

# AP<sup>®</sup> African American Studies

---

**COURSE FRAMEWORK AND EXAM OVERVIEW**

**February 2022  
Preview**

# Contents

---

Acknowledgements	3–4
About AP	5–7
About the AP African American Studies Course	8
<b>Course Framework</b>	<b>9</b>
Course Framework Components	10
Skills	11
Course at a Glance	12
Unit 1: Origins of the African Diaspora	13–15
Unit 2: Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance	16–19
Unit 3: The Practice of Freedom	20–22
Unit 4: Movements and Debates	23–27
Instructional Exemplar: Unit 1 Origins of the African Diaspora	28–49
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>50</b>
Assessment Overview	51–52
Illustrative AP African American Studies Exam Questions	53–61
Question Alignment to Course Framework	62–63
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>64</b>
Research Summary	65–80
Sources for Consideration	81

# Acknowledgements

---

The Advanced Placement® Program would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their assistance with and contributions to the development of this course. All individuals' affiliations were current at the time of contribution.

## Development Committee (2022)

**Tiffany E. Barber**, *University of Delaware, Newark, DE*  
**Alysha Butler**, *McKinley Technology High School, Washington, D.C.*  
**Antoinette Dempsey-Waters**, *Wakefield High School, Arlington, VA*  
**David G. Embrick**, *University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT*  
**Carlos Escobar**, *Felix Varela Senior High School, Miami, FL*  
**Patrice Francis**, *Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Atlanta, GA*  
**Nishani Frazier**, *University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS*  
**Jarvis R. Givens**, *Harvard University, Cambridge, MA*  
**Kerry Haynie**, *Duke University, Chapel Hill, NC*  
**Kamasi Hill**, *Evanston Township High School, Evanston, IL*  
**Lisa Hill**, *Hamden Hall Country Day School, Hamden, CT*  
**Evelyne Laurent-Perrault**, *University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA*  
**Robert J. Patterson**, *Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.*  
**Teresa Reed**, *University of Louisville, Louisville, KY*  
**Walter Rucker**, *Emory University, Atlanta, GA*  
**Darius Young**, *Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL*

## Advisory Board (2021)

**Herman Bennett**, *The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, New York, NY*  
**Daina Ramey Berry**, *University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX*  
**Greg Carr**, *Howard University, Washington, D.C.*  
**David G. Embrick**, *University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT*  
**Robert J. Patterson**, *Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.*  
**Rebecca VanDiver**, *Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN*

## Content Writing Team (2021)

**Tiffany E. Barber**, *University of Delaware, Newark, DE*  
**Joshua Bennett**, *Dartmouth University, Hanover, NH*  
**Carlos Escobar**, *Felix Varela Senior High School, Miami, FL*  
**Jarvis R. Givens**, *Harvard University, Cambridge, MA*  
**Joshua M. Myers**, *Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

## Advanced Placement Program Staff

**Armand Garcia**, *Director, AP African American Studies Assessment*

**Dana Kopelman**, *Executive Director, AP Instruction*

**Sarah Leonard**, *Director, AP Curriculum, Research, and Analysis*

**Kelly Stromberg**, *Executive Director, AP History/Social Sciences Curriculum and Assessment*

**Allison Thurber**, *Vice President, AP Curriculum and Assessment*

**Natasha Vasavada**, *Executive Director, AP New Course Development*

**Brandi Waters**, *Director, AP African American Studies*

# About AP

---

The Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies—with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both—while still in high school. Through AP courses in 38 subjects, each culminating in a challenging exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments, and see many sides of an issue—skills that prepare them for college and beyond. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most challenging curriculum available to them, and research indicates that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically experience greater academic success in college and are more likely to earn a college degree than non-AP students. Each AP teacher's syllabus is evaluated and approved by faculty from some of the nation's leading colleges and universities, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores; more than 3,300 institutions worldwide annually receive AP scores.

## AP Course Development

In an ongoing effort to maintain alignment with best practices in college-level learning, AP courses and exams emphasize challenging, research-based curricula aligned with higher education expectations.

Individual teachers are responsible for designing their own curriculum for AP courses and selecting appropriate college-level readings, assignments, and resources. This publication presents the content and skills that are the focus of the corresponding college course and that appear on the AP Exam. It also organizes the content and skills into a series of units that represent a sequence found in widely adopted college syllabi. The intention of this publication is to respect teachers' time and expertise by providing a roadmap that they can modify and adapt to their local priorities and preferences.

## Enrolling Students: Equity and Access

The Advanced Placement® Program strongly encourages educators to make equitable access a

guiding principle for their AP programs by giving all willing and academically prepared students the opportunity to participate in AP. We encourage the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underserved. The Advanced Placement® Program also believes that all students should have access to academically challenging coursework before they enroll in AP classes, which can prepare them for AP success. It is only through a commitment to equitable preparation and access that true equity and excellence can be achieved.

## Offering AP Courses: The AP Course Audit

The AP Program unequivocally supports the principle that each school implements its own curriculum that will enable students to develop the content understandings and skills described in the course framework.

While the unit sequence represented in this publication is optional, the AP Program does have a short list of curricular and resource requirements that must be fulfilled before a school can label a course "Advanced Placement" or "AP." Schools wishing to offer AP courses must participate in the AP Course Audit, a process through which AP teachers' course materials are reviewed by college faculty. The AP Course Audit was created to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements for AP courses and to help colleges and universities validate courses marked "AP" on students' transcripts. This process ensures that AP teachers' courses meet or exceed the curricular and resource expectations that college and secondary school faculty have established for college-level courses.

The AP Course Audit form is submitted by the AP teacher and the school principal (or designated administrator) to confirm awareness and understanding of the curricular and resource requirements. A syllabus or course outline, detailing how course requirements are met, is submitted by the AP teacher for review by college faculty.

Please visit [collegeboard.org/apcourseaudit](https://collegeboard.org/apcourseaudit) for

more information to support the preparation and submission of materials for the AP Course Audit.

## How the AP Program Is Developed

The scope of content for an AP course and exam is derived from an analysis of hundreds of syllabi and course offerings of colleges and universities. Using this research and data, a committee of college faculty and expert AP teachers work within the scope of the corresponding college course to articulate what students should know and be able to do upon the completion of the AP course. The resulting course framework is the heart of the course and exam description and serves as a blueprint of the content and skills that can appear on an AP Exam. See the appendix for a deeper summary of the AP African American Studies course research process.

The AP Development Committees are responsible for developing each AP Exam, ensuring the exam questions are aligned to the course framework. The AP Exam development process is a multiyear endeavor; all AP Exams undergo extensive review, revision, piloting, and analysis to ensure that questions are accurate, fair, and valid, and that there is an appropriate spread of difficulty across the questions.

Committee members are selected to represent a variety of perspectives and institutions (public and private, small and large schools and colleges), and a range of gender, racial/ethnic, and regional groups. A list of each subject's current AP Development Committee members is available on [apcentral.collegeboard.org](https://apcentral.collegeboard.org).

Throughout AP course and exam development, the Advanced Placement® Program gathers feedback from various stakeholders from secondary schools, higher education institutions, and disciplinary organizations. This feedback is carefully considered to ensure that AP courses and exams are able to provide students with a college-level learning experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications for advanced placement or college credit.

## How AP Exams Are Scored

The exam scoring process, like the course and exam development process, relies on the expertise of both AP teachers and college faculty. While multiple-choice questions are scored by machine, the free-response questions and through-course performance

assessments, as applicable, are scored by thousands of college faculty and expert AP teachers. Most are scored at the annual AP Reading, while a small portion is scored online. All AP Readers are thoroughly trained, and their work is monitored throughout the Reading for fairness and consistency. In each subject, a highly respected college faculty member serves as Chief Faculty Consultant and, with the help of AP Readers in leadership positions, maintains the accuracy of the scoring standards. Scores on the free-response questions and performance assessments are weighted and combined with the results of the computer-scored multiple-choice questions, and this raw score is converted into a composite AP score on a 1–5 scale.

AP Exams are **not** norm-referenced or graded on a curve. Instead, they are criterion-referenced, which means that every student who meets the criteria for an AP score of 2, 3, 4, or 5 will receive that score, no matter how many students that is. The criteria for the number of points students must earn on the AP Exam to receive scores of 3, 4, or 5—the scores that research consistently validates for credit and placement purposes—include:

- The number of points successful college students earn when their professors administer AP Exam questions to them.
- The number of points researchers have found to be predictive that an AP student will succeed when placed into a subsequent, higher-level college course.
- Achievement-level descriptions formulated by college faculty who review each AP Exam question.

## Using and Interpreting AP Scores

The extensive work done by college faculty and AP teachers in the development of the course and exam and throughout the scoring process ensures that AP Exam scores accurately represent students' achievement in the equivalent college course. Frequent and regular research studies establish the validity of AP scores as follows:

AP Score	Credit Recommendation	College Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A
4	Well qualified	A-, B+, B
3	Qualified	B-, C+, C
2	Possibly qualified	n/a
1	No recommendation	n/a

While colleges and universities are responsible for setting their own credit and placement policies, most private colleges and universities award credit and/or advanced placement for AP scores of 3 or higher. Additionally, most states in the U.S. have adopted statewide credit policies that ensure college credit for scores of 3 or higher at public colleges and universities. To confirm a specific college's AP credit/placement policy, a search engine is available at [apstudent.org/credtpolicies](http://apstudent.org/credtpolicies).

### BECOMING AN AP READER

Each June, thousands of AP teachers and college faculty members from around the world gather for seven days in multiple locations to evaluate and score the free-response sections of the AP Exams. Ninety-eight percent of surveyed educators who took part in the AP Reading say it was a positive experience.

There are many reasons to consider becoming an AP Reader, including opportunities to:

- Bring positive changes to the classroom: Surveys show that the vast majority of returning AP Readers—both high school and college educators—make improvements to the way they teach or score because of their experience at the AP Reading.

- Gain in-depth understanding of AP Exam and AP scoring standards: AP Readers gain exposure to the quality and depth of the responses from the entire pool of AP Exam takers, and thus are better able to assess their students' work in the classroom.
- Receive compensation: AP Readers are compensated for their work during the Reading. Expenses, lodging, and meals are covered for Readers who travel.
- Score from home: AP Readers have online distributed scoring opportunities for certain subjects. Check [collegeboard.org/apreading](http://collegeboard.org/apreading) for details.
- Earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs): AP Readers earn professional development hours and CEUs that can be applied to PD requirements by states, districts, and schools.

### How to Apply

Visit [collegeboard.org/apreading](http://collegeboard.org/apreading) for eligibility requirements and to start the application process.

# About the AP African American Studies Course

---

AP African American Studies is an interdisciplinary course that examines the diversity of African American experiences through direct encounters with authentic and varied sources. The course focuses on four thematic units that move across the instructional year chronologically, providing students opportunities to examine key topics that extend from the medieval kingdoms of West Africa to the ongoing challenges and achievements of the contemporary moment. Given the interdisciplinary character of African American studies, students in the course will develop skills across multiple fields, with an emphasis on developing historical, literary, visual, and data analysis skills. This new course foregrounds a study of the diversity of Black communities in the United States within the broader context of Africa and the African diaspora.

## Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply lenses from multiple disciplines to evaluate key concepts, historical developments, and processes that have shaped Black experiences and debates within the field of African American studies.
- Identify the intersections of race, gender, and class, as well as connections between Black communities, in the United States and the broader African diaspora in the past and present.
- Analyze perspectives in text-based, data, and visual sources to develop well-supported arguments applied to real-world problems.
- Demonstrate understanding of the diversity, strength, and complexity of African societies and their global connections before the emergence of transatlantic slavery.
- Evaluate the political, historical, aesthetic, and transnational contexts of major social movements, including their past, present, and future implications.
- Develop a broad understanding of the many strategies African American communities have employed to represent themselves authentically, promote advancement, and combat the effects of inequality and systemic marginalization locally and abroad.
- Identify major themes that inform literary and artistic traditions of the African diaspora.
- Describe the formalization of African American studies and new directions in the field as part of ongoing efforts to articulate Black experiences and perspectives and create a more just and inclusive future.

## College Course Equivalent

AP African American Studies is designed to be the equivalent of an introductory college or university course in African American studies.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for AP African American Studies. Students should be able to read college-level texts and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.



**AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

---

# Course Framework

# Course Framework Components

---

## Overview

This course framework provides a description of what students should know and be able to do to qualify for college credit or placement.

The course framework includes the following components:

### SKILLS

The skills are central to the study and practice of African American studies. Students should develop and apply the described skills on a regular basis over the span of the course.

### COURSE AT A GLANCE

The course at a glance provides an outline of all four units of the course as well as the weekly instructional focus for each unit.

### TOPICS

Each weekly instructional focus is broken down into teachable segments called topics. The course topics and topic descriptions outline the essential content knowledge students should learn through multidisciplinary source analysis. Although most topics can be taught in one or two class periods, teachers are encouraged to modify instructional pacing to suit the needs of their students and school.

**Note to the AP African American Studies symposium participants:** the breadth of topics is currently larger than what is found in any one semester of introductory African American studies courses at colleges. We anticipate a 10-20% reduction of topics based on feedback from the Symposium.

### UNIT 1 INSTRUCTIONAL EXEMPLAR: ORIGINS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

The instructional exemplar for Unit 1 provides an example of the deeper content and instructional guidance teachers will receive in the course and exam description. This section includes:

- **Learning Objectives:** Learning objectives define what a student should be able to do with content knowledge. Learning objectives pair skills with disciplinary knowledge.
- **Source Encounters:** For almost every topic, a recommended source is provided to help focus and guide instruction of the topic. Sources invite interdisciplinary learning and analysis.
- **Essential Knowledge:** Essential knowledge statements comprise the knowledge required to demonstrate mastery of the learning objective.
- **Suggested Instructional Resources:** Where possible, instructional resources are listed that might help teachers address a particular topic in their classroom.

The full course and exam description will articulate this information for every topic across all four units of the course.

# Skills

The AP African American Studies skills describe what students should be able to do while exploring course topics and examining sources. These skills are embedded and spiraled throughout the course, providing routine opportunities for students to develop and practice these skills and then transfer and apply those skills on the AP assessments.

---

## Skill Category 1

### Applying Disciplinary Knowledge

Explain course concepts, developments, patterns, and processes (e.g., cultural, historical, political, social).

**Skill 1.A** Identify and explain course concepts, developments, and processes.

**Skill 1.B** Explain the context of a specific event, development, or process.

**Skill 1.C** Identify and explain patterns or other relationships (continuities, changes, causation).

---

## Skill Category 2

### Written Source Analysis

Evaluate written sources, including historical documents, literary texts, and music lyrics.

**Skill 2.A** Identify and explain an author's claim(s), evidence, and reasoning.

**Skill 2.B** Describe a written source's perspective, purpose, context, and audience, and explain the significance of the source's perspective, purpose, context and audience.

**Skill 2.C** Explain the function of character, setting, word choice, imagery, and/or symbols in a written source.

---

## Skill Category 3

### Data Analysis

Interpret data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, surveys, and infographics.

**Skill 3.A** Identify and describe patterns and trends in data.

**Skill 3.B** Draw conclusions based on patterns, trends, and limitations in data, making connections to relevant course content.

---

## Skill Category 4

### Visual Analysis

Analyze visual artifacts, including works of art and material culture.

**Skill 4.A** Describe a visual source's perspective, purpose, context, and audience, and explain the significance of the source's perspective, purpose, context, and audience.

**Skill 4.B** Explain how an artist's techniques, materials, or style achieve a particular effect or elicit a specific response.

---

## Skill Category 5

### Argumentation

Develop an argument using a line of reasoning to connect claims and evidence.

**Skill 5.A** Articulate a defensible claim.

**Skill 5.B** Support a claim or argument using specific and relevant evidence.

**Skill 5.C** Use reasoning to guide the audience through a well-supported argument.

---

# Course at a Glance

## Units and Weekly Instructional Focus

### Unit 1: Origins of the African Diaspora

5 weeks

- Africa: First Look
- The Strength and Reach of West African Empires
- Intercultural Forces in African Kingdoms and City-States
- Gender, Community, and Knowledge Production
- Envisioning Early Africa in African American Studies

### Unit 2: Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance

8 weeks

- Atlantic Africans and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- The Middle Passage
- Communal Life, Labor, and Law
- Gender and Reformation of Kinship
- Strategies for Change, Part 1
- Strategies for Change, Part 2
- Black Identities
- Abolition and the Politics of Memory

### Unit 3: The Practice of Freedom

7 Weeks

- Reconstruction and Black Politics
- Uplift Ideology
- The New Negro Renaissance
- Art, Literature, and Music
- Migrations, Pan-Africanism, and Black Internationalism
- [AP Extended Essay]

### Unit 4: Movements and Debates

8 weeks

- Anti-Colonial Movements and Military Service
- The Long Civil Rights Movement
- Black Power, Black Arts, Black Pride, and the Birth of Black Studies
- The Black Feminist Movement, Womanism, and Intersectionality
- African American Studies: Movements and Methods
- Diversity Within Black Communities
- Black Lives Today
- New Directions in African American Studies

# Unit 1: Origins of the African Diaspora

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Africa: First Look

<b>TOPIC 1.1</b>	Introduction to African American Studies and Interdisciplinarity	This topic introduces the interdisciplinary field of African American studies and invites students to explore multiple perspectives by examining works of art.
<b>TOPIC 1.2</b>	Exploring Africa's Geographic Diversity	This topic explores the diversity of Africa's primary regions and climate zones using maps. Students can examine misconceptions through readings, such as the essay "How to Write About Africa" by Binyavanga Wainaina.
<b>TOPIC 1.3</b>	Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Bantu Dispersals	This topic explores how the Bantu dispersals affected linguistic diversity across African regions. Students may investigate maps and music selections to examine this topic.
<b>TOPIC 1.4</b>	Geography, Climate, and the Emergence of Empires	This topic explores the influence of Africa's geography on settlement and trade and encourages examination of African climate zone maps.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: The Strength and Reach of West African Empires

<b>TOPIC 1.5</b>	The Sudanic Empires: Ghana	This topic explores the role of geography and the influence of Islam on ancient Ghana. Students may examine selections of historical texts describing Ghana's strength, such as Al-Bakri's <i>Book of Routes and Realms</i> (1068).
<b>TOPIC 1.6</b>	The Sudanic Empires: Mali	This topic explores how Mali's geographic location and material wealth led to its rise to power and ability to eclipse ancient Ghana. Students may apply textual and visual analysis to works of art and primary source documents.
<b>TOPIC 1.7</b>	The Sudanic Empires: Songhai	This topic explores how trade routes contributed to the rise and decline of the Songhai Empire using maps and primary source accounts.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Intercultural Forces in African Kingdoms and City-States

<b>TOPIC 1.8</b>	East Africa: The Swahili Coast	This topic explores the geographic and cultural factors that contributed to the rise and fall of the Swahili Coast's city-states. Students may analyze primary source accounts to build their understanding.
<b>TOPIC 1.9</b>	Southern Africa: Great Zimbabwe	This topic explores the significance of Great Zimbabwe's stone architecture by inviting students to study images of the walls and stone enclosure.
<b>TOPIC 1.10</b>	West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo	This topic explores the consequences of the Kingdom of Kongo's conversion to Christianity. Students may review primary source documents, such as letters, as well as artistic images.
<b>TOPIC 1.11</b>	Enslavement in Africa	This topic explores the characteristics of enslavement in West Africa prior to the Atlantic slave trade using historical documents related to voyages, such as those by Alvise Cadamosto.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Gender, Community, and Knowledge Production

<b>TOPIC 1.12</b>	Women and Leadership	This topic explores various facets of Queen Idia's and Queen Njinga's leadership by inviting students to consider art works and secondary texts.
<b>TOPIC 1.13</b>	Learning Traditions	This topic explores institutional and community-based models of education in medieval West African societies using historical accounts and oral histories.
<b>TOPIC 1.14</b>	Indigenous Cosmologies and Culture	This topic explores various belief systems in West African societies. Students can view and discuss musical performances from artists such as Osain del Monte.
<b>TOPIC 1.15</b>	Africans in Europe and European in Africa	This topic explores the factors that brought Africans to Europe and Europeans to Africa prior to the transatlantic slave trade. Students may have the opportunity to apply visual analysis to artworks and maps.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Envisioning Early Africa in African American Studies

---

**TOPIC 1.16** Reframing Early African History

This topic explores how African American studies reframes conceptions of early Africa and its relationship to people of African descent. Students may analyze secondary text selections from historians such as Nell Irvin Painter.

---

**TOPIC 1.17** Interdisciplinarity and Multiple Perspectives

This topic explores how the interdisciplinary approach of African American studies incorporates multiple perspectives. Students may read and discuss topics from among the key debates in African American studies as presented by scholars such as Henry Louis Gates Jr.

---

**TOPIC 1.18** Imagining Africa

This topic explores the question of Africa's relationship to African American ancestry and culture. Students may analyze poetry that expresses connections to and detachments from Africa, such as "Heritage" by Countee Cullen.

---

**TOPIC 1.19** Visualizing Early Africa

This topic explores techniques contemporary African American artists use in music, film, and performance to illustrate the diversity of African cultures and their influence on the African diaspora.

# Unit 2: Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Atlantic Africans and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

<b>TOPIC 2.1</b>	African Explorers in the Americas	This topic explores the various roles Africans played during colonization of the Americas in the 16th century. Students may analyze a primary source text or apply visual analysis to a work of art.
<b>TOPIC 2.2</b>	Origins and Overview of the Transatlantic Slave Trade	This topic explores the primary embarkation zones in West Africa used during the transatlantic slave trade. Students may examine a map of the transatlantic slave trade and a secondary text to build their awareness that the Africans who arrived in the U.S. originated from regions beyond West Africa.
<b>TOPIC 2.3</b>	Impact of the Slave Trade on West African Societies in Literature	This topic explores how African and African American authors often combine literary techniques with historical research to convey the impact of the slave trade on West African society. Students may read a short excerpt from a contemporary novel.
<b>TOPIC 2.4</b>	Architecture and Iconography of a Slave Ship	This topic explores the purpose, context, and audiences for slave ship diagrams circulated during and after the era of slavery. Students may examine archival images or modern art.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: The Middle Passage

<b>TOPIC 2.5</b>	Experiences of Capture and the Middle Passage	This topic explores narratives by formerly enslaved Africans that detail their experience of capture and the middle passage. Students may analyze literary techniques used in primary accounts, such as Olaudah Equiano's narrative, to also consider how these narratives served as political texts that aimed to end the dehumanizing slave trade.
<b>TOPIC 2.6</b>	Resistance on Slave Ships	This topic explores methods by which Africans resisted their commodification and enslavement during the Middle Passage. Students may examine a primary account, such as the transcript from the <i>Amistad</i> trial.
<b>TOPIC 2.7</b>	The Middle Passage in African American Poetry	This topic explores how African American writers use imagery and the senses to recount experiences of enslaved Africans' resistance and foreground resistance as endemic to the slave trade. Students may read or listen to a poem, such as Robert Hayden's "Middle Passage."



---

<b>TOPIC 2.8</b>	Slave Auctions and the Domestic Slave Trade	This topic explores the assault to the bodies, minds, and spirits of enslaved Africans at slave auctions and the physical and emotional effects of being sold to unknown territory. Students may analyze a narrative, poem, or historical broadside to build their understanding.
------------------	---	---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Communal Life, Labor, and Law

---

<b>TOPIC 2.9</b>	Labor and Economy	This topic explores the economic effects, within and outside African American communities, of enslaved people's commodification and labor using a narrative or secondary text.
------------------	-------------------	--

---

<b>TOPIC 2.10</b>	Slavery and American Law: Slave Codes and Landmark Cases	This topic explores the impact of slave codes and landmark cases intended to strip enslaved African Americans of their rights and freedoms and harden the color line in American society for free Blacks. Students may analyze selections from slave codes from different states.
-------------------	--	---

---

<b>TOPIC 2.11</b>	Faith Among Free and Enslaved African Americans	This topic explores the context in which various African American faith traditions emerged. Students may analyze a musical performance or apply textual analysis to a song lyric.
-------------------	---	---

---

<b>TOPIC 2.12</b>	Music, Art, and Creativity in African Diasporic Cultures	This topic explores how African Americans combined influences from African cultures and local sources to develop new musical and artistic forms of self-expression. Students may examine a work of art or poetry, such as those by David Drake.
-------------------	--	---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Gender and Reformation of Kinship

---

<b>TOPIC 2.13</b>	Gender and Slavery in Literature	This topic explores the impact of gender on women's experiences of enslavement, seeking freedom, and writing about their experiences. Students may read select passages from Harriet Jacob's <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself</i> , for example.
-------------------	----------------------------------	--

---

<b>TOPIC 2.14</b>	Reproduction and Racial Taxonomies	This topic explores the impact of <i>partus sequitur ventrem</i> on African American families and the emergence of racial taxonomies in the United States. Students may examine a secondary text, by Jennifer Morgan for example, to build knowledge of the emergence of race as a social construct and part of a system of classification.
-------------------	------------------------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 2.15</b>	Recreating Kinship and Traditions	This topic explores the disruptions slavery created for African American families and how enslaved people forged marital and kinship bonds despite these challenges. Students may analyze a poem, such as France Ellen Watkins Harper's "The Fugitive's Wife" or a selection from a narrative.
-------------------	-----------------------------------	--

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Strategies for Change, Part 1

---

**TOPIC 2.16** Race to the Promised Land:  
The Underground Railroad

This topic directly explores innovative methods of escape via the Underground Railroad. Students may analyze an example of visual or textual narratives, including Harriet Tubman's reflections as captured by a biographer.

---

**TOPIC 2.17** Fleeing Enslavement

This topic explores the accounts and experience of fleeing enslavement in pursuit of freedom. Students may investigate archival sources such as broadsides and kidnapping advertisements.

---

**TOPIC 2.18** The Maroons: Black  
Geographies and Autonomous  
Black Communities

This topic explores the creation of maroon societies and their lasting influence on the concept of *marronage*, using a selection from a secondary text.

---

**TOPIC 2.19** Legacies of the Haitian  
Revolution

This topic explores the immediate and long-term impacts of the Haitian Revolution on Black politics and historical memory. Students may analyze an excerpt from a Haitian founding document, such as the Haitian Constitution (1805) or Haiti's Declaration of Independence (1804) or a secondary text from anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot.

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Strategies for Change, Part 2

---

**TOPIC 2.20** Radical Resistance

This topic explores strategies advocating for radical resistance and the reception to those ideas. Students may analyze a text from leaders such as David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet.

---

**TOPIC 2.21** The "Common Wind" of Revolt  
Across the Diaspora

This topic explores the interconnecting influence of slave revolts and the impact of different strategies. Students may examine a secondary source on figures like Nat Turner, for example.

---

**TOPIC 2.22** Moral Suasion and Literary  
Protest

This topic explores the political strategies of moral suasion and radical resistance among African Americans in the United States. Students may analyze a primary text from authors such as Phillis Wheatley or a secondary text.

---

**TOPIC 2.23** Separatism: Emigration and  
Colonization

This topic explores various perspectives on African American emigration and colonization by reviewing a primary source document, such as a newspaper article or letter.

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Black Identities

---

**TOPIC 2.24** Integration: Transatlantic Abolitionism and Belonging in Antebellum America

This topic explores the influence of transatlantic abolitionism on Frederick Douglass' political views on the potential for African Americans' integration and belonging in American society. Students may analyze a text by Douglass, such as "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

---

**TOPIC 2.25** A Question of Naming: African and/or American

This topic explores factors that influenced African Americans' self-identification within American society. Students may examine a secondary source from a historian or analyze a primary source from a Black newspaper such as *The Liberator*.

---

**TOPIC 2.26** Black Women's Rights & Education

This topic explores the intersection of race and gender in African American women activists' advocacy for justice. Students may analyze a primary source speech.

---

**TOPIC 2.27** Black Pride

This topic explores John S. Rock's 1858 speech on Black pride and the significance of the concept for African American communities. Students may review and discuss the speech alongside another text, such as Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Abolition and the Politics of Memory

---

**TOPIC 2.28** The Civil War and Black Communities

This topic explores the contributions of free and enslaved African Americans in the U.S. Civil War. Students may examine a poem and archival images to deepen their knowledge.

---

**TOPIC 2.29** Theorizing Slavery and Resistance in African American Studies

This topic explores the utility of the concept of social death for understanding African American agency during the period of enslavement. Students may compare arguments from secondary texts related to this concept.

---

**TOPIC 2.30** The Afterlives of Slavery in Contemporary Culture

This topic explores artistic reflections on slavery's enduring legacy for African Americans. Students may analyze lyrics from a contemporary music selection.

---

**TOPIC 2.31** Commemorating the Ongoing Struggle for Freedom

This topic explores Juneteenth and its significance for African Americans prior to its recognition as a federal holiday. Students may analyze photographs of Jubilee celebrations.

---

# Unit 3: The Practice of Freedom

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Reconstruction and Black Politics

<b>TOPIC 3.1</b>	Reconstruction and Its Discontents	This topic explores the Reconstruction amendments that defined Black citizenship and Black leadership in the post-emancipation period. Students may analyze historical texts from writers such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington.
<b>TOPIC 3.2</b>	Health and Education for Freedpeople	This topic explores freedpeople's efforts to acquire educational and healthcare resources immediately after abolition and the institutions that supported these efforts. Students may review historical photographs of freedpeople's schools and hospitals and a selection from a scholarly text by an author such as Heather Williams.
<b>TOPIC 3.3</b>	Violence and White Supremacy	This topic explores Black responses to white retaliation against strides toward Black political and social advancement during and after Reconstruction. Students may explore the manifestations of racial terrorism physically (e.g., through lynching), socially, and in discriminatory policies through historical texts, by writers such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Claude McKay.
<b>TOPIC 3.4</b>	Reuniting Black Families	This topic traces African Americans' efforts to reconstruct their families in the 1860s and 1870s, including their searches for lost kin separated by slavery and their decisions to consecrate families through marriage. Students may explore these efforts through a primary source, such as a newspaper ad, or a scholarly source by writers such as Heather Williams and Tera Hunter.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Uplift Ideology

<b>TOPIC 3.5</b>	Racial Uplift	This topic explores ideas and strategies for Black social, political, and economic advancement within Black communities. Students may explore the speeches and writings of leaders such as Booker T. Washington and Henry McNeal Turner.
<b>TOPIC 3.6</b>	Black Suffrage and Women's Rights	This topic explores Black women's advocacy for justice and political inclusion at the intersection of race and gender in the late 19th century. Students may explore a speech or text from leaders such as Anna Julia Cooper and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.

---

<b>TOPIC 3.7</b>	HBCUs and Black Education	This topic introduces the founding of autonomous Black educational institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Students may examine historical photographs of these institutions and a text on Black education by Carter G. Woodson.
------------------	---------------------------	--

---

<b>TOPIC 3.8</b>	Labor and Economics	This topic examines the nature of Black labor and Black businesses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Students may examine the simultaneity of exploitative post-slavery labor systems (e.g., sharecropping and convict leasing) and the advent of Black inventions and businesses through a scholarly text and visual analysis of photographs.
------------------	---------------------	---

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: The New Negro Renaissance

---

<b>TOPIC 3.9</b>	The New Negro Movement	This topic explores new visions for Black identity that emerged around artistic and literary expression and social thought. Students may explore the influence of the New Negro Movement on the political ideas of subsequent movements through text by a writer such as Alain Locke.
------------------	------------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 3.10</b>	Black Expression	This topic explores diverse perspectives on the flourishing of African American artistic and expressive forms. Students may examine the influence of “New Negro” themes in the writings on art by figures such as Langston Hughes, George Schuyler, and Zora Neale Hurston.
-------------------	------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 3.11</b>	Everyday Life in Literature	This topic explores everyday life during the Harlem Renaissance as portrayed by an author such as Jean Toomer.
-------------------	-----------------------------	--

---

<b>TOPIC 3.12</b>	Black Identity in Literature	This topic explores aspects of Black identity, including colorism, through the literary works of Harlem Renaissance authors, such as Nella Larsen and Wallace Thurman.
-------------------	------------------------------	--

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Art, Literature, and Music

---

<b>TOPIC 3.13</b>	The Harlem Renaissance in Art	This topic explores elements of visual art from the Harlem Renaissance through the work of artists such as Palmer Hayden, Lois Mailou Jones, Romare Bearden, James Van Der Zee, and Aaron Douglass.
-------------------	-------------------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 3.14</b>	The Rise and Fall of Harlem	This topic explores reflections on the rise and fall of Harlem and its impact on African American communities in the U.S. and abroad. Students may explore reflections on the newly fashioned identities, emerging post-slavery folk traditions, or continuing effects of institutional racism from a writer, such as Ralph Ellison, Manuel Zapata Olivella, and James Weldon Johnson.
-------------------	-----------------------------	--

---

---

**TOPIC 3.15** Music and the Black National Anthem

This topic explores the musical genres that African Americans innovated in the early 20th century and the use of music for social and political purposes. Students may explore the contemporary prominence of what is known as the Black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” through sources by James Weldon Johnson and Imani Perry.

---

**TOPIC 3.16** Black in America: Reflections

This topic explores enduring themes in literature on Black experiences in the U.S. Students may examine a selection from Black writers, such as Paul Laurence Dunbar, W.E.B. Du Bois, and James Baldwin.

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Migrations, Pan-Africanism, and Black Internationalism

---

**TOPIC 3.17** The Great Migration

This topic explores the scale and impact of African American migration in the century after the Civil War, including motivations to escape racial oppression and political and economic marginalization in the U.S. South. Students may explore sources such as newspapers and photographs, the art of Jacob Lawrence, or scholarly texts, such as one from Isabel Wilkerson.

---

**TOPIC 3.18** Afro-Caribbean Migration to the U.S.

This topic examines the wave of Afro-Caribbean migration to the U.S. and the influence of changing demographics on African American political thought. Students may explore this process through a figure like Arturo Schomburg or an excerpt from the writings of Wilfred A. Domingo.

---

**TOPIC 3.19** Marcus Garvey and the UNIA

This topic explores the influence of Marcus Garvey and the founding of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) on the Black political sphere in the early twentieth century. Students may examine political ideas in a speech from Marcus Garvey or a debate between Garvey and other African American leaders.

---

**TOPIC 3.20** The Pan-African Congresses

This topic explores the political concept of Pan-Africanism, including its roots in the collective experiences of Afro-descendants throughout the world and response to European colonialization in Africa. Students may explore contrasting perspectives on Pan-Africanist approaches through texts from authors such as W.E.B. Du Bois or George Schuyler.

## Unit 4: Movements and Debates

### Weekly Instructional Focus: Anti-Colonial Movements and Military Service

<b>TOPIC 4.1</b>	Anti-Colonial Politics and the African Diaspora	This topic explores the writings of Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon on the impact of colonialism and racism on Black consciousness and the influence of this work on Black political movements in the U.S.
<b>TOPIC 4.2</b>	The Négritude Movement	This topic explores the literary and political influence of the Négritude Movement, including the influences of the Harlem Renaissance and its promotion of Black cultural pride throughout the diaspora. Students may examine selections of a text by Aimé Césaire.
<b>TOPIC 4.3</b>	African Americans and the U.S. Occupation of Haiti	This topic explores the impact of the U.S. occupation of Haiti on Black political discourse in the U.S. Students may explore how the occupation influenced ideas about transnational Black identity and American values through an excerpt from the writings of James Weldon Johnson.
<b>TOPIC 4.4</b>	Black Military Service and the G.I. Bill	This topic explores Black military service and the differential benefits of the G.I. Bill for White and Black veterans. Students may examine historical photographs and selections from a scholarly text.

### Weekly Instructional Focus: The Long Civil Rights Movement

<b>TOPIC 4.5</b>	Segregation, Discrimination, and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement	This topic explores the impact of Jim Crow-era segregation and discrimination in the areas of housing and education. It also foregrounds the grassroots organizing at the foundation of the Civil Rights Movement. Students may examine primary sources such as maps, newspaper articles, or selections from landmark cases including <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> .
<b>TOPIC 4.6</b>	The Big Four: NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, CORE	This topic explores unique facets of the major organizations, ideas, and events of the Civil Rights Movement, with special emphasis on the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Students may examine historical photographs, a primary source text, or a selection from a scholarly text.

---

<b>TOPIC 4.7</b>	Civil Rights Leaders	This topic explores distinctions between major political leaders of the Civil Rights era. Students may examine speeches, a primary source text, and photographs of leaders such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X.
------------------	----------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 4.8</b>	Faith and the Sounds of the Civil Rights Movement	This topic explores the impact of faith, religious organizations, and music on Black advocacy for civil rights. It focuses on African Americans' use of music for empowerment and to express visions for a better future. Students may examine lyrics, performances, or a selection from a scholarly text on the freedom songs of the Civil Rights Movement.
------------------	---	--

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Black Power, Black Arts, Black Pride, and the Birth of Black Studies

---

<b>TOPIC 4.9</b>	The Black Power Movement and the Black Panther Party	This topic introduces the political shift of the Black Power Movement through the lens of the Black Panther Party. Students may examine photographs and a text featuring leaders such as Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.
------------------	--	--

---

<b>TOPIC 4.10</b>	The Black Arts Movement	This topic explores the influence of the Black Power Movement on the emergence of the Black Arts Movement's artist-activists and intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s. Students may examine various forms of visual art and an example of the writings of Amiri Baraka.
-------------------	-------------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 4.11</b>	The Black Is Beautiful Movement	This topic explores how the movement to express pride in aesthetic and cultural elements of Black heritage became an instrument of Black joy and liberation. Students may examine excerpts from articles in <i>Ebony</i> magazine or Elizabeth Catlett's piece, "Negro es Bello."
-------------------	---------------------------------	---

---

<b>TOPIC 4.12</b>	Student Protest and the Birth of Black Studies	This topic explores the birth of the field of Black studies from student-led protest and the political and cultural movements of the late 1960s and 1970s. Students may examine a primary or secondary source on the founding of Black studies departments across the nation, including from writers like June Jordan and Fabio Rojas.
-------------------	--	--

---



## Weekly Instructional Focus: The Black Feminist Movement, Womanism, and Intersectionality

---

<b>TOPIC 4.13</b> The Black Feminist Movement and Womanism	This topic explores the Black feminist movement, the concept of womanism, and approaches that center the unique everyday experiences of Black women. Students may analyze a text such as the Combahee River Collective Statement or an excerpt from writers such as Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Alice Walker, or Audre Lorde.
<b>TOPIC 4.14</b> African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race	This topic explores scholarship on the intersections of analyses of race, power, and Black women's experiences in a text by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham.
<b>TOPIC 4.15</b> Intersectionality and Activism	This topic examines intersectionality as an analytical framework and its connection to Chicana and Asian American feminist thought. Students may explore a text from the writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, or Angela Davis.
<b>TOPIC 4.16</b> Black Feminist Literary Thought	This topic explores the literary contributions of Black feminist and womanist writers. Students may examine a literary text from authors such as Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, bell hooks, and Nikki Giovanni.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: African American Studies: Movements and Methods

---

<b>TOPIC 4.17</b> The Black Intellectual Tradition	This topic explores the development of a Black intellectual tradition before and after slavery at the foundations of Black studies. Students may examine a text by Manning Marable and Darlene Clark Hine.
<b>TOPIC 4.18</b> Movements and Methods in Black Studies	This topic explores how Black social and political movements shaped Black studies and the impact of institutionalization in universities on the field. Students may examine a text by Sylvia Wynter.
<b>TOPIC 4.19</b> Black Queer Studies	This topic explores the concept of the queer of color critique, grounded in Black feminism and intersectionality, as a Black studies lens that shifts sexuality studies toward racial analysis. Students may examine texts by writers such as Cathy Cohen, Roderick Ferguson, or E. Patrick Johnson.
<b>TOPIC 4.20</b> Afrocentricity in Black Studies	This topic explores the lens of Afrocentricity in Black studies and its influence on Black cultural practices. Students may examine a text by a writer such as Molefi Kete Asante.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Diversity Within Black Communities

---

<b>TOPIC 4.21</b> Demographic Diversity in African American Communities	This topic explores the diverse experiences and identities of Black communities in the U.S. in areas such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, class, language, or education, with specific attention to the last 20 years. Students may analyze a data set from the Pew Research Center's reports on African Americans.
<b>TOPIC 4.22</b> "Postracial" Racism and Colorblindness	This topic explores concepts such as postracialism, colorblindness, racecraft, or inequality through a scholarly text by authors such as Eduardo Bonilla Silva and Barbara J. Fields.
<b>TOPIC 4.23</b> Politics and Class in African American Communities	This topic explores the diversity of political and economic affiliations among African Americans and the range of perspectives held on various political issues. Students may examine a selection of scholarly texts or a data set from the Pew Research Center's reports on African Americans.
<b>TOPIC 4.24</b> Religion and Faith in Black Communities	This topic explores Black Liberation Theology and connects to contemporary debates on the role of religious activism as a tool for overcoming anti-Black racism and oppression. Students may analyze a text from scholars such as James Cone and Jacquelyn Grant.

## Weekly Instructional Focus: Black Lives Today

---

<b>TOPIC 4.25</b> Medicine, Technology, and the Environment	This topic explores the impact of the intersections of race, medicine, technology, and the environment on the lives of African Americans. Students may examine inequities and opportunities for change in these areas through a scholarly text.
<b>TOPIC 4.26</b> Incarceration and Abolition	This topic explores the long history of Black incarceration from the 13th Amendment to the present and the influence of 19th-century policies on the prison industrial complex. Students may examine the relationship between carceral studies and abolition movements in the work of a scholar such as Michelle Alexander.
<b>TOPIC 4.27</b> The Evolution of African American Music	The topic explores the evolution of the African American music and its influence on broader American musical production. Students may examine performances and scholarship in ethnomusicology from a writer such as Portia Maultsby and Amiri Baraka.

---

**TOPIC 4.28** Black Vernacular, Pop Culture, and Cultural Appropriation

This topic explores the concept of cultural appropriation and the influence of African American communities on popular culture and American vernacular. Students may examine a scholarly text or an analysis of social networks such as Black Twitter.

---

## Weekly Instructional Focus: New Directions in African American Studies

---

**TOPIC 4.29** Movements for Black Lives

This topic explores the origins, mission, and global influence of the Black Lives Matter movement and the Movement for Black Lives. Students may examine a primary source text, photographs, or a secondary text from scholars such as Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor and Leslie Kay Jones.

---

**TOPIC 4.30** The Reparations Movement

This topic explores the case for reparations for the centuries-long enslavement and legal discrimination of African Americans in the U.S. Students may examine House Bill H.R. 40 and a text by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

---

**TOPIC 4.31** Black Study and Black Struggle in the 21st Century

This topic explores reflections on the evolution of Black studies and the field's salience in the present through a text by scholars, such as Robin D.G. Kelley.

---

**TOPIC 4.32** Black Futures and Afrofuturism

This topic explores the cultural aesthetics and practices of Afrofuturism. Students may examine a scholarly or literary text or film such as an example from the writings of Octavia Butler, Tiffany E. Barber, or the film *Black Panther*.

**UNIT 1 INSTRUCTIONAL EXEMPLAR:**  
**Origins of the African  
Diaspora**

5 WEEKS

# Unit at a Glance

Topic #	Topic Title	Instructional Periods	Skill Focus
<b>Africa: First Look</b>			
1.1	Introduction to African American Studies and Interdisciplinarity	1	1.A
1.2	Exploring Africa's Geographic Diversity	1	3.B
1.3	Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Bantu Dispersals	2	1.B
1.4	Geography, Climate, and the Emergence of Empires	1	1.C
<b>The Strength and Reach of West African Empires</b>			
1.5	The Sudanic Empires: Ghana	1	1.C
1.6	The Sudanic Empires: Mali	2	1.B, 2.B
1.7	The Sudanic Empires: Songhai	1	1.C
<b>Intercultural Forces in African Kingdoms and City States</b>			
1.8	East Africa: The Swahili Coast	1	1.A
1.9	Southern Africa: Great Zimbabwe	1	4.B
1.10	West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo	1	1.B
1.11	Enslavement in Africa	1	1.A
<b>Gender, Community, and Knowledge Production</b>			
1.12	Women and Leadership	2	4.B
1.13	Learning Traditions	1	1.C
1.14	Indigenous Cosmologies and Culture	1	1.A
1.15	Africans in Europe and Europeans in Africa	1	1.B
<b>Envisioning Early Africa in African American Studies</b>			
1.16	Reframing Early African History	1	5.A
1.17	Interdisciplinarity and Multiple Perspectives	1	5.B
1.18	Imagining Africa	1	2.C
1.19	Visualizing Early Africa	1	4.A

**TOPIC 1.1**

# Introduction to African American Studies and Interdisciplinarity

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1.A

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Describe how the interdisciplinary approach of African American studies incorporates multiple perspectives.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- “*I Go To Prepare A Place For You*” (2021) by Bisa Butler

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.1.A.1** African American studies explores the experiences of people of African descent and their connections to the wider world from their own perspectives.
- **1.1.A.2** African American studies is an interdisciplinary field that integrates knowledge and analysis from multiple disciplines to examine a problem, question, or artifact more effectively than through a single disciplinary perspective.
- **1.1.A.3** Bisa Butler’s artwork exemplifies the incorporation of multiple perspectives that is characteristic of African American studies. Her quilted portraits draw from African American quilting traditions to integrate historical, religious, diasporic, and gender perspectives (among others) in a visual and tactile format.
- **1.1.A.4** Bisa Butler’s *I Go To Prepare a Place For You* contextualizes Harriet Tubman’s legacy, emphasizes Black women’s beauty and strength, illustrates the link between faith and leadership in Tubman’s life, and draws connections between African Americans and Africa.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- Compare Butler’s piece (2021) to the work that inspired it: Benjamin F. Powelson’s carte-de-visite portrait of Harriet Tubman (1868–1869).

**TOPIC 1.2**

# Exploring Africa's Geographic Diversity

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 3.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Describe the diversity of Africa's primary regions and climate zones.
- 

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Physical and political maps of Africa
  - "How to Write About Africa" (2005) by Binyavanga Wainaina
- 

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.2.A.1** As the second-largest continent in the world, Africa is geographically diverse. There are five main geographic regions: North Africa, East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, and Southern Africa.
  - **1.2.A.2** The African continent is made up of five primary climate zones: desert (e.g., the Sahara), semi-arid (e.g., the Sahel), savanna grasslands, tropical rainforests, and the Mediterranean zone.
  - **1.2.A.3** Binyavanga Wainaina's satirical essay "How to Write About Africa" critiques Western depictions of Africa that rely on negative stereotypes and oversimplify the continent's complexity, diversity, and centrality to humanity's past and present. The essay encourages the reader to develop a more complex understanding of Africa's 54 countries, including ongoing changes in the landscapes, cultures, and political formations within them.
-

**TOPIC 1.3**

# Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Bantu Dispersals

Instructional Periods: 2 periods  
Skills Focus: 1.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Describe the causes and effects of the Bantu dispersals on the linguistic diversity of West and Central Africa.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Map of Bantu dispersals
- **Miriam Makeba performing “Qongqothwane,”** a Xhosa wedding song
- Selection from “Dispersals and Genetic Adaptation of Bantu-Speaking Populations in Africa and North America” (2017) by Etienne Patin et al.

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.3.A.1** Africa is the ancestral home of thousands of ethnic groups and languages.
  - **1.3.A.2** Two important factors contributed to population growth among Bantu-speaking peoples in West Africa, triggering a series of migrations throughout the continent from 1500 BCE to 500 CE:
    - ♦ Technological innovations (e.g., the development of iron tools and weapons)
    - ♦ Agricultural innovations (e.g., cultivating bananas, yams, and cereals).
  - **1.3.A.3** Bantu-speaking peoples’ linguistic influences spread throughout the continent. Today, the Bantu linguistic family contains hundreds of languages that are spoken throughout West, Central, and Southern Africa (e.g., Xhosa, Swahili, Kikongo, Zulu). Western and Central African Bantu speakers also represent a large portion of the genetic ancestry of African Americans.
-



**TOPIC 1.4**

# Geography, Climate, and the Emergence of Empires

Instructional Periods: 1 period  
Skills Focus: 1.C

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain how Africa's varied geography influenced patterns of settlement and trade between diverse cultural regions in West Africa.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Map of African climate zones

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.4.A.1** Variations in climate and geography in West Africa facilitated opportunities for regional trade.
    - ♦ In desert and semiarid areas, herders were often nomadic, moving in search of food and water, and some traded salt.
    - ♦ In the Sahel, people traded livestock.
    - ♦ In the savannas, people cultivated grain crops.
    - ♦ In the tropical rainforests, people grew kola trees and yams and traded gold.
  - **1.4.A.2** Medieval empires strategically emerged in the Sahel and the savanna grasslands for three important reasons:
    - ♦ Fertile land supported the growth of agriculture and domestication of animals.
    - ♦ Water routes (e.g., the Senegal and Niger rivers) facilitated the movement of people and goods through trade.
    - ♦ The Sahel and savannas connected trade between communities in the Sahara to the north and in the tropical regions to the south.
-

**TOPIC 1.5**

# The Sudanic Empires: Ghana

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1.C

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Describe the influence of geography and Islam on the empire of ancient Ghana.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selection from *Book of Routes and Realms* (1068) by Abu Ubaydallah Al-Bakri
- Map of the Sudanic empires

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.5.A.1** The ancient empire of Ghana grew as a confederation of Soninke settlements along the Senegal and Niger rivers (throughout the seventh and 13th centuries). These water routes contributed to Ghana's rise through regional trade.
  - **1.5.A.2** Ancient Ghana's wealth and power came from its gold. Arab writers nicknamed its capital city, Kumbi Saleh, "land of the gold."
  - **1.5.A.3** Along with Muslim scholars, jurists, and administrators, trans-Saharan trade played an essential role in introducing Islam to the region. Despite the spread of Islam, many Soninke people continued to follow indigenous spiritual practices, causing divisions within the empire and its leadership.
  - **1.5.A.4** The Ancient Ghana (located in present-day Mauritania and Mali) was eventually incorporated into the Mali Empire as a vassal state.
-

**TOPIC 1.6**

# The Sudanic Empires: Mali

Instructional Periods: 2 periods

Skills Focus: 1.B, 2.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain how Mali's geographic location and material wealth led to its rise to power and ability to eclipse ancient Ghana.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selection from *The Rihla* (1355) by Ibn Battuta
- Images of Mali's terracotta horseman sculptures

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.6.A.1** The Mali Empire emerged during the decline of ancient Ghana, flourishing between the 13th and 17th centuries. Like ancient Ghana, the Mali Empire was renowned for its gold and its strategic positioning. It was located at the nexus of multiple routes that connected trade from the Sahara (toward Europe) to sub-Saharan Africa.
- **1.6.A.2** Mali's wealth and access to trade routes enabled its leaders to crossbreed powerful North African horses and purchase steel weapons. These tools gave Mali an advantage over foot soldiers and contributed to the empire's ability to centralize and extend power over local groups.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- Selection from "Mansa Musa and Global Mali," a chapter in Michael Gomez's *African Dominion: A New History of Empire in Early and Medieval West Africa* that contextualizes Ibn Battuta's text

**TOPIC 1.6 continued**

# The Sudanic Empires: Mali

Instructional Periods: 2 periods

Skills Focus: 1.B, 2.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- B. Explain what sources like the *Catalan Atlas* reveal about how non-African groups perceived the wealth and power of West African empires.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- *Catalan Atlas* (1375), created by Abraham Cresque

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.6.B.1** The wealth and power of the Mali Empire attracted the interest of merchants and cartographers across the eastern Mediterranean to southern Europe, prompting plans to trade manufactured goods for gold.
-

**TOPIC 1.7**

# The Sudanic Empires: Songhai

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1.C

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain how trade routes contributed to the rise and decline of the Songhai Empire.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selection from *History and Description of Africa* (1550) by Leo Africanus
- Map of the Sahelian/Sudanic empires

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.7.A.1** The Songhai Empire emerged from the Mali Empire and achieved preeminence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Acquiring revenue from taxes and trans-Saharan trade, Songhai eclipsed the Mali Empire through territorial expansion, the codification of its laws, and its establishment of a central administration with representation from conquered ethnic groups.
  - **1.7.A.2** The Songhai Empire was undermined in part by internal strife and the diversion of trade from trans-Saharan to Atlantic trade routes, occasioned by Portuguese exploration along the coast of western Africa and the European trade that followed. Shifting trade routes diminished the empire's wealth, as gold-producing regions increasingly benefited from direct access to non-African markets.
-

**TOPIC 1.8**

# East Africa: The Swahili Coast

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1.A

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain the geographic and cultural factors that contributed to the rise and fall of the Swahili Coast's city-states.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selection from *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* (1514) by Duarte Barbosa
- Map of Swahili Coast trade routes

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.8.A.1** The Swahili Coast (named from *sawahil*, the Arabic word for *coasts*) stretches from Somalia to Mozambique. The coastal location of its city-states linked Africa's interior to Arab, Persian, Indian, and Chinese trading communities.
- **1.8.A.2** Between the 11th and 15th centuries, the Swahili Coast city-states were united by their shared language (Swahili, a Bantu lingua franca) and a shared religion (Islam).
- **1.8.A.3** The strength of these trading states garnered the attention of the Portuguese, who invaded major city-states and established settlements in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to control Indian Ocean trade.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- **"The Swahili Coast,"** a video clip (2:59) from the PBS series, *Africa's Great Civilizations*

**TOPIC 1.9**

# Southern Africa: Great Zimbabwe

Instructional Periods: 1 period  
Skills Focus: 4.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Describe the aesthetic elements and functions of Great Zimbabwe's stone architecture.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Images of Great Zimbabwe's walls and stone enclosures

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.9.A.1** Great Zimbabwe was linked to trade on the Swahili Coast, and its inhabitants, the Shona people, became wealthy from its gold, ivory, and cattle resources.
- **1.9.A.2** Great Zimbabwe is best known for its large stone architecture, including the Great Enclosure, which served the purposes of military defense and religious rituals.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- **"The City of Great Zimbabwe,"** a video clip (2:36) from the PBS series *Africa's Great Civilizations*

**TOPIC 1.10**

# West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo

Instructional Periods: 1 period  
Skills Focus: 1.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Identify short- and long-term consequences of the Kingdom of Kongo's conversion to Christianity.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selection from a letter by Afonso I, King of Kongo, to Manuel I, King of Portugal, 5 October 1514"
- [Images of Kongo Christian artworks](#)

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.10.A.1** In the late 15th century, King Nzinga and his son Afonso I converted the West Central African Kingdom of Kongo to Roman Catholicism to secure a political and economic alliance with the Portuguese monarchy. This had three important effects:
  - ♦ It increased Kongo's wealth through trade in ivory, salt, copper, and textiles.
  - ♦ The Portuguese demanded access to the trade of enslaved people in exchange for military assistance. Despite persistent requests made to the king of Portugal, Kongo's nobility was unable to limit the number of captives. This region (Kongo, along with the greater Central Africa region and West Africa) was the largest source of enslaved people in the history of the Atlantic slave trade.
  - ♦ A syncretic blend of Christian and indigenous religious beliefs and practices emerged.
- **1.10.A.2** In the Americas, West Central Africans continued the practice of merging forms of Christianity with African beliefs to create new syncretic faiths.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- Selection from *The Art of Conversion: Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* by Cécile Fromont



**TOPIC 1.11**

# Enslavement in Africa

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1.A

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Identify characteristics of enslavement in West Africa before the Atlantic slave trade.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selections from *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century* edited (2015) by G.R. Crone

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.11.A.1** Enslavement in Africa existed in many forms, including some that were very different from chattel slavery in the Americas. Enslaved status was considered temporary and could change throughout one's lifetime.
    - ♦ People became enslaved through debt, through poverty, as prisoners of war, or by seeking protection under elite custodianship. Some labored as attendants while others worked in administration, the military, and as agricultural or mine laborers.
    - ♦ Slavery was not based on race, and enslaved people most often came from different religious or ethnic groups than their enslavers.
    - ♦ Slavery in Africa tended to include women and children who were thought to assimilate more easily into kinship networks.
-

TOPIC 1.12

# Women and Leadership

Instructional Periods: 2 periods  
Skills Focus: 4.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Compare the political, spiritual, and military leadership of Queen Idia of Benin and Queen Njinga of Ndongo-Matamba.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- **Queen Mother Pendant Mask: *Iyoba*** (16th century)
- Illustrations of Queen Njinga
- Selection from *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen* (2017) by Linda M. Heywood

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.12.A.1** In medieval West African societies, women played many roles, including spiritual leaders, political advisors, market traders, educators, and agriculturalists.
- **1.12.A.2** In the late 15th century, Queen Idia became the first *iyoba* (queen mother) in the Kingdom of Benin (present-day Nigeria). She served as a political advisor to her son, the king, and she became one of the best-known generals of the renowned Benin army. She was known to rely on spiritual power and medicinal knowledge to bring victories to Benin.
- **1.12.A.3** Shortly after 1619, when Ndongans became the first large group of enslaved Africans to arrive in the American colonies, Queen Njinga became queen of Ndongo (present-day Angola). She fought to protect her people from enslavement by the Portuguese.
- **1.12.A.4** After diplomatic relations between Ndongo and Portugal collapsed, Queen Njinga fled to Matamba, where she created sanctuary communities, called *kilombos*, for those who escaped Portuguese enslavement. Queen Njinga's strategic guerrilla warfare solidified her reign, her legacy throughout the African diaspora, and the political leadership of women in Matamba.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- **"The Country of Angola,"** a video clip (5:18) from the PBS series *Africa's Great Civilizations*

TOPIC 1.13

# Learning Traditions

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1.C

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Compare the institutional and community-based models of education present in medieval West African societies.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Griot performance of *The Epic of Sundiata*
- Description of Timbuktu in *History and Description of Africa* (1550) by Leo Africanus

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.13.A.1** West African empires housed centers of learning in their trading cities. In Mali, Mansa Musa established a book trade and learning community at Timbuktu, which drew astronomers, mathematicians, architects, and jurists.
- **1.13.A.2** Griots were prestigious historians, storytellers, and musicians who maintained and shared a community's history, traditions, and cultural practices.

---

**SUGGESTED  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE**

- **"City of Timbuktu,"** a video clip (1:40) from the PBS series *Africa's Great Civilizations*

TOPIC 1.14

# Indigenous Cosmologies and Culture

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 1A

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain the development and interactions of various belief systems present in West African societies.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- [Video of performance by Osain del Monte](#) (Afro-Cuban performance group)

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.14.A.1** Although the leaders of empires often converted to Islam (e.g., in Mali and Songhai) or Christianity (e.g., in Kongo), they were not always able to convert their subjects, who instead blended these faiths with indigenous spiritual beliefs and cosmologies.
  - **1.14.A.2** Africans brought indigenous religious practices and their experiences blending traditional beliefs with Catholicism from the continent to the Americas. They infused elements of their performative traditions into the religious cultures they created in the diaspora. Cultural practices such as veneration of the ancestors, divination, healing practices, and collective singing and dancing survive in African diasporic religions such as Louisiana Voodoo and *regla de ocha* in Cuba.
-

TOPIC 1.15

# Africans in Europe and Europeans in Africa

Instructional Periods: 1 period  
Skills Focus: 1.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Describe the factors that brought Africans to Europe and Europeans to Africa before the onset of the transatlantic slave trade.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Images of artworks showing Africans in Renaissance Europe, such as the *Chafariz d'el Rey (The King's Fountain)* in the Alfama district of Lisbon, 1570
- 16<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese map of northwestern Africa and the Iberian Peninsula

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.15.A.1** Trade between West African kingdoms and the Portuguese for gold, goods, and enslaved people grew steadily, bypassing the trans-Saharan trade routes. This trade increased the presence of Europeans in West Africa and the population of sub-Saharan Africans in Mediterranean port cities like Lisbon.
  - **1.15.A.** In the mid-fifteenth century, the Portuguese established a trading post at Elmina Castle (present-day Ghana). They also colonized the Atlantic islands of Cape Verde and São Tomé, where they established cotton, indigo, and sugar plantations based on the labor of enslaved Africans. These plantations became a model for slave-based economies in the Americas. By 1500, about 50,000 enslaved Africans had been removed from the continent to work on these islands and in Europe.
  - **1.15.A.3** Elite, free Africans, including the children of rulers, traveled to Mediterranean port cities for diplomatic, educational, and religious reasons.
  - **1.15.A.4** In the early 16th century, free and enslaved Africans familiar with Iberian culture journeyed with Europeans in their earliest explorations of the Americas, including the first Africans in territory that became the United States.
-

**TOPIC 1.16**

# Reframing Early African History

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 5.A

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain how African American studies reframes conceptions of early Africa and its relationship to people of African descent.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- Selection from Chapter 1: “Africa and Black Americans” from *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (2006) by Nell Irvin Painter

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.16.A.1** Perceptions of Africa continue to shift, from the notion of a primitive continent with no history to recognition of Africa as the homeland of powerful societies and leaders that made enduring contributions to humanity.
  - **1.16.A.2** Early African societies saw developments in many fields, including the arts, architecture, technology, politics, economics, mathematics, religion, and music.
  - **1.16.A.3** The interdisciplinary analysis of African American studies has dispelled notions of Africa as a “dark” continent with an undocumented or unknowable history, affirming early Africa as a diverse place full of complex societies that were globally connected well before the onset of the Atlantic slave trade.
-

**TOPIC 1.17**

# Interdisciplinarity and Multiple Perspectives

Instructional Periods: 1 period  
Skills Focus: 5.B

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Explain the importance of incorporating multiple perspectives on Africa and African Americans to the field of African American studies.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- “Forty Million Ways to be Black” (2011) by Henry Louis Gates Jr. from *Call and Response: Key Debates in African American Studies*

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.17.A.1** There was no singular way of life in early Africa, and there is no singular perspective among African Americans about their ancestry or history.
  - **1.17.A.2** The field of African American studies interrogates the development of ideas about Africa’s history and its ongoing relationship to communities of the African diaspora.
-

**TOPIC 1.18**

# Imagining Africa

Instructional Periods: 1 period  
Skills Focus: 2.C

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Identify and explain how Countee Cullen uses imagery and refrain to express connections to, or detachments from, Africa in the poem “Heritage.”

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- “Heritage” (1925) by Countee Cullen

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.18.A.1** The question of Africa’s relationship to African American ancestry, culture, and identities remains a central and fraught one for communities of the African diaspora, due to the ruptures caused by colonialism and Atlantic slavery. In response, writers, artists, and scholars interrogate and imagine their connections and detachment.
  - **1.18.A.2** In “Heritage,” Countee Cullen uses imagery to counter negative stereotypes about Africa and express admiration.
  - **1.18.A.3** In “Heritage,” Countee Cullen explores the relationship between Africa and African American identity through introspective reflection.
-



**TOPIC 1.19**

# Visualizing Early Africa

Instructional Periods: 1 period

Skills Focus: 4.A

---

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

- A. Identify techniques that contemporary African American artists use in music, film, and performance to illustrate the diversity of African cultures and their influence on the African diaspora.

---

**SOURCE ENCOUNTER**

- “Spirit” video (4:30) by Beyoncé

---

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- **1.19.A.1** Perceptions of Africa and its early history have influenced ideas about the ancestry, cultural heritage, and identities of people of African descent in the Americas.
  - **1.19.A.2** Artists from the African diaspora often aim to counter negative stereotypes about Africa with narratives that emphasize the strength, beauty, diversity, and dynamism of African cultures as the foundation of the broader inheritance of African Americans.
  - **1.19.A.3** Communities of the African diaspora emerged from the blending of multiple African cultures in the Americas. Because many African Americans cannot trace their heritage to a single ethnic group, African American cultural production often reflects a creative blend of cultural elements from multiple societies and regions in Africa.
  - **1.19.A.4** African American studies seeks to recover and reframe the continuities and transformations of African cultural practices, beliefs, and aesthetic and performative traditions within the diaspora.
  - **1.19.A.5** Research in African American studies underscores the role that diversity of early African societies played a significant role in the diverse expressions of African culture that exist in diaspora communities today.
-

**AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

---

# Assessment

# Assessment Overview

---

The AP African American Studies assessments measure student understanding of the skills, learning objectives, and essential knowledge outlined in the course framework. The assessment score is based on multiple components: an extended essay, administered during the course, and source-analysis objective questions and open-ended writing questions, administered at the end of the course. All of these assessment components require source analysis and application of course content knowledge and skills.

Assessment Component	Description
<b>EXTENDED ESSAY</b>	<p>The extended essay engages students in interdisciplinary source analysis and extended essay writing based on key questions, debates, and perspectives addressed in the AP African American Studies course. Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Analyze and evaluate interdisciplinary sources, including scholarly texts from the field of African American studies.</li><li>■ Develop an argument essay in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples from the sources and applying course concepts and disciplinary knowledge.</li><li>■ Use reasoning to guide the audience through a well-supported argument.</li><li>■ Demonstrate a complex understanding of African American studies course content.</li></ul> <p>Essays are scored by college professors of African American studies and AP educators. The course project comprises approximately 20% of a student's cumulative exam score.</p>
<b>SOURCE-ANALYSIS OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS</b>	<p>The source-analysis objective questions on the AP Exam assess an extensive breadth and depth of course content knowledge and interdisciplinary skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Source-analysis objective questions typically appear in sets of three to four questions, each requiring examination of one or more sources.</li><li>■ The sources reflect the range of materials students encounter in the course, including primary texts, secondary texts, literary texts, images (e.g., artwork, photos, posters), charts and other data sources, and maps. Additionally, students will be asked to examine paired sources representing different source types from similar or different time periods.</li><li>■ Source-analysis objective questions require analysis of the provided sources as well as application of disciplinary concepts learned throughout the course.</li></ul>

Assessment Component	Description
	Source-analysis objective questions are machine scored and comprise approximately 60% of a student's cumulative exam score.
<b>OPEN-ENDED WRITING QUESTIONS</b>	<p>The open-ended writing questions provide an opportunity for in-depth and focused assessment of important concepts, developments, and perspectives from the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each question asks students to examine either a single source or a paired source based on a variety of different types of sources (text, visual, and data).</li> <li>Each question has multiple parts and requires students to draw evidence both from the source as well as course content.</li> <li>Students respond in writing, with appropriate responses requiring well-formed complex sentences or, at times, paragraphs.</li> </ul> <p>Open-ended writing questions are scored by AP readers and comprise approximately 20% of the cumulative exam score.</p>

Across these assessment components students will examine sources that they have encountered in the course framework as well as new and unfamiliar sources.

# Illustrative AP African American Studies Assessment Questions

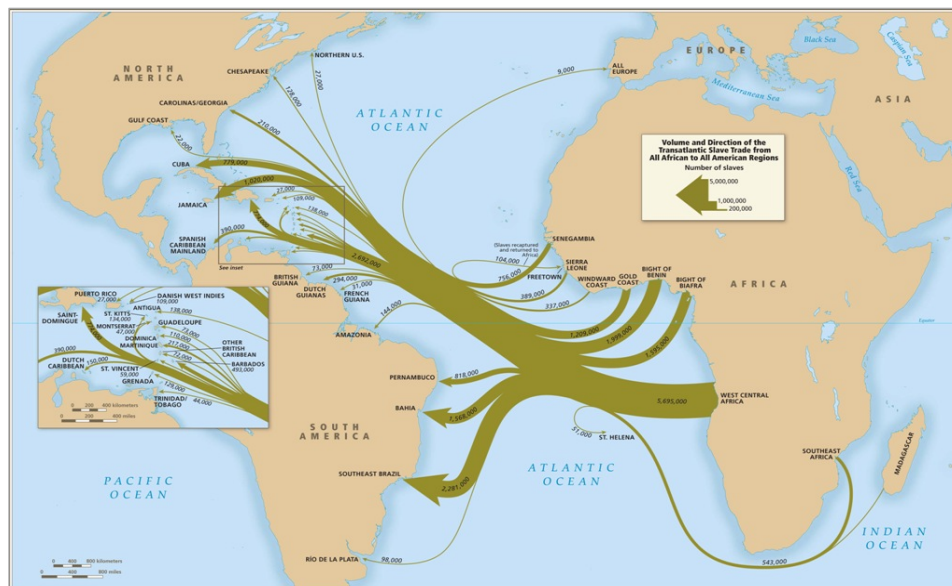
The illustrative assessment questions and sources that follow illustrate the relationship between the course framework and the AP African American Studies assessment. After the illustrative questions is a table that shows to which Skill, Unit, and Topic each question relates. For the purpose of this course and exam overview, only the sources and question prompts for the source-analysis objective questions are included.

## Open-Ended Writing Questions

The following are examples of the kinds of open-ended writing questions found on the exam.

1. Use the map below to answer all parts of the question that follows.

**Volume and direction of the transatlantic trade in enslaved persons from all of Africa to all American regions**



David Eltis and David Richardson,  
*Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010)

- (A) Identify the African embarkation zone from which the largest number of enslaved persons was transported to the Americas.
- (B) Explain why the largest number of enslaved persons transported to the Americas came from that African embarkation zone.
- (C) Identify the mainland North American destination that received the largest number of enslaved persons.

(D) Describe one way enslaved persons transported to North America contributed to the economy in the U.S. North.

(E) Describe two effects of the Haitian Revolution on enslaved African-descended populations beyond the Caribbean.

2. Use the text below and image on the next page to answer all parts of the question that follows.

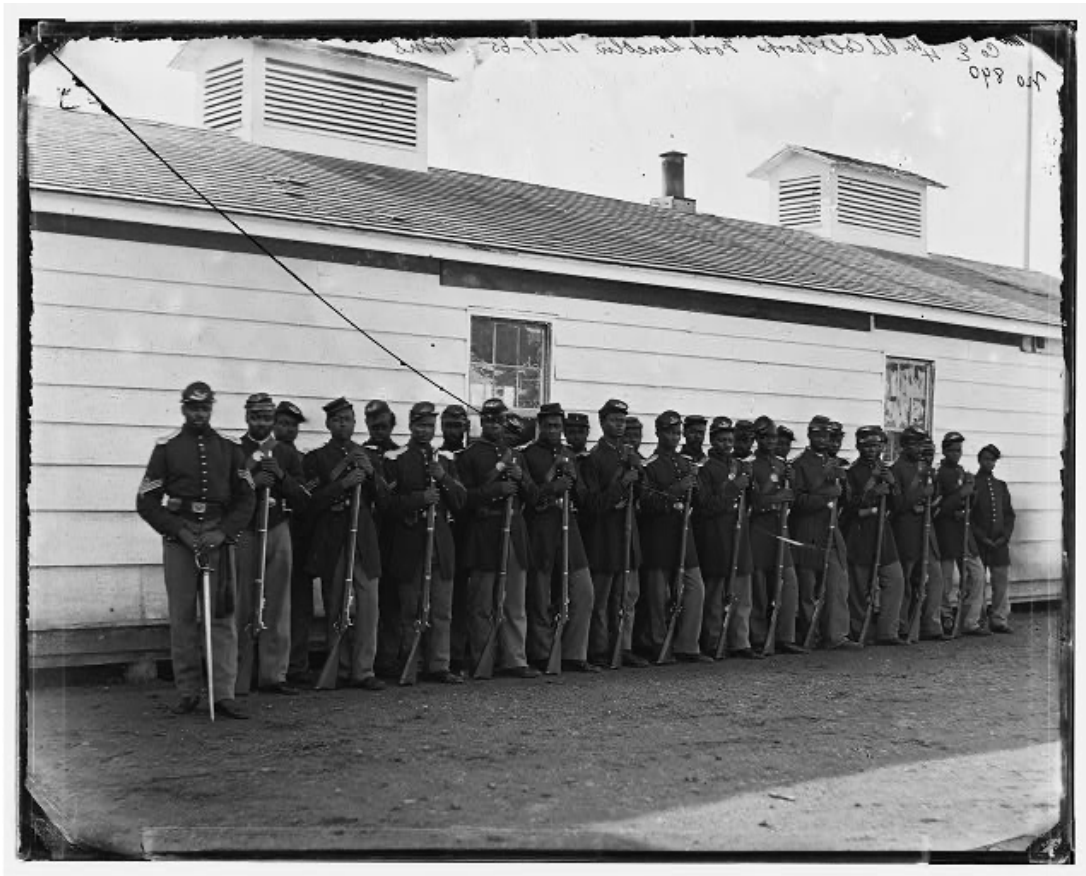
**Paul Laurence Dunbar, “The Colored Soldiers,” 1895**

If the muse were mine to tempt it  
And my feeble voice were strong,  
If my tongue were trained to measures,  
I would sing a stirring song.  
I would sing a song heroic  
Of those noble sons of Ham  
Of the gallant colored soldiers  
Who fought for Uncle Sam!

In the early days you scorned them,  
And with many a flip and flout  
Said “These battles are the white man’s,  
And the whites will fight them out.”  
Up the hills you fought and faltered,  
In the vales you strove and bled,  
While your ears still heard the thunder  
Of the foes’ advancing tread.

Then distress fell on the nation,  
And the flag was drooping low;  
Should the dust pollute your banner?  
No! the nation shouted, No!  
So when War, in savage triumph,  
Spread abroad his funeral pall—  
Then you called the colored soldiers,  
And they answered to your call.

**William Morris Smith, District of Columbia. Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry at Fort Lincoln, one of the seven forts defending the U.S. capital from the Confederates, 1863–1865**



Library of Congress

- (A) Describe the condition of the Union military effort, as conveyed by Dunbar in the second stanza of the poem, before African Americans joined the Union army.
- (B) Explain how Dunbar establishes a tension between African Americans answering the call and the circumstances under which they were recruited into the Union army.
- (C) Describe two details in the photograph that counter commonly held perceptions of the role of African Americans in the military at the time of the Civil War.
- (D) Explain what motivated African Americans to fight for the cause of the Union.
- (E) Explain the significance of recording African American participation during the U.S. Civil War as represented in poems and photographs such as these.
- (F) African Americans played instrumental roles in abolishing slavery in the U.S. beyond active military participation. Provide a piece of specific and relevant evidence to support this claim.

# Source-Analysis Objective Questions

The following are examples of the kinds of sources and question prompts that will appear on the AP Exam. Specific question phrasing and answer choices are not included for the purpose of this overview but will be included as samples for AP teachers who will implement the course.

**Questions 3–5 refer to the image below.**

**Unknown artist, Crucifix (Nkangi Kiditu),  
Kingdom of Kongo (modern-day Angola), 1500s**



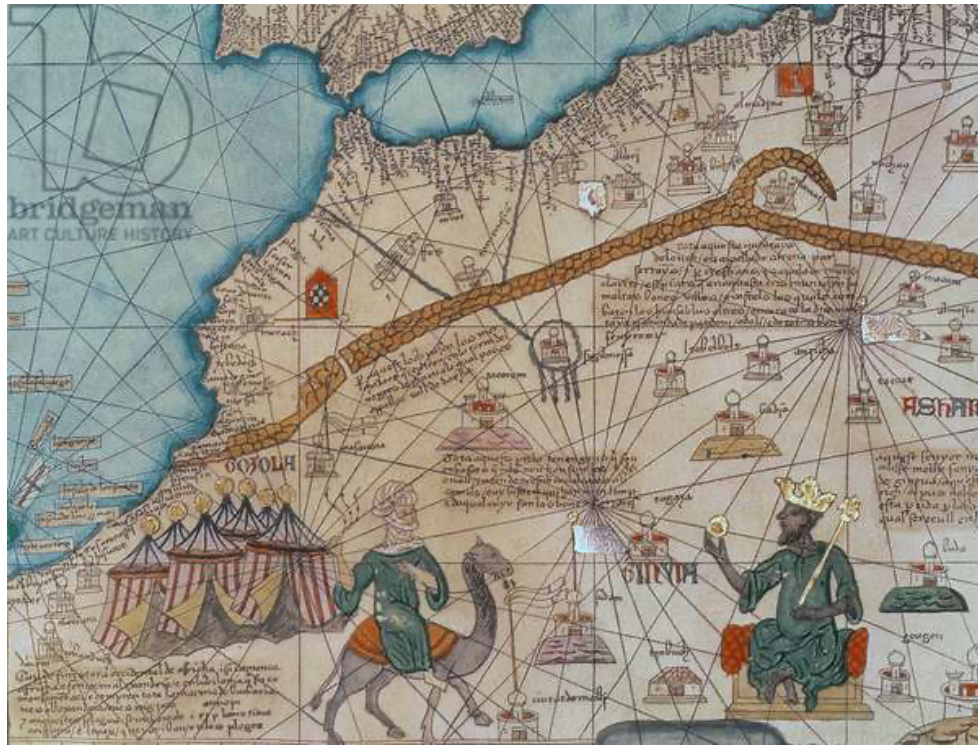
Creative Commons-BY Brooklyn Museum

3. Explain how the image best illustrates one cultural process in the period 1450 to 1600.
4. Describe a historical development in the West Central African Kingdom of Kongo that best contextualizes the image.
5. Explain why objects with features similar to those in the image emerged in the African diasporic religions of the Americas in the following centuries.



Questions 6–8 refer to the image below.

Abraham Cresques, detail from the Catalan Atlas, 1375



Bridgeman Images

6. Describe the historical development that best explains the voyage of a Muslim trader to the empire of Mali as depicted in the map.
7. Explain the significance of how the map conveys Mansa Musa, ruler of the Mali Empire.
8. Identify one likely intended audience for the map.

Questions 9–10 refer to the passage below.

“To the honorable Andrew T. Judson, Judge of the District Court of the United States for the District of Connecticut:

The Respondents by protestations . . . say they are natives of Africa and were born free, and ever since have been, and still of right are and ought to be free, and not slaves . . . that on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 1839 they were in the land of their nativity unlawfully kidnapped and forcibly and wrongfully carried on board [*La Amistad*] near the coast of Africa by certain persons to them unknown and were thence unlawfully transported to the Island of Cuba for the unlawful purpose of being there sold as slaves.

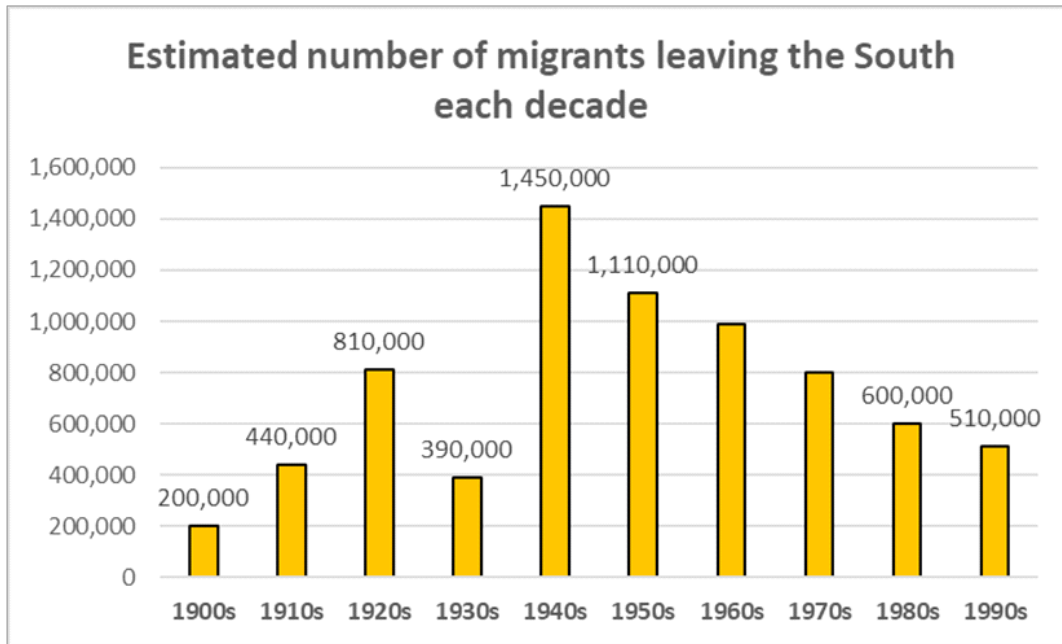
That the respondents, being treated on board said vessel with great cruelty and oppression, and being of right free, were incited by the love of liberty natural to all men, and by the desire of returning to their families and kindred, to take possession of said vessel, while navigating the high seas with the intent to return therein to their native country or to seek an asylum in some free State where Slavery did not exist in order that they might enjoy their liberty under the protection of its government.

Wherefore the Respondents say that neither by the Constitution or laws of the United States or any Treaty pursuant thereto nor by the law of nations doth it pertain to this Honorable Court to exercise any jurisdiction over these respondents and they pray to be hence released, and to remain as they of right ought to be free and at liberty from this process of this Honorable Court.”

Plea to the Jurisdiction of Cinque and Others, regarding the case of the ship *La Amistad*,  
August 21, 1839

9. Identify one group that would have directly opposed the arguments described in the passage.
10. Describe how the passage represents an example of broader African efforts to resist enslavement.

Questions 11–12 refer to the chart below.



Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium, University of Washington

11. Identify one historical development that most likely generated the spike in the 1920s relating to the number of migrants shown in the chart.
12. Describe one factor in the trend illustrated by the number of migrants from the South after the 1970s.

Questions 13–15 refer to the passage below.

“Black studies students and scholars are not bound by any geographical location. We consider the world to be our purview and thus it is necessary to study black experiences within global processes of racial ordering in the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Pacific, and Asia. Black studies scholars connect, draw parallels, and chart discontinuities between people of color in diverse locations, at disparate times or eras. Black studies scholars explore all societies that have had historical or contemporary experiences with slavery, colonialism, segregation, and apartheid. In other words, because black peoples have had to engage in freedom struggles and wars of liberation even in the aftermath of slavery, they have often had to contend with *de jure*\* slavery such as the legal disfranchisement and segregation in the Jim Crow era. Because the end of colonialism has often been followed by political and economic neo-colonialism and vestiges of colonial racial stratification such as colorism, freedom struggles remain ongoing imperatives.”

\*practices that are legally recognized

Darlene Clark Hine, “A Black Studies Manifesto,” *The Black Scholar*, Summer 2014

13. Identify a major claim Clark Hine makes in this passage.
14. Describe Clark Hine’s purpose in writing the passage.
15. Explain why the author of the passage would agree that a comparative approach to Black studies enriches the understanding of the experiences of African-descended peoples.

Questions 16–18 refer to the image below.

Willie Ford, “Drawing: man and woman with Black Power fist on shirt,” 1970–1976



California State University, Los Angeles

16. Describe the artist's purpose in creating the drawing.
17. Identify a social or cultural development that coincided with the drawing.
18. Explain the significance of the woman's gaze and of her hands crossed over a dress that resembles the U.S. flag.

# Question Alignment to Course Framework

Open-Ended Writing Questions	Skill	Unit	Topic
1	1.A, 1.B, 1.C, 3.A, 3.B	Unit 1 Unit 2	1.10 West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo 2.2 Origins and Overview of the Transatlantic Slave Trade 2.3 Impact of the Slave Trade on West African Societies 2.21 Legacies of the Haitian Revolution
2	1.C, 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 4.A, 5.B	Unit 2	2.28 The Civil War and Black Communities

Source-Analysis Objective Questions	Skill	Unit	Topic
3	4.A	1	1.10 West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo
4	4.A	1	1.10 West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo
5	1.C	1	1.10 West-Central Africa: The Kingdom of Kongo
6	1.C	1	1.6 The Sudanic Empires: Mali
7	4.B	1	1.6 The Sudanic Empires: Mali
8	4.A	1	1.6 The Sudanic Empires: Mali
9	2.B	2	2.6 Resistance on Slave Ships
10	1.B	2	2.6 Resistance on Slave Ships
11	3.B	3	3.17 The Great Migration
12	3.B	3	3.17 The Great Migration
13	2.A	4	4.12 Student Protest and the Birth of Black Studies

Source- Analysis Objective Questions	Skill	Unit	Topic
14	2.B	4	4.12 Student Protest and the Birth of Black Studies
15	2.B	4	4.12 Student Protest and the Birth of Black Studies
16	4.A	4	4.10 The Black Arts Movement
17	1.B	4	4.10 The Black Arts Movement
18	4.B	4	4.10 The Black Arts Movement

AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

---

# Appendix



# Research Summary

---

## Introduction

This summary provides an overview of the research activities that informed the African American studies course design principles, framework, and assessment design. In 2021, after conducting exploratory research during prior years, the AP Program conducted new, focused research including the following inputs:

- Syllabi collection and analysis (higher education and high school)
- Virtual small-group academic conversations with college faculty
- Online surveys of college faculty
- Virtual advisory sessions with college faculty
- Virtual focus groups with high school and college students

In addition to these insights, the AP Program listened to feedback from a five-member writing team and six-member advisory board of college faculty and also considered perspectives from high school teachers and administrators through focus groups.

## Research Goals

Each research strand pursued distinct goals:

- Syllabi collection and analysis
  - ♦ Collect, review, and analyze at least 100 college course syllabi for introductory African American studies or similar courses
  - ♦ Understand course content, organization, assessments, and texts
  - ♦ Ensure syllabi represent a diverse cadre of institutions
- Virtual academic conversations with college faculty
  - ♦ Gather perspectives from at least 80 college faculty in small-group, semi structured discussions about course goals, skills, and content topics
  - ♦ Socialize the proposed course design to understand top-line feedback
  - ♦ Test assumptions gleaned from syllabi analyses
- Surveys of college faculty
  - ♦ Confirm and clarify positions on key areas shaping the course design
- Expert judgement
  - ♦ Assemble subject-matter experts through an advisory board and writing team to harness research insights into a course design and guiding principles
- Virtual advisory sessions with college faculty
  - ♦ Gather feedback on detailed course outline
- Student focus groups
  - ♦ Understand students' interest in and expectations for the proposed course

## Key Takeaways

Across all research strands, there was tremendous alignment in what we heard and observed over the course of 2021. This strengthened the rationale for the course learning outcomes, skills, unit structure, and content topics.

The primary learnings from our investigation centered on 1) course structure, scope, and content, 2) considerations for the course name, and 3) professional learning for teachers. While the AP Program offers robust professional learning and teacher support for all courses, additional considerations for AP African American Studies are needed. Deeper content support may be warranted for teachers with limited academic and teaching experience in the discipline. Additionally, antiracist pedagogical guidance will be important to provide teachers with tools for creating culturally inclusive classroom. To ensure fidelity in our approach, the AP Program will partner with experienced organizations to equip teachers with strong content and pedagogical support. In addition to surfacing the importance of teacher resources and supports, the research offered clear evidence for a preferred course framework structure, geographic scope, disciplinary perspectives, and essential disciplinary content. Finally, while stakeholders agree that the name of the course matters and should not be taken lightly, there is substantial support to position the course title as AP African American Studies.

Each research takeaway has been translated to a course design priority. These takeaways are highlighted throughout the Voices in the Field section on the subsequent pages.

## Research Methods

### COLLEGE SYLLABI ANALYSIS

Between February and August 2021, Advanced Placement program staff collected, reviewed, catalogued, and analyzed syllabi from 107 colleges and universities, surpassing our goal of 100. This included 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, all eight Ivy League institutions, and over 20 state flagship institutions. The syllabi examined came from a database of department chairs at over 200 institutions.

Several methods were employed to track and quantify data from the 107 syllabi, including coding and analyzing the characteristics of content (geographic scope, topics, themes, disciplines included), texts and sources (including text based, visual, film, and audio), and assessments (type and weight).

### ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS

Academic conversations were held virtually between April 27 and May 27, 2021, with 132 college faculty. Participants were drawn from a list of over 1,000 faculty contacts. The academic conversations were designed as semistructured focus groups. Each discussion was capped at 8–10 participants to enable in-depth perspectives and questions to be shared.

At the conclusion of each academic conversation, all participants received a 19-question Qualtrics survey via email asking them a series of questions based on topics from the conversations. Respondents were also asked about their interest in various forms of future involvement with the course. The survey was designed to confirm and quantify comments we heard. A total of 65 participants responded to the survey (response rate of 49%).

### EXPERT JUDGEMENT

Using the insights from the syllabi analysis and academic conversations, the course lead assembled disciplinary experts in the format of a writing team and advisory board. These groups advised on the course outline and principles that would translate the research to course design priorities.

### ADVISORY PANELS

In fall 2021, the AP Program gathered deeper input and fresh-eyes perspectives on the course design through four virtual advisory sessions with college faculty and disciplinary experts. Some participants took part in the spring academic conversations and were able to reflect and see how we had incorporated earlier feedback, while others were new to the conversation and provided a fresh review and perspective.

As part of these advisory panels, participants were asked to rank course content and indicate which areas, if any, could be consolidated, abbreviated, or removed to ensure a balance of depth versus breadth and a course that can effectively be taught in 140 instructional periods—the design target for an AP course framework.

## STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

Finally, student focus groups were held virtually over two weeks in October 2021, with a total of 21 high school and seven college students participating across four sessions. Participants were recruited from existing contacts with AP staff, staff connections with Cooperman College Scholars and SEO Scholars, and a large urban school district that has expressed interest in offering the course. Focus groups were conducted over Zoom, each lasting one hour.

## Voices from the Field

### COURSE STRUCTURE

#### Research Takeaways:

- Research supports the design of thematic units that follow a chronological structure. The course framework should promote **depth and focus** by including the most important and essential topics.
- Thematic units should follow a chronological structure to support student understanding and ease of implementation.

Syllabi analysis suggested that college courses take a variety of approaches to structuring their courses. More than one in three syllabi followed a chronological–thematic blended model or a thematic approach. One in five syllabi pursued a strictly chronological (historical) approach. However, distinctions among these approaches are not always clear in what is presented through syllabi, so we also asked academic-conversation participants in the follow-up survey how they would define their course structure. That research instrument revealed that over two-thirds of respondents embrace a chronological-thematic, or blended, model, while one in six structure their course chronologically and one in 10 use a thematic approach. While the exact percentages diverged between these two data sources, the consistent takeaway was that strictly chronological approaches are in the minority, with most college courses introducing some thematic organization.

High school course documents reveal the same variety of course structure models, and while a much larger percentage adopts a chronological approach, more than half embrace a thematic or blended chronological and thematic approach, suggesting that this model can be successfully adopted at the secondary level.

**TABLE 1: COURSE STRUCTURE APPROACHES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND HIGH SCHOOL**

	College Syllabi	Postconversation Survey	High School Syllabi
Chronological	21%	17%	44%
Thematic	36%	9%	8%
Chrono-Thematic (Blended)	37%	69%	44%
Other (Not Specified)	6%	5%	4%
Combined Thematic or Chrono-Thematic	73%	78%	52%

Qualitative data also support these findings. Anecdotally, the writing team and advisory board expressed a preference for a thematic structure that moves chronologically, and across the academic conversations a greater number of participants indicated they preferred a thematic structure with chronological anchors. “[The course

should be organized] thematically, but chronologically within those units,” one participant recommended. Another indicated that they preferred a chrono-thematic model that would allow the course to begin with themes as a foundation, then move into chronology, and then turn back to themes. “[A] hybrid approach is appropriate because you can explore chronologically but explore different lenses and scopes and themes within,” shared another participant. Some participants also pointed out that a chronological approach will be more familiar to and comfortable for teachers and students because this is what they are used to, so it is imperative to include chronology in some form, further supporting a chrono-thematic rather than thematic-only structure.

## COURSE CONTENT

### Research Takeaways:

- Students should understand **core concepts**, including diaspora, Black feminism and intersectionality, the language of race and racism (e.g., structural racism, racial formation, racial capitalism) and be introduced to important approaches (e.g., Pan-Africanism, Afrofuturism).
- Each unit should foster **interdisciplinary analysis**, with specific disciplines identified (e.g., history, literature, arts, social sciences) and recurring across the course.

The research inputs helped define the essential course topics and concepts. Among college syllabi that embrace a chronological or chrono-thematic approach, slavery was nearly always included (98%), while more than two-thirds of institutions referenced the Civil Rights movement and transatlantic slave trade. These were also the top three historical developments represented on high school syllabi. Among college syllabi that follow a thematic or chrono-thematic approach, the most represented themes were culture, the field of African American studies, and social justice. Not surprisingly, high school syllabi show strong alignment for culture and social justice but are quite low for the studies of the evolution of the field itself and intersectionality, as these are typically themes that emerge in the postsecondary environment.

Interestingly, in student focus groups, participants expressed a strong desire not to delve deeply into slavery because this is the one topic they feel has been covered extensively and is traumatic. While we know we cannot have an African Americans studies course in which slavery is absent, this feedback indicates that the AP course should endeavor to expand student understanding and not repeat instruction students have already encountered.

**TABLE 2: COMMON COURSE CONTENT AS INDICATED ON COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL SYLLABI<sup>1</sup>**

Historical Content	% College Syllabi in Which Present	% High School Syllabi in Which Present
Slavery	98%	96%
Civil Rights	70%	96%
Transatlantic Slave Trade	68%	84%
Resistance	60%	60%
Precolonial Africa	52%	80%
Reconstruction	52%	84%
Emancipation	44%	--
Civil War	34%	80%

<sup>1</sup> Data shown for content represented on at least 30% of college syllabi in the sample.

Harlem Renaissance	32%	64%
Movement for Black Lives	32%	--
Thematic Content	% College Syllabi in Which Present	% High School Syllabi in Which Present
Culture (Including Food, Art, Music)	78%	72%
The field of African American Studies	69%	8%
Social Justice (Including Civil Rights and Black Power)	69%	96%
Gender/Sexuality/Intersectionality	68%	20%
Diaspora	55%	36%
Race	48%	32%
Politics	40%	60%
Religion	38%	20%
Family	32%	16%
Identity	32%	24%

In the academic conversations, diaspora was the most frequently mentioned concept, followed by intersectionality. “Diaspora is so important to contextualize what happens in great Northern America,” one participant commented. Another added, “Africana context in the world in general needs to be taught. Important to know the African history has influences in the larger context of [the U.S.].” One participant bound together the importance of the diaspora and intersectionality in the course, offering, “Please think about Black women and LGBTQ people as central to the history and future of the African Diaspora.” Another added, “Scope is key; [this is] not just Black male studies.”

For the postconversation survey, the AP Program proposed more specific titles for content topics and themes. These are similar to the data shown in Table 3 but are not a 1:1 match, so results should be interpreted with that caveat in mind. Intersectionality, Cultural Production and Appropriation, and Structural Racism were selected as the most essential themes. In terms of alignment with actual college courses, respondents indicated they spend the most time on slavery and resistance in the Americas (42% spend three or more weeks) and Civil Rights/Black Power movements (36% spend three or more weeks).

Student focus group participants expressed a desire for depth of content and noted that most of their existing knowledge about African American studies is self-taught, often via social media. Only one quarter of the participants said they had some level of knowledge, typically about the Civil Rights Movement and notable leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, but stressed that this was not as much as they could have. They have a desire to learn more and are not presented with opportunities to do so. “From a scale of 1-5 I’d give myself a 3 because all I know about African American studies is the Civil Rights Movement, notable leaders, and the different types of protests they’ve done. But I’m sure there’s more to know and I don’t really know the dates off the top of my head,” said one participant.

Moving beyond history and making connections across geographies, chronologies, and perspectives was also important for students. “I would like to learn how these historical events and historical people have affected African Americans today. I feel like that’s such an important topic to talk about and it helps us understand more about how society works,” one participant explained.

## STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

Given that most students who participated in focus groups had not taken an African American studies course, rather than asking them about their prior experiences we asked about their expectations for a course like this. What would they want to see, learn, and do? What would make this a positive or a negative experience for them?

Students expressed these four expectations for the course:

- Black perspectives should ground the text and materials.
- Emphasis should be placed on joy and accomplishments rather than trauma.
- Students should be provided with an unflinching look at history and culture.
- Students should have an opportunity to learn about lesser-known figures, culture, intersectionality, and connections across time and topics.

Regarding Black perspectives, one participant shared their thoughts on what would make the course stand out for them as a Black student:

*I think it is also important how the course material is presented. If a Black student is taking the course, will they feel that the course is written for white students? Or will it feel like it is written for me? Will it have that 'wow' factor – like I never knew this before. Or, will it have to accommodate to a larger [white] audience. Readings by Black people, Black voices. Not just an analytical discussion. The sources especially, having primary sources written by Black people is really important, and not looking at Blackness from the white perspective.*

Several students mentioned that when learning about African American history and racism they have been assigned texts by white authors or offered a Eurocentric perspective, which can be disheartening. *"I feel like it's always coming from the white man's perspective ... African Americans are usually side characters in the U.S. history classes,"* said one participant.

In terms of emphasis on Black joy, multiple participants expressed fatigue with learning about slavery since this is one of a few topics they have learned about throughout their primary and secondary educations. *"I'm tired of hearing about [slavery],"* one said. Another echoed, *"All the courses I've taken we've heard about slavery."* One college student who is majoring in African American studies offered a potential framing for the course that includes enslavement and goes beyond it to also focus on culture, family, and achievements.

*"I would like for them to start out outside of the framework of slavery and start on the continent and then move towards enslavement. I think too often we constrain the history of African Americans to slavery, and I feel like it's very limiting. I would also want to learn more about the ways African culture has been adapted to American culture, like how it's seen in Louisiana in the Creole culture or the Mardi Gras Indians. I would also like to learn about the adaptations of African culture into music, like jazz and hip-hop, and also the ways arts were used as liberation tools."*

Students feel that they have been inundated with trauma, whether through school or the media, and hope that this course will allow them to learn about and understand broader facets of African American history, life, and culture.

At the same time, when learning about traumatic events they want to know that they are getting the whole truth and not a watered down, sanitized version. *"I don't want some details to be hidden,"* said one participant, while another wanted to focus on *"debunking myths and misconceptions like how Lincoln was the ultimate savior when it comes to slavery,"* and a third asked that this course *"show us everything. The good and bad."*

Finally, the request to learn more about lesser-known figures and topics was a common refrain across focus groups, with students noting that Black feminism and intersectionality are not typically covered in high school courses, that there are leaders and changemakers beyond Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks, and that it can be useful to learn about perspectives from ordinary people. *"We did an exercise where we would look at women, ordinary people, rich white people, and Black people and how historical events affected them,"* one participant said, describing a course they had taken. *"That inspired me to take more classes, since you*

*realize there are so many different perspectives. In order to really get into history, you have to know each perspective and how it affected everybody.”*

Addressing the students’ feedback, the course framework recommends sources that deepen students’ awareness of key African American studies figures that receive less attention in standard U.S. history or English courses, such as Juan Garrido, Maria Stewart, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and illuminate Black perspectives through the works of W.E.B. DuBois, Manning Marable, and Nell Irvin Painter, among others.

## GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

### Research Takeaway:

Students should understand the **complexity of African cultures** as the foundation of the diversity of the **African diaspora**. They should learn about the ongoing relationship between Africa and the US/diaspora throughout the course (not just during the period of enslavement) as constitutive of Black identities, Black thought, and the field of Black studies.

It was difficult to determine the geographic scope of college courses from reviewing their syllabi, so our research and analysis efforts in this area focused on feedback in the academic conversations and on the postconversation survey. Nearly half of the participants offered a preference for diasporic connections represented in the course as opposed to focusing solely on the Black experience in the United States. “Blackness is global in so many ways. West Africa is crucial in a diasporic way. Haiti is crucial - not just about oppression, or Louverture. It has to do with rights of man,” one participant explained. Another added that if this is intended as a foundational survey course, it should include a global perspective. “If the course is meant to be a foundation for further study, or if they don’t actually take any other courses in the field, for both reasons the course must emphasize the global Black experience.” One in six participants suggested that if the entire course is not diasporic, elements of the African diaspora should be woven throughout the course, either as a learning outcome or in the content/material. At the same time, some participants expressed concerns about whether high school teachers could teach within a diasporic lens if they don’t have the requisite training or understanding of the content.

On the postconversation survey, respondents were asked about specific percentages for the course’s geographic scope. When given the options ranging from 100% U.S. focused to 100% global focused, most respondents preferred some focus on regions beyond the U.S. Over half of respondents felt that 75% focus on the U.S. and 25% on Africa and other regions in of the diaspora was the appropriate balance.

**TABLE 3: PREFERRED GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE AP COURSE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

Geographic Scope	Percentage of Respondents
100% U.S.	6%
75% U.S.; 25% Africa and other regions of the diaspora	53%
50% U.S.; 50% Africa and other regions of the diaspora	31%
25% U.S.; 75% Africa and other regions of the diaspora	0%
100% global	5%

Students also expressed a preference for a course that includes diasporic connections. “We shouldn’t limit our understanding to just America,” one participant recommended. Another echoed this, saying, “I think to focus on African Americans, we need to focus on African Americans everywhere, since this isn’t a U.S. history class.” And one student noted that this depth and breadth of understanding is missing in traditional courses: “[I] have not learned much about African American history in the broader world. It would be eye opening.”



## SOURCES

### Research Takeaway:

Careful curation of texts and sources should provide students **direct and deep encounters** with historical, cultural, and intellectual developments across multiple perspectives and disciplines.

Among the sample of 107 college course syllabi, just under two-thirds list a textbook (61%, n = 65). A total of 27 textbooks are referenced across the syllabi. Twelve textbooks are used by more than one institution, with Karenga's *Introduction to Black Studies*, Gomez's *Reversing Sail*, and Anderson and Stewart's *Introduction to African American Studies* being the top three.

**TABLE 4: TEXTBOOKS AS INDICATED ON COLLEGE SYLLABI**

Textbook	Author(s)/Editor(s)	# Institutions Using
<i>Introduction to Black Studies</i>	Karenga	8
<i>Reversing Sail</i>	Gomez	6
<i>Introduction to African American Studies</i>	Anderson and Stewart	6
<i>Africana Studies</i>	Azevedo	5
<i>Freedom on My Mind</i>	Gray White, Bay, and Martin	5
<i>Out of the Revolution</i>	Aldridge and Young	3
<i>Keywords for African American Studies</i>	Edwards et al.	3
<i>A Turbulent Voyage</i>	Hayes	3
<i>The African-American Odyssey</i>	Hine Clark	3
<i>From Slavery to Freedom</i>	Franklin and Higginbotham	2
<i>Race in North America</i>	Smedley and Smedley	2
<i>African Americans: A Concise History</i>	Clark Hine, Hine, and Harrold	2

In addition to textbooks, types of texts were catalogued, revealing that short nonfiction pieces (e.g., essay, journal article, speech) are the most used type of literature with 79% of the sample including these texts. Long nonfiction pieces (e.g., full-length books) were also common, with 75% of the sample including these, as were various forms of media (e.g., film, music, podcast), with 71% of the sample including these. Less common were literature sources (e.g., novel, short story, poetry), with just over one-third of the sample naming these types of texts on their syllabi (36%).

As far as the specific titles of works on syllabi, W.E.B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk* is by far the most widely represented text, with 24 syllabi including this text. Other texts span genres including poetry, essays, letters, narratives, speeches, journal articles, folklore, and calls to action. Among the most frequently used texts, only four are written by women.

For high school courses, there is some overlap with frequently listed texts. Of the 16 most common texts for high school and college courses, five texts are common: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, and "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

When looking at the most common authors, many are the same names that appear on the list of most common texts, though there are some differences, particularly for authors of multiple seminal works rather than a single common text (e.g., Henry Louis Gates Jr., James Baldwin, Audre Lorde).



**TABLE 5: COMMON TEXTS ON COLLEGE SYLLABI<sup>2</sup>**

Text	Author	Genre	# Institutions Using
"The Souls of Black Folk"	W.E.B. DuBois	Essay	24
<i>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness</i>	Michelle Alexander	Nonfiction book	18
"Letter from a Birmingham Jail"	Martin Luther King, Jr.	Letter	12
<i>Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World</i>	David Walker	Call to action	12
<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	Frederick Douglass	Narrative	12
"Discourse on Colonialism"	Aimé Césaire	Essay	11
<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Harriet Jacobs	Narrative	11
"The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"	Langston Hughes	Essay	9
"What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"	Frederick Douglass	Speech	8
<i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i>	Thomas Jefferson	Nonfiction book	8
"The Case for Reparations"	Ta-Nehisi Coates	Article	7
<i>The Mis-Education of the Negro</i>	Carter G. Woodson	Nonfiction book	7
<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i>	Olaudah Equiano	Narrative	6
Atlanta Exposition Address/Atlanta Compromise	Booker T. Washington	Speech	6
"If We Must Die"	Claude McKay	Poem	6
<i>Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali</i>	D.T. Niane	Folklore	6
"The Ballot or the Bullet"	Malcolm X.	Speech	6
<i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>	Frantz Fanon	Nonfiction book	6
"Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color"	Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw	Article	5
"On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of <i>Desêtre</i> : Black Studies Toward the Human Project"	Sylvia Wynter	Book chapter	5
<i>Between the World and Me</i>	Ta-Nehisi Coates	Nonfiction book	4
"Message to the Grassroots"	Malcolm X.	Speech	4
"The Negro Art Hokum"	George Schuyler	Article	4

<sup>2</sup> Only texts that appeared on at least three college syllabi are listed here.

"The Black Campus Movement and the Institutionalization of Black Studies, 1965–1970"	Ibram H. Rogers	Article	3
"Black Studies and Global Perspectives: An Essay"	St. Clair Drake	Essay	3

**TABLE 6: COMMON TEXTS ON HIGH SCHOOL SYLLABI**

Text	Author(s)	Genre
13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments	Founding Fathers	Laws
<i>Brown v. Topeka Board of Education</i>	NA; court opinion written by Justice Earl Warren	Court Case
Declaration of Independence	Founding Fathers	Declaration
Emancipation Proclamation	Abraham Lincoln	Proclamation
Fugitive Slave Acts	NA	Laws
"I Have a Dream"	Martin Luther King Jr.	Speech
<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Harriet Jacobs	Narrative
"Letter from a Birmingham Jail"	Martin Luther King Jr.	Letter
<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	Frederick Douglass	Narrative
<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>	NA; court opinion written by Justice Henry Billings Brown	Court Case
<i>The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America</i>	Richard Rothstein	Nonfiction Book
<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i>	Olaudah Equiano	Narrative
Three-Fifths Compromise	Founding Fathers	Law
<i>Twelve Years a Slave</i>	Solomon Northrup	Narrative
U.S. Constitution	Founding Fathers	Law
"What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"	Frederick Douglass	Speech

Beyond written texts, many syllabi also referenced visual and audio texts, with film being most common. Some common films showing in college courses are *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, *Black Is ... Black Ain't*, and *The Birth of a Nation*.

**TABLE 7: AUTHORS APPEARING ON 10 OR MORE INSTITUTIONS' SYLLABI**

Author	Number of Institutions Using
W.E.B. DuBois	54
Frederick Douglass	21
Martin Luther King Jr.	17
Ta-Nehisi Coates	16
Michelle Alexander	16
Henry Louis Gates Jr.	15
Malcolm X.	15
David Walker	13
Langston Hughes	12
James Baldwin	11
Aimé Césaire	11
Patricia Hill Collins	11
Harriet Jacobs	11
Audre Lorde	11

In contrast, high school courses are more likely to incorporate excerpts from feature films than documentaries in their courses, often turning to more recent pieces. The only film that was common to both college and high school syllabi was the 1987 PBS documentary series *Eyes on the Prize*.

**TABLE 8: FILMS APPEARING ON HIGH SCHOOL COURSE DOCUMENTS**

Work	Type
42	Feature film
<i>12 Years a Slave</i>	Feature film
<i>Amistad</i>	Feature film
<i>Eyes on the Prize</i>	Documentary
<i>The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross</i>	Documentary
<i>Roots</i>	Television miniseries
<i>The Great Debaters</i>	Feature film
<i>The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow</i>	Documentary

From these analyses it is evident there is some overlap in written and visual texts between high school and college courses, though college courses emphasize nonfiction writing and documentary films, while high school courses lean toward court cases, U.S. founding documents, and feature films.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER SUPPORT

### Research Takeaway:

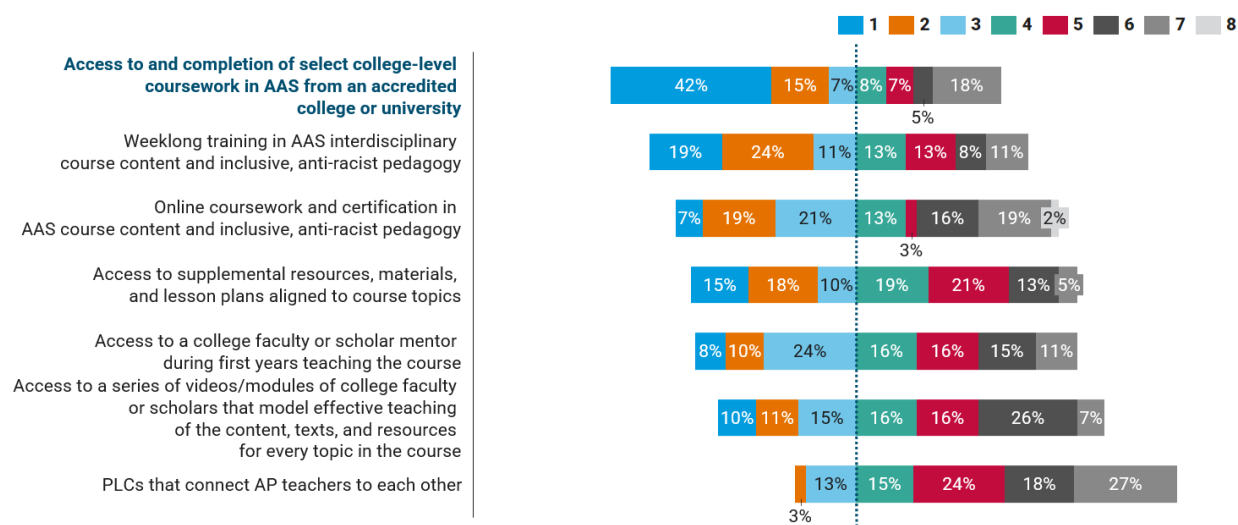
The AP program should dedicate significant time and resources to building a **robust suite of professional learning resources**. AP teacher support should be buttressed in the areas of disciplinary content and antiracist instructional approaches. The AP Program should leverage partnerships with higher education institutions and other organizations and provides all teachers with the tools they need to teach this course well.

Professional learning/development was one of the most prominent topics that emerged in the semistructured academic conversations with college faculty. Nearly one in five comments centered around this theme, with participants focusing on aspects such as educational requirements for teachers of this course, resources, suggestions for professional development opportunities, and concerns.

Participants suggested that teacher preparation requirements could range from taking an introductory-level college course to having an undergraduate credential (major or minor) or obtaining a master's degree in the field. “[I’m] interested in using AP African American Studies to recruit Black teachers into the teaching profession, showing what can be done with graduate training in AFAM,” one participant stated.

Others acknowledged that some teachers may not have formal education and training so other supports and resources should be implemented. “[It’s] crucial, since most teachers are going to be white, that they are educated [in teaching African American studies]. For people who don’t have a background in the field, [they] should go through some type of curriculum and certification before teaching.” In terms of professional development opportunities, participants suggested mandatory week-long or summer-long training, or a year-long cohort approach to learning. “Have modules that experts in the area who have a depth of training could partner with for a frame and help guide teachers at a secondary level. Leaning on folks in the community like professors in African American studies in nearby institutions.”

**CHART 1: WHAT PREPARATION AND ONGOING SUPPORT IS MOST NECESSARY FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS TO EFFECTIVELY TEACH THIS COURSE? (PLEASE RANK ORDER FROM 1 TO 8, WHERE 1 IS MOST NECESSARY AND 8 IS LEAST NECESSARY).<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> N = 62

The survey question above sought to probe on the comments voiced during the academic conversations, asking more targeted questions around perspectives on professional learning. When presented with seven options for professional learning and asked to rank them from most to least necessary, respondents felt it was most necessary for AP teachers in African American studies to have access to and complete select college-level coursework from an accredited college or university (42% of respondents ranked this #1, and 64% ranked this in their top three). This was followed by the recommendation for a weeklong training in African American studies interdisciplinary course content and inclusive, antiracist pedagogy (19% ranked #1, 54% ranked in top three).

## **ASSESSMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

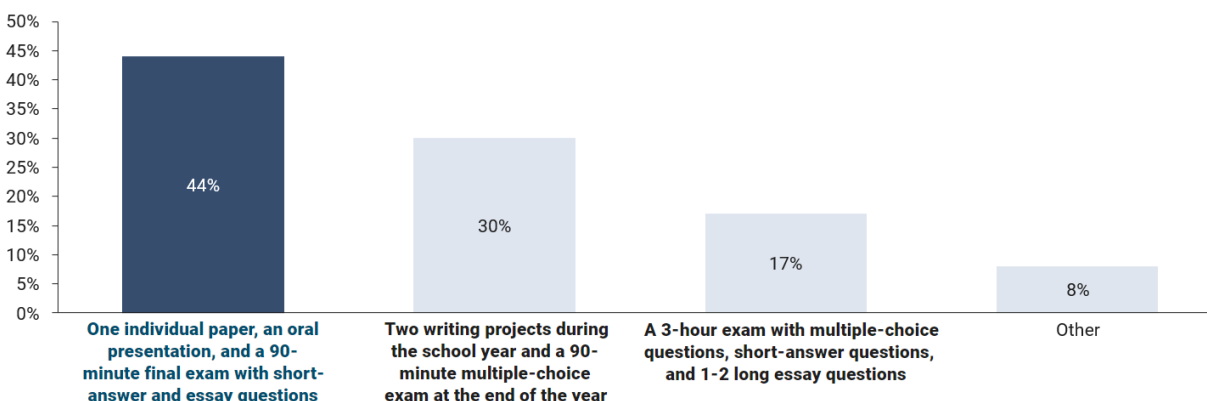
College syllabi analysis revealed not only common assessment types but also weightings for each. Assessing students using attendance and participation is ubiquitous, with over three-quarters of sample institutions incorporating this in their final grade, but the weightings are typically low (mean: 16%). In contrast, we discovered generally high percentages of institutions assessing students using exams (64%), short essays (<5 pages, 43%), and quizzes (37%), all at more substantial percentages (means of 42%, 33%, and 23%, respectively). Long essays or research papers (>5 pages) and projects were each included on around one-quarter of syllabi in our sample (24% and 22%, respectively) but carried higher weights when they were included (means: 33% and 28%, respectively). These higher-weighted assessment types of exams, essays, and projects align well with the current AP assessment model.

High school syllabi analysis showed a slightly different picture, with the majority using exams (76%), projects (71%), and quizzes (65%) to assess students. Short essays were less prevalent in high school (35%), though long essays were the same as in our higher ed sample (24%).

Discussion in the academic conversations was more nuanced and focused not just on how students were assessed, but why. Projects as a way of helping students see the connection of theory and practice, and activism building on the roots of the discipline's founding and evolution, were both discussed and debated. "Project-based approach captures students, and they take the information they are learning and apply it," one participant explained. "Finding those things that reach [the students] and pique their interest and be able to show in current time." Others expressed trepidation with projects, particularly service-learning, noting the potential for students to develop a savior complex or to benefit more than the communities and populations they were attempting to serve. "Service-learning can reinforce a 'Savior Complex' and perpetuate power dynamics. These projects, when done poorly, also encourage parachuting into a community to deliver short-term support, which can result in a feel-good experience for the student but no meaningful engagement."

When participants from the academic conversations were asked on the follow-up survey which assessment model they would prefer for the AP course in African American studies, most preferred multiple assessment components as opposed to the traditional three-hour exam.

**CHART 2: FOR THE AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES EXAM, WHICH EXAM DESCRIPTION WOULD BEST MEASURE WHETHER A STUDENT DESERVES COLLEGE CREDIT AND PLACEMENT OUT OF YOUR INSTITUTION’S INTRODUCTORY COURSE?<sup>4</sup>**



This model, selected by just under half of respondents, is similar to the model used for the AP Seminar course, while the option selected by nearly one-third of respondents is similar the model used for the AP Computer Science Principles course. A through-course assessment task and end-of-course exam are currently proposed for the AP African American Studies summative assessment components.

## COURSE NAME

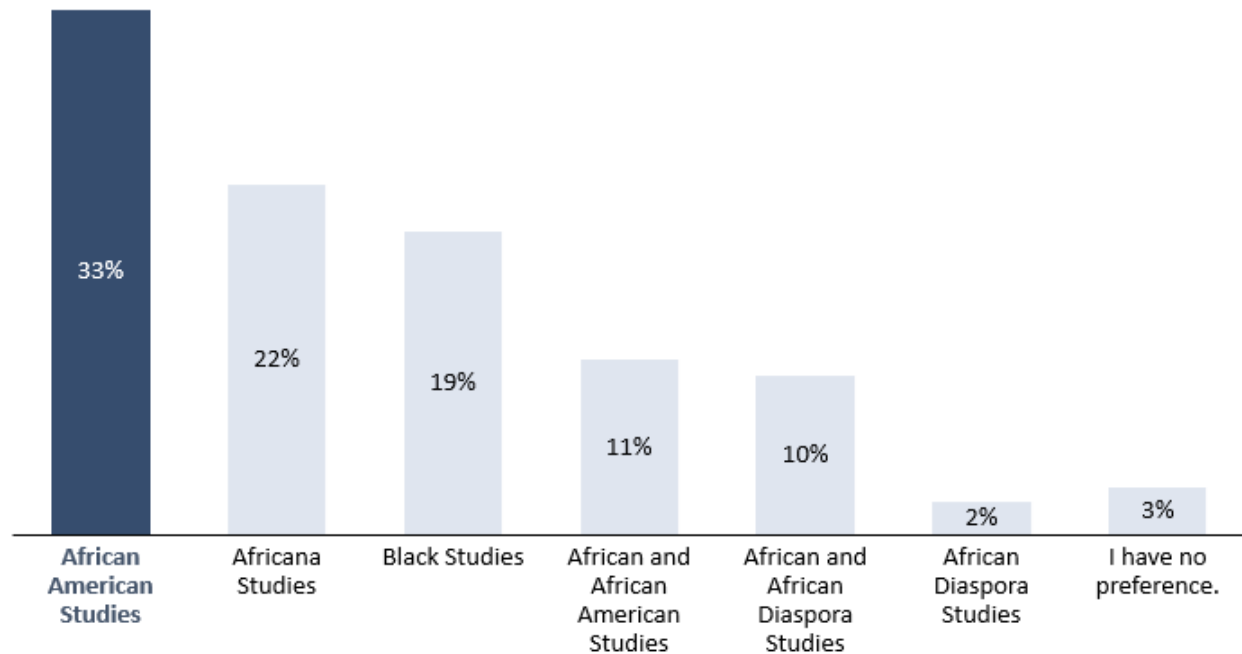
There are many facets to consider regarding the name of the course. For example, should the course title reference studies, history, or literature? Should it reflect the United States, the Americas, or the broader African diaspora? What name will resonate the most with high school students? What will align with current practices in higher education?

Through conversations with stakeholders, we recognized that the name of the course should reflect its content and geographic scope. The course we have developed embraces an interdisciplinary approach, and while it contains both historical perspectives and literary resources, “studies” is a more apt description than either history or literature, given the attention to art, culture, political science, and sociology across course topics. We heard from college faculty that the diaspora should be part of the course, but that emphasis should still be heaviest on the United States. When asked to consider specific balances by percentage, nearly 60% of respondents indicated that at least 75% of the course should focus on the United States. Student focus group participants commented that the course name should reflect the course content.

One of the tenets of the AP Program has always been alignment with higher education. Our research into the current higher education landscape vis-à-vis syllabi collection revealed that at over 100 institutions the words “African American” appear in 50% of course titles, while “Africana” and “Black” appear in 17% and 13%, respectively. As one academic conversation participant shared, “For simplicity’s sake and teacher introduction’s sake, [the] name of the course should be Introduction to African American Studies or something along those lines.” Taken together, these data have led us to confirm AP African American Studies is the best option for the course title.

<sup>4</sup> N = 63

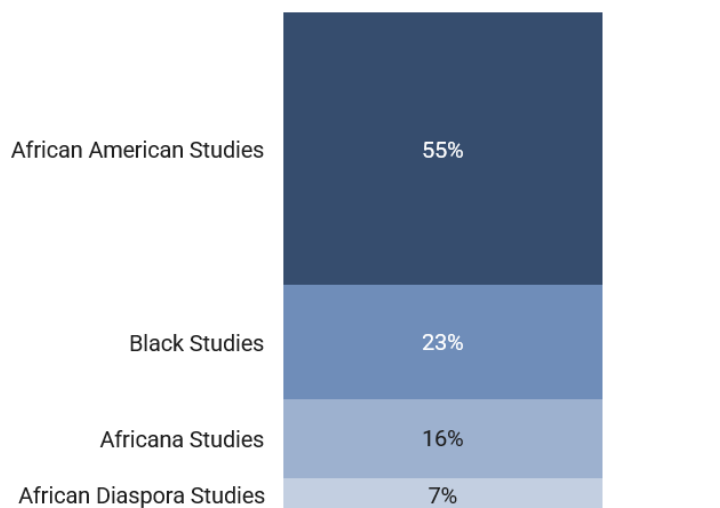
**CHART 3: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE FACULTY RESPONDENTS FROM ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS RANKING EACH PROPOSED COURSE TITLE AS #1 (HIGHEST RANKED)**



Finally, when asking for specific feedback from college faculty, our survey data reveal that African American Studies was ranked number one by one-third of respondents when asked to rank various options, 11 percentage points higher than the second highest-ranked option of Africana Studies.

Narrowing the options from six to four for the virtual advisory sessions, participants provided even greater clarity, as more than half of survey respondents selected African American Studies as their choice, primarily because they felt it most clearly tells students what the course is about and will resonate with high school students.

**CHART 4: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE FACULTY FROM ADVISORY SESSIONS  
SELECTING COURSE NAME OPTION AS THEIR PREFERENCE**



Regardless of the course title, academic conversation participants expressed a desire that the course include a discussion of the origins of the field to explain the reasons behind the name and what differentiates this course from others.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

Taken together, the data obtained through a review of 100+ college syllabi, direct feedback from more than 150 college faculty through academic conversations, virtual advisory sessions, and expert committees, and direct feedback from current high school and college students, give us a clear and consistent concept of what key stakeholders value in an AP African American Studies course and the major contours of course learning outcomes, skills, content, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Syllabi analysis offered a foundation for course objectives, content, and assessment and provided insight into source types and texts that are common across many institutions. Conversations and survey data confirmed the analysis. Specifically, we saw alignment across institutions in terms of chronological scope, geographic scope, assessment types, disciplinary concepts and themes, and a grounding in the field of African American studies, all of which influenced our course design.

In addition to guiding the course framework architecture, we heard time and again, from students and faculty alike, that the spirit of the course must emphasize Black joy and resilience while offering an unflinching examination of traumatic developments, patterns, and processes. For example, with the examination of centuries of enslavement and its brutalities, students should also study persistent models of resistance, agency, and vitality. This course aims to achieve this teaching and learning spirit through its interdisciplinary design, thematic units that follow a chronological progression, and deep and direct encounters with sources, texts, and ideas from the diversity of Black experiences in the United States and the broader diaspora.



# Sources for Consideration

---

The following sources represent a strong consensus across the college syllabi analyzed for the AP course design and will likely be examined during the course. As we continue to engage college faculty, partner museums, and other organizations throughout the course development and pilot phase, the AP Program will actively curate textual, visual, and data sources to infuse into the course experience.

- *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr.
- *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* by David Walker
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass
- "Discourse on Colonialism" by Aimé Césaire
- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself* by Harriet Jacobs
- "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" by Langston Hughes
- "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass
- *Notes on the State of Virginia* by Thomas Jefferson
- "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *The Mis-Education of the Negro* by Carter G. Woodson
- *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano
- Atlanta Exposition Address/Atlanta Compromise by Booker T. Washington
- "If We Must Die" by Claude McKay
- *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* by D.T. Niane
- "The Ballot or the Bullet" by Malcolm X.
- *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon
- "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw
- "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of *Desêtre*: Black Studies Toward the Human Project" by Sylvia Wynter
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- "Message to the Grassroots" by Malcolm X.
- "The Negro Art Hokum" by George Schuyler
- "The Black Campus Movement and the Institutionalization of Black Studies, 1965–1970" by Ibram H. Rogers
- "Black Studies and Global Perspectives: An Essay" by St. Clair Drake