

AP World History Long Essay Question

In your response you should do the following.

- **Thesis:** Present 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.
- **Application of Historical Thinking Skills:** Develop and support an argument that applies historical thinking skills as directed by the question.
- **Supporting the Argument with Evidence:** Utilize specific examples of evidence to fully and effectively substantiate the stated thesis or a relevant argument.
- **Synthesis:** Extend the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and one of the following.
 - A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area.
 - 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).

Evaluate the extent to which the year 1450 can be considered a turning point in world history.

In the development of your argument, explain what changed and what stayed the same from the period before the year 1450 to the period after the year 1450. (*Historical thinking skill: Periodization*).

LEQ Periodization Key Points

For your thesis, you should make a very clear statement as to whether or not AND to what extent the year 1450 is a significant turning point. That means that you say it either was or wasn't in general, but then you qualify that position as necessary to point out how it wasn't 100% one way or the other. Assuming you are arguing that it is IS a turning point, your thesis needs to clearly and explicitly identify what factors make it a turning point AND what issues in some way or other limit its significance of a turning point. In other words, you answer YES to this yes or no question of whether it is a turning point, but, in the spirit of honesty, to be more clear and precise, and because we recognize (at this elite and highly intellectual academic level of AP) that such matters are never really so black and white, you are almost pointing out the holes in your own argument. By doing it yourself, rather than leaving them for someone else to point out, you essentially claim them as part of your argument, part of your thesis, and thereby have total control over the discussion.

For the first part of the body, which we can expect to be much longer, you should explain why this period is such a significant turning point. You need to identify multiple examples, and you must clearly discuss the BEFORE and the AFTER for each one, which shows how things changed. These examples should have already been identified in the thesis. Since these are the examples that support the main point of your thesis, remember to also emphasize the "extent" of their importance.

For the second part of the body, which we can expect to be a bit shorter, you should explain the issues or limitations that qualify turning point. You need to identify multiple examples, and you must clearly discuss the BEFORE and the AFTER for each one, which shows how things stayed the same. These examples should have already been identified in the thesis. Remember, in this section, you are not trying to contradict your thesis position, but rather to explore the complexities and grey areas, in order to show the "extent."

For Synthesis, you just compare to any other turning point ever, and say this one was more of a turning point. The great thing about this essay on 1450 is that, for every other Periodization essay you ever write, you can probably just use this topic for your thesis, since it's such a big turning point. For this time, though, you might want to go with the Neolithic Revolution, since that's a pretty safe bet, being arguably the most significant turning point in human history, but you can do others as well, such as the collapse of the Classical empires.

[Note: When I say "qualify" in this context, I mean "to make (a statement or assertion) less absolute; add reservations to." It is usually used when you answer something simply, to make the overall point clear, but then add on more information to explain the more complicated details... which is exactly what you have to do, so it's a great word.]