



Chapter 5
Using Time
Effectively to
Maximize Points

BECOMING A BETTER TEST TAKER

Very few students stop to think about how to improve their test-taking skills. Most assume that if they study hard, they will test well, and if they do not study, they will do poorly. Most students continue to believe this even after experience teaches them otherwise. Have you ever studied really hard for an exam, then blown it on test day? Have you ever aced an exam for which you thought you weren't well prepared? Most students have had one, if not both, of these experiences. The lesson should be clear: Factors other than your level of preparation influence your final test score. This chapter will provide you with some insights that will help you perform better on the AP World History Exam and on other exams as well.

PACING AND TIMING

A big part of scoring well on an exam is working at a consistent pace. The worst mistake made by inexperienced or unsavvy test takers is that they come to a question that stumps them, and, rather than just skip it, they panic and stall. Time stands still when you're working on a question you cannot answer, and it is not unusual for students to waste five minutes on a single question (especially a question involving a graph or the word EXCEPT) because they are too stubborn to cut their losses. It is important to be aware of how much time you have spent on a given question and on the section you are working. There are several ways to improve your pacing and timing for the test:

- **Know your average pace.** While you prepare for the multiple-choice section of the exam, try to gauge how long you take on 5, 10, or 20 questions. Knowing how long you spend on average per question will help you identify how many questions you can answer effectively and how best to pace yourself for the test.
- **Have a watch or clock nearby.** You are permitted to have a watch or clock nearby to help you keep track of time. It is important to remember however that constantly checking the clock is in itself a waste of time and can be distracting. Devise a plan. Try checking the clock after every 15 or 30 questions to see if you are keeping the correct pace or whether you need to speed up; this will ensure that you are cognizant of the time but will not permit you to fall into the trap of dwelling on it.
- **Know when to move on.** Since all questions are scored equally, investing appreciable amounts of time on a single question is inefficient and can potentially deprive you of the chance to answer easier questions later on. If you are able to eliminate answer choices, do so, but don't worry about picking a random answer and moving on if you cannot find the correct answer. Remember, tests are like marathons; you do best when you work through them at a steady pace. You can always come back to a question you don't know. When you do, very often you will find that your previous mental block is gone, and you

will wonder why the question perplexed you the first time around (as you gleefully move on to the next question). Even if you still don't know the answer, you will not have wasted valuable time you could have spent on easier questions.

- **Be selective.** You don't have to do any of the questions in a given section in order. If you are stumped by an essay or multiple-choice question, skip it or choose a different one. In the section below, you will see that you may not have to answer every question correctly to achieve your desired score. Select the questions or essays that you can answer and work on them first. This will make you more efficient and give you the greatest chance of getting the most questions correct.
- **Use Process of Elimination on multiple-choice questions.** Many times, one or more answer choices can be eliminated. Every answer choice that can be eliminated increases the odds that you will answer the question correctly. Review Chapter 1 and make sure you're completely familiar with all the strategies you can use to find these incorrect answer choices and increase your odds of getting the question correct.

Remember, when all the questions on a test are of equal value, no one question is that important, your overall goal for pacing is to get the most questions correct. Finally, you should set a realistic goal for your final score.



Keep Calm

Trying to relax and de-stress isn't important only on test day; it's also necessary for your test prep! As you work your way through this book, be sure to take intermittent study breaks to help yourself unwind and then refocus.

TEST ANXIETY

Everybody experiences anxiety before and during an exam. To a certain extent, test anxiety can be helpful. Some people find that they perform more quickly and efficiently under stress. If you have ever pulled an all-nighter to write a paper and ended up doing good work, you know the feeling.

However, too much stress is definitely a bad thing. Hyperventilating during the test, for example, almost always leads to a lower score. If you find that you stress out during exams, here are a few preemptive actions you can take.

- **Take a reality check.** Evaluate your situation before the test begins. If you have studied hard, remind yourself that you are well prepared. Remember that many others taking the test are not as well prepared, and (in your classes, at least) you are being graded against them, so you have an advantage. If you didn't study, accept the fact that you will probably not ace the test. Make sure you get to every question you know something about. Don't stress out or fixate on how much you don't know. Your job is to score as high as you can by maximizing the benefits of what you do know. In either scenario, it is best to think of a test as if it were a game. How can you get the most points in the time allotted to you? Always answer questions you can answer easily and quickly before you answer those that will take more time.
- **Try to relax.** Slow, deep breathing works for almost everyone. Close your eyes, take a few, slow, deep breaths, and concentrate on nothing but your inhalation and exhalation for a few seconds. This is a basic form of meditation, and it should help you to clear your mind of stress and, as a result, concentrate better on the test. If you have ever taken yoga classes, you probably know some other good relaxation techniques. Use them when you can (obviously, anything that requires leaving your seat and, say, assuming a handstand position won't be allowed by any but the most free-spirited proctors).
- **Eliminate as many surprises as you can.** Make sure you know where the test will be given, when it starts, what type of questions are going to be asked, and how long the test will take. You don't want to be worrying about any of these things on test day or, even worse, after the test has already begun.

The best way to avoid stress is to study both the test material and the test itself. Congratulations! By buying or reading this book, you are taking a major step toward a stress-free AP World History Exam.

REFLECT

Respond to the following questions:

- How long will you spend on multiple-choice questions?
- How will you change your approach to multiple-choice questions?
- What is your multiple-choice guessing strategy?
- How much time will you spend on the short-answer questions?
- How much time will you spend on the DBQ? The long essay?
- What will you do before you begin writing an essay?
- How will you change your approach to the essays?
- Will you seek further help outside of this book (such as a teacher, tutor, or AP Students) on how to approach multiple-choice questions, the essays, or a pacing strategy?

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

Now that you know the kinds of questions to expect on the AP World History Exam, you're ready to take on the world!—or at least the review of AP World History. Part V of this book is designed to maximize your AP World History review. Here's how it is organized:

While You Read

As you read these content chapters, remember to underline key ideas or jot down notes in the margins.

Remembering the key events and issues that took place during pivotal moments in history will help you when it comes to the new source-based questions on the exam, which test your ability to tie a specific piece of evidence to a larger historical idea or theme.

- **Six Periods, Six Chapters.** The AP World History Exam divides world history into six distinct time periods, as we discussed in Part III. For ease of use, we have split our world history content review into these exact periods. Chapters 6 and 7 cover the first two Periods of AP World History as outlined by the College Board.
- **Get the Big Picture.** Each chapter begins with a “Stay Focused on the Big Picture” section so that you will—you guessed it—stay focused on the big picture while you review. To do well on this test, you're going to need to demonstrate that you not only have specific knowledge of people and events, but also that you understand how historical issues and events are connected. You'll also need to be able to think (and write) about concepts with a wide-angle lens, as well as use primary and secondary sources to investigate and analyze historical concepts and issues.
- **Make Those Connections.** Each chapter reviews the salient points of that period; the Compare Them, Contrast Them, Note the Change, and Focus On boxes help you make connections between different societies (that's the whole point of this test, remember?).
- **Pull It All Together.** Each chapter ends with a “Pulling It All Together” section to once again help you focus on the major points of the period.

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE IN THE WORLD

The AP World History Exam frequently refers to cultural regions of the world. So it is important to know where you are! The following map shows you the most commonly defined regions. Be aware that they don't always match up with physical boundaries. For example, parts of North Africa may be included when we're talking about the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia may be considered part of the Islamic world.

Geographic Regions of the World



HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR REVIEW

Here's what we suggest. Read through each chapter once. You'll probably remember most of the people, places, events, and concepts from your AP class. The chapters will help you review and pull together the major points. This part won't be as detailed as the book from your AP class, or else this book would be as thick as your textbook, which would be kind of pointless. As you read through each chapter, consult your textbook if you've forgotten something entirely. After you finish going through a chapter once, spend some time in your AP textbook (or another world history source) going over the stuff you either didn't know or didn't remember. Then go back to the chapter to do mini-reviews of certain areas and to focus on the big-picture concepts and connections taking place in that period.

No, After You

It does not matter in which order you choose to review the material. If you love the Renaissance and hate the Middle Ages, review Chapter 9 first and Chapter 8 later. If you know that your knowledge of the Foundations era is lacking but you are pretty confident in what you know about recent history, dive into Chapter 6 first. This review is meant to be dynamic—we expect that you will return to it repeatedly as you prepare for your exam.

In addition, as we mentioned in the introduction to this book, you may wish to flip back and forth between your history review and your testing strategies practice. We would advise you to work through at least the multiple-choice section of Part IV before you get to the test, but it is really up to you. If you want to get a jump start on your history review and save the techniques for later, go ahead. On the other hand, you may wish to mix them up to see how our strategies help you gain points.

No matter how you decide to organize your review, we do suggest that you continue to practice your test strategies and essay writing throughout the course of your preparation. As we said before, knowing this history is not enough—you need to be able to show what you know on test day. Once you review a chapter, practice writing an essay based on one of the comparisons or significant changes that took place within the period. Make up multiple-choice questions for a classmate and quiz each other. Once you've done your first pass through the history, take a full-length diagnostic test so that you can get a feel for what the real thing will be like. The bottom line is: Do not leave all your test strategy practice to the last minute. Instead, use that practice to enhance your history review and zero in on the key concepts of each period.

Let the review begin...