

## Contextualization

### SAMPLES:

Prompt: Evaluate the extent in which the Civil War was a turning point in the lives of African Americans in the United States. Use the documents and your knowledge of the years 1860-1877 to construct your response.

Student Response #1: The Civil War was a bloody event that led to the death of thousands of Americans.

Of course this is a true statement, but is **extremely vague**. What led to the Civil War? Why was it so deadly? Without any specific detail, this student could not earn the contextualization point.

Student Response #2: Slavery had existed for hundreds of years in the United States. It was a terrible thing that had to be abolished.

It mentions things that are true, but lacks any meaningful details or explanation that would demonstrate understanding of the time period in discussion. What led to the beginning of slavery in the colonies? How did it develop? What made it so horrible? How did individuals resist and protest slavery? These are the types of details that would add meaning to contextualization.

Student Response #3: The peculiar institution of slavery had been a part of **America's identity** since the founding of the original English colony at Jamestown. In the early years, compromise was key to avoiding the moral question, but as America entered the mid-19th century sectional tensions and crises with popular sovereignty, Kansas, and fugitive slaves made the issue increasingly unavoidable. When the Civil War began, the war was transformed from one to simply save the Union to a battle for the future of slavery and freedom in the United States.

**Now THAT is contextualization!** It gives specific details about the beginning of slavery and its development. It discusses attempts at compromise, but increasing sectional tensions that led to the Civil War. The writer paints a vivid and clear picture of the situation, events, and people that set the stage for the Civil War. Students don't want to write a 6-8 sentence paragraph (they will want to save time for their argument in the body), but they need to do more than write a vague sentence that superficially addresses the era.

---

# APUSH Synthesis

## What is SYNTHESIS?

Simply put, synthesis compares the connection between the thesis (or argument) with a similar development in another era, area, or situation. It isn't really a comparison of an event since it deals with a process, development, or position in the thesis.

*Example:* A thesis dealing with abolition tactics could be connected to radicalization of civil rights tactics in the 1960s. It can also be explaining a connection to another theme as opposed to the one expressed in the question and/or the thesis.

Some tidbits:

1. A stray piece of information outside the time period was not intended to suffice for synthesis.
2. Synthesis must be connected to the overall argument – it is an extension of the argument.
3. Synthesis is most typically attempted in the final paragraph, but could also be elsewhere.
4. Would normally need 1-3 sentences to be accomplished.

Let's say we wanted to connect the Great Society to the New Deal...

**NO:** The Great Society programs did more for people just like the New Deal did in the 1930s.

**YES:** The Great Society programs expanded entitlement programs designed to combat high poverty rates and provide all Americans the opportunity to share in the national wealth. While not as extensive as the Great Society, the New Deal relief and recovery agencies tackled the problem of returning America to its rightful level of prosperity and economic potential amidst the Great Depression.

Here's another example: Women's rights activists and abolitionists both used religion in support of their cause...

**NO:** "These strong appeals to religion to further a cause were especially prevalent in the aftermath of the 2001 terror attacks, where the U.S. government appealed especially to Christians to fight the Muslim terror that had done us wrong. This prejudice, created by that message, hangs heavy even today, 15 years later."

**YES:** "Women appealed to the American public through religion during the 1970s women's movement. Phyllis Schlafly described the role of women as subservient to their husbands and a guardian of family values. Her beliefs helped fuel states to reject the Equal Rights Amendment, but, according to her and others like her, preserve a woman's right to be a moral matriarch."

**YES:** "The Republican Party appealed to the religious right to expand their electorate and party voting blocs. By supporting issues such as pro-life, the death penalty, and prayer in school, the GOP used religious rhetoric and platforms to secure more congressional and state legislative seats after the 1980s."

## Synthesis List

The new AP US History exam requires students to make valid historical comparisons across periods and geographical areas. In order to help students make these comparisons, I am compiling a list of comparisons to serve as examples for students.

While some comparisons may be spot on in terms of similarities, other comparisons may have nuances or plot twists or entirely different outcomes.

In some cases, there may be two things that share a similarity, but also a key difference.

Using these or other similar comparisons could help students earn the **synthesis** point on the AP US History exam. **However, in order to earn synthesis, the comparison will have to be made in a way that advances an argument.**

Debates over the balance of power between federal and state government

Constitutional Convention (Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists)  
Marshall Court decisions  
Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions / Nullification Crisis  
Hartford Convention  
South Carolina Tariff Nullification  
Northern Liberty Laws  
Interstate Commerce Commission  
Supreme Court striking down New Deal laws based on restrictive view of commerce clause  
Arkansas and the Little Rock 9 - Faubus' reaction to Ike's intervention  
New Federalism - Nixon/Reagan  
Arizona immigration law  
DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act)  
Medicinal Marijuana

Debates and restrictions over free speech and government power during wartime

Alien and Sedition Acts (Quasi-War)  
Hartford Convention (War of 1812)  
Thoreau refusing to pay taxes (Mexican-American War)  
Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus (Civil War)  
Anti-Imperialist League (Spanish-American War)  
Sedition Acts, Part II and opposition of Eugene V. Debs and others (WWI)  
Internment of West-Coast Japanese (WWII)  
1st Red Scare (Palmer Raids - post WWI)  
McCarthyism and Red Scares (Cold War)  
Draft dodging, rallies, college opposition, Kent State (Vietnam)  
Patriot Act after 9-11 ("War on Terror")

Conflict between those on the coast and those on the frontier (class conflict)

Bacon's Rebellion  
Leisler's Rebellion  
Regulator Movement  
Paxton Boys  
Pontiac's Rebellion and Proclamation of 1763  
Shays' Rebellion  
Whiskey Rebellion  
Jackson's Bank War  
Populists Grange  
Movement

Opposition to wars/foreign intervention or entanglements

Washington's Farewell Address  
Isolationism between world wars  
Charles Lindbergh and America First  
American Anti-Imperialist League Anti-war  
movement--Vietnam War

American Exceptionalism

Winthrop's City on a Hill (Puritans; religion)  
Declaration of Independence

Monroe Doctrine  
 Manifest Destiny (John L. O’Sullivan; annexation of Texas)  
 The New Colossus, by Emma Lazarus  
 Social Darwinism, New Imperialism, nationalism  
 Insular cases (imperialism, “Does the Constitution follow the flag?”)  
 Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine  
 “Make the World Safe for Democracy”/“A War to End All Wars”  
 FDR’s “Four Freedoms” Speech  
 Containment policy  
 JFK’s Inaugural Address  
 Ronald Reagan (used City on a Hill imagery in speeches)

Sectional tensions and differences (some affected by environment)

Regional differences between Native American tribes  
 Regional differences between British North American colonies  
 Regional differences between states at the Constitutional Convention (slavery)  
 Hartford Convention  
 Sectionalism 1848 - 1865  
 Reconstruction  
 Great Migration (1910-1930) - growth of racial tensions and race riots  
 Silent Majority

Rebellion against the established social order

Committees of Correspondence / Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee  
 The Liberator (Immediatists vs. gradualists) / MLK/non-violent resistance vs. Malcolm X/Black Panthers  
 Independence Faction vs. Olive Branch Faction / Interventionists vs. America First (isolationists)  
 Civil War-The Union Must Be Preserved vs. Copperheads/Peace Faction  
 Civil Rights  
 Movement/Hippies/New Left  
 Women’s Rights Movement

<p><b>Ratification of the Constitution</b></p> <p><i>Constitution (success) was a product of compromise between Federalists and moderate Antifederalists concerning the addition of a Bill of Rights.</i></p>	<p><b>Versailles Treaty Debate</b></p> <p><i>The Senate’s rejection of the Versailles Treaty was the product of a failure on Wilson’s part to compromise with Sen. Lodge and the “Reservationist” faction.</i></p>
<p><b>The Free Soil Movement (Antebellum)</b></p> <p><i>Stop the <b>spread</b> of <b>slavery</b> (while not actively opposing slavery where it was)</i></p>	<p><b>Containment (Cold War)</b></p> <p><i>Stop the <b>spread</b> of <b>communism</b> (while not actively opposing communism where it was)</i></p>
<p><b>Hamiltonian Federalists</b></p> <p>Believed in a more expansive role for government than the Jeffersonians</p> <p>Government should <b>assist</b> business</p>	<p><b>Progressives</b></p> <p>Believed in a more expansive role for government than conservatives</p> <p>Government should <b>regulate</b> business</p>
<p><b>Jeffersonian Republicans</b></p>	<p><b>Populists</b></p>

<p>Represented the interests of farmers</p> <p>Believed that government should stay out of the economy (<i>laissez-faire</i>)</p>	<p>Represented the interests of farmers</p> <p>Believed that the government should regulate the economy (e.g., nationalize railroads)</p>
<p><b>1900-1920 Progressive Reformers</b></p> <p>Muckrakers published exposé articles and books against corporate abuses and to increase govt. focus on public health, sanitation, living conditions</p> <p>Expanded rights for women (19th Amendment), not much increase for Af. Americans</p> <p>Expansion of democracy at all levels - initiative, referendum, recall. 16th Amendment direction election of senators</p>	<p><b>1950-1970s Reformers</b></p> <p>Civil Rights leaders organized non-violent sit-ins, marches to achieve Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act</p> <p>Rachel Carson published <i>Silent Spring</i> - environmental movement led to EPA 1970</p> <p>Vietnam anti-war protests lead to expansion of democracy - 26th Amendment voting age 18</p>
<p><b>Yellow Journalism</b></p> <p>Newspapers encouraged sensational stories in order to sell papers</p> <p>Public outcry was generated (e.g., “Remember the Maine”) as a result of stories simply designed to increase circulation</p>	<p><b>Muckrakers</b></p> <p>Journalists published accounts in order to create public outcry for change</p> <p>Newspapers and magazines encouraged muckrakers because their sensational stories helped sell papers</p>
<p><b>Mayflower Compact</b></p> <p>Used as the first governing document for an English colony.</p> <p>Successful</p>	<p><b>Articles of Confederation</b></p> <p>First governing body of the United States.</p> <p>Ultimately unsuccessful and arguably too weak.</p>
<p><b>French and Indian War</b> [causes of]</p> <p>British colonists expanding into the Ohio River Valley (claimed by France)</p>	<p><b>Mexican-American War</b> [causes of]</p> <p>US annexation of Texas (including portion of border disputed with Mexico)</p>
<p><b>Nullification Crisis</b></p> <p>Brinkmanship</p> <p>Henry Clay negotiates a compromise tariff (at the last second) at a point where South Carolina and the federal government were on the verge of armed conflict</p>	<p><b>Cuban Missile Crisis</b></p> <p>Brinkmanship</p> <p>JFK and Khrushchev negotiate a compromise (at the last second) at a point where the US and USSR appeared to be on the brink of nuclear war over missiles in Cuba</p>
<p><b>War of 1812</b> [causes of]</p> <p>British were boarding American ships and impressing sailors and interdicting commerce</p> <p><b>VIOLATION OF NEUTRAL RIGHTS</b> (Freedom of the Seas)</p>	<p><b>World War I</b> [causes of]</p> <p>Germans resumed a policy of <i>unrestricted submarine warfare</i></p> <p><b>VIOLATION OF NEUTRAL RIGHTS</b></p>

	(Freedom of the Seas)
<p><b>Spanish-American War</b> [causes of]</p> <p>Alleged attack on U.S.S. <i>Maine</i> (Havana Harbor)</p> <p>Furor fueled by Yellow Journalism</p>	<p><b>Vietnam War</b> [causes of]</p> <p>Alleged attack on U.S.S. <i>Maddox</i> (Gulf of Tonkin)</p> <p>Furor fueled by Cold War anticommunist sentiment</p>
<p><b>Manifest Destiny</b> (Antebellum)</p> <p>The US should expand to the Pacific - no matter who gets in the way</p> <p>(Mexico / Native Americans)</p>	<p><b>Imperialism</b> (Turn of 20th c.)</p> <p>The US should acquire available imperial territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific - no matter who gets in the way (Spain / Filipino Natives)</p>
<p><b>Common Sense</b> by Thomas Paine</p> <p>Rallied Americans up to fight for independence and to go to war</p>	<p><b>Uncle Tom's Cabin</b> by Harriet Beecher Stowe</p> <p>Brought support to the antislavery movement and pushed more for war.</p>
<p><b>Dred Scott Case</b></p> <p>Nullified the Missouri Compromise</p>	<p><b>Kansas-Nebraska Act</b></p> <p>Nullified the Missouri Compromise</p>
<p><b>Sherman's March</b></p> <p>Sherman's army considers civilian property fair game - scorched earth policy in GA and SC.</p>	<p><b>20th Century Total War</b></p> <p>Civilians called upon to actively assist the war effort - civilian targets on both sides considered fair game for bombing raids</p>
<p><b>Social Gospel</b></p> <p>Created by Protestant clergy to apply Christian principles to social problems.</p>	<p><b>Gospel of Wealth</b></p> <p>Stated that the wealthy had a responsibility of philanthropy.</p>
<p><b>"Corrupt Bargain"</b></p> <p>Henry Clay (allegedly) helps John Q. Adams win the presidency - becomes Sec of State.</p> <p><b>SCANDAL</b> - many upset (no proof of foul play)</p>	<p><b>Ford Pardons Nixon</b></p> <p>Gerald Ford becomes POTUS after Nixon's resignation - pardons Nixon</p> <p><b>SCANDAL</b> - many upset (no proof of foul play)</p>
<p><b>Cuban Revolution</b> (1959)</p> <p>Pro-American ruler (Batista) with a record of human rights violations overthrown by anti-American revolutionaries (<i>the extent of the revolutionaries' anti-Americanism was unknown at</i></p>	<p><b>Iranian Revolution</b> (1979)</p> <p>Pro-American ruler (Shah) with a record of human rights violations overthrown by anti-American revolutionaries (<i>the extent of the revolutionaries' anti-Americanism was</i></p>

<i>the time</i> ) after US support for the regime began to waver.	<i>unknown at the time</i> ) after US support for the regime began to waver.
<b>GETTING BIN LADEN</b> (Obama 2011) <b>GREAT SUCCESS</b>	<b>GETTING THE IRAN HOSTAGES</b> (Carter 1979) <b>EPIC FAILURE</b>
<b>Flappers (1920s)</b>	<b>Hippies (1960s)</b>
<b>Personal Liberty Laws</b>  De Facto nullification of the fugitive slave law in the Compromise of 1850	<b>Lend Lease Act/Cash and Carry</b>  Somewhat ignoring the Neutrality Acts by gradually aiding Britain.
<b>FDR on Civil Rights</b>  New Deal programs employed blacks (in segregated capacities) Exec Order 8802 Prohibited discrimination in the defense industry  No advocacy of integration or federal anti-lynching legislation  Never lost a former Confederate state  FDR acted as a politician - his measures to employ blacks prompted black voters to join the New Deal Coalition (they'd previously tended to vote Republican) without alienating Southern whites.	<b>Truman on Civil Rights</b>  Advocated for a federal anti-lynching law Desegregated the Military  Lost FOUR former Confederate states in the 1948 election ("Dixiecrat" Party)  Truman acted without regard to the political implications of doing the right thing.