the common cold, flu, etc.
 - Information about specific conquests (e.g., conquistadores, Cortez, fall of the Aztecs)
 - Spanish mining for silver in the Americas
 - Spanish efforts to eliminate aspects of native culture such as religion
 - The dying out of local peoples, which led to the importation of African labor
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Responding to Part c—supporting Nunn and Qian

Examples of evidence that would *also* need to be explained

- New World crops used in the Old World such as corn, potatoes, tomatoes, and tobacco
 - Old World crops cultivated in the New World such as wheat, sugar and coffee
 - Impact of transatlantic commerce (e.g., triangular trade, mercantilism, pirates)
 - Colonial expansion into other parts of the world after Europe gained power and wealth from business with the Americas
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Sample Response #1

One specific historical difference between Richards' and Nunn & Qian's interpretations are the focuses on Spanish conquest vs. European settlement. Richard focuses on the destruction and disease spread by the Spanish conquest movements across the the Americas as Nunn & Qian focus on the prosperous trade and wealth increased due to the trading of European goods with Native American goods as well as European colonization. One development in connection to Nunn and Qian's interpretation was the beginning of the columbian exchange to open up trade from the Americas with Europe, leading to international interests in the production and fertility of the land in the Americas. One development in connection to Richard's interpretation is the accounts of rape and murder happening throughout the Native American tribes due to Spanish soldiers storming their camps/settlements. This was held in close regard to the Spanish's inferior view of the Native Americans, an early sign of racism.

Scoring of Response #1

This response earns 1 out of a possible 3 points.

The first two sentences develop an explanation of differences in the authors' views. The response notes Richards' focus on conquest in juxtaposition to Nunn and Qian's examination of European settlement earning a point for part a.

The response makes a general assertion of "murder" and "Spanish soldiers storming their camps/settlements," which lacks the necessary level of historical specificity, falling short of earning a point for part b.

It does not earn a point for part c because it offers no historical evidence not given in the passage. The use of "Columbian exchange" does not count since it is given in the source line for the Nunn and Qian excerpt.

Sample Response #2

A historical difference between Richards' and Nunn and Qian's interpretations is that Richards discusses the downfalls of occupying the New World and starting Atlantic trade, as Nunn and Qian speak of benefits from such developments in the New World and in trade. Richards also takes a strong side of the Natives of the New World as Nunn and Qian seem to take the view from the European point of view. The Columbian Exchange in this period was the main reason for all of such trade and events in Nunn/Qian's interpretation. This exchange allowed for large trade of new goods between the New World and Europe as well. Richards' interpretation coexists with the events of the Great Dying, in which the nations were introduced to new diseases that they had not yet had immunities to. As a result, millions an millions of natives died due to new diseases.

Scoring of Response #2

This response earns 2 out of a possible 3 points.

A point is given for part a because the first two sentences link “downfalls” to Richards and “benefits” to Nunn and Qian.

A point is given for part b because the last two sentences offers “the Great Dying” in which “millions and millions of natives died due to disease.” The phrase “The Great Dying” is not used in Richards’ excerpt, and it represents a historically specific terminology use by historians.

The response does not earn a point for part c, since there is no evidence beyond what was in the the passage by Nunn and Qian.

Sample Response #3

One historical difference between Richards and Nunn and Qian's interpretation of the Columbian exchange was that Richards was analyzing the exchange from the viewpoint of Native Americans who were taken advantage of and killed by diseases such as influenza and smallpox, while Nunn and Qian are looking at the exchange as an advancement for the Old World that could use the new world lands for modernization and advancements in technology. One historical event that could support Richards' interpretation was the harsh systems and oppressions Natives faced by Spanish domination such as the caste system. This dictated how much tax and labor was owed to the Spanish based upon the origin of nationality of the indigenous people. One historical event that could support Nunn and Qian's interpretation is the Virginia Company which through capitalism and forced labor made profits in the new world based off of slave production—these profits went back to Europe and propelled them forward in the race for industrialization.

Scoring of Response #3

This response earns 3 out of a possible 3 points.

The point for part a is earned in the first sentence, which contrasts Richards' and Nunn and Qian's statements by holding up correct and different version of their interpretations.

The response goes on to detail specific historical events and developments to support Richards (the development of a case system), and Nunn and Qian (Virginia Company and slave production sent back to Europe), thus earning the points for parts b and c.
