

APUSH SAQ, LEQ and DBQ Scoring Guide

1. Short Answer Question (SAQ) Scoring Guide

Points Available: 3 (1 per part)

- **Complete Answer (1 pt per part)**
 - Clearly addresses the question prompt.
 - Provides historically accurate information.
 - Explains with 2–3 sentences per part.

How to Earn the Point:

- **Identify:** Name a specific development, person, or event.
- **Explain:** Show how/why it matters in context.
- **Example:**
Prompt: Identify and explain ONE way geography influenced New England colonies.
Strong Answer: “The rocky soil and short growing season in New England limited cash crop agriculture. As a result, colonists developed economies based on shipbuilding, fishing, and trade, which encouraged towns to develop along the coast.”

Common Mistakes to Avoid:

- Listing without explanation.
 - Too vague (“Religion was important.”).
 - Factual inaccuracies.
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2. Long Essay Question (LEQ) Scoring Guide

Points Available: 6

1. **Thesis/Claim (1 pt)**
 - Responds directly to the prompt with a clear, defensible argument.
 - Avoids restating the question.
2. **Contextualization (1 pt)**
 - Situates the argument in broader historical events, developments, or processes.
 - Example: “Colonial development occurred during a period of expanding Atlantic trade and mercantilism.”
3. **Evidence (2 pts)**
 - **1 pt:** Provides specific historical examples relevant to the argument.

- **2 pts:** Uses at least 2+ examples as supporting evidence integrated into argument.
- 4. **Analysis & Reasoning (2 pts)**
 - Demonstrates **historical reasoning** (causation, comparison, continuity/change).
 - Shows nuance or considers multiple perspectives.
 - Example: “While economic opportunity shaped Chesapeake colonies, religious motivations more strongly influenced New England society.”

Common Mistakes:

- Weak thesis: “Religion was important in the colonies.”
- Laundry list of facts without analysis.
- Missing context outside 1607–1754.

3. Document-Based Question (DBQ) Scoring Guide

Points Available: 7

1. **Thesis/Claim (1 pt)**
 - Makes a defensible argument responding to the prompt.
2. **Contextualization (1 pt)**
 - Situates colonial America within broader Atlantic/imperial/world context.
 - Example: “European colonization was part of the global Columbian Exchange that reshaped economies and societies on both sides of the Atlantic.”
3. **Evidence from the Documents (2 pts)**
 - **1 pt:** Uses content from at least 3 documents.
 - **2 pts:** Supports argument with 6+ documents (here scaled down for workshop: **all 3 docs required**).
4. **Evidence Beyond the Documents (1 pt)**
 - Brings in additional specific outside evidence (e.g., Navigation Acts, Bacon’s Rebellion, Great Awakening).
5. **Sourcing (1 pt)**
 - Explains the **POV, purpose, audience, or historical context** for at least 2 docs.
 - Example: “Winthrop wrote to inspire Puritans; his religious tone reflected the goal of building a model society.”
6. **Complexity (1 pt)**
 - Demonstrates nuanced understanding (both/and arguments, multiple perspectives, unexpected connections).
 - Example: “Although Franklin’s cartoon encouraged unity, colonial regionalism remained strong, as seen in resistance to the Albany Plan.”

Common Mistakes:

- Summarizing documents instead of analyzing them.
- Forgetting outside evidence.

- Ignoring sourcing.

4. Quick Reference Rubric (Student Handout)

Task	SAQ (3 pts)	LEQ (6 pts)		DBQ (7 pts)
Thesis	Clear claim per part	1 pt		1 pt
Context	n/a	1 pt		1 pt
Evidence	1 pt per part	2 pts		3+ docs (2 pts) + 1 outside (1 pt)
Sourcing	n/a	n/a		1 pt
Reasoning/Complexity	Explanation in each part	2 pts		1 pt
Total	3 pts	6 pts		7 pts

This scoring guide can be given as a **student handout** or posted as a **rubric chart** during workshops.