

## 2018 AP World History Scoring Commentary

Evaluate the extent to which railroads affected the process of empire-building in Afro-Eurasia between 1860 and 1918.

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The invention of the steam engine allowed for more efficient movement of peoples, goods, and ideas around the world and among empires. The key use of the steam engine can be found in the use of railroad and trains. For large-land based empires in Afro-Eurasia the train and steam engine allowed for a tighter control of their territory and the movement of goods and people.

The British Empire controlled much of Africa and in order to rule the interior peoples and exploit the natural resources they constructed railroads to effectively and quickly move troops and raw and manufactured goods around. Document 4 is a map of the Eastern half of Africa and shows the territory controlled by the British the railroads put in place as well as these planned on being put in place in 1899. The plan proposed would connect Cape Town, South Africa with Cairo, Egypt and would allow for efficient movement through British and German territories. The plan was introduced by Cecil Rhodes, a well-known British entrepreneur, explore, and imperialist. As an imperialist, Rhodes would have greatly benefitted from the process railway system along with the British and German states. It would have allowed for tighter control by the colonialist/imperialist governments and increased their empires power. Document 6 corroborates this theory that the railroads would lead to more control from the imperialist governments. Document 6 is from Ernest Roume, a French governor of west Africa in 1904 and he proposed that the railroads would help bring the country/region out of “poverty and barbarism” and that is the French governments “duty as a civilized nation” to construct railroads. By increasing the “lines of penetration” into the “immense regions” of French West Africa, Roumes hopes to increase the amount of raw goods flowing out of Africa and into the French government. This would be made possible by building railroads and would greatly increase the power of the French state. As shown by these two documents, railroads would increase the power and wealth of imperialist empires that were present in Africa.

Railroads were not only wanted in Africa however, other empires besides the Europeans were interested in the use of railroads such as the Chinese and Ottoman’s. Document 2 is a memorandum to the Qin court in 1867 written by a dynasty official advocating for domestic reforms. In it, they argue that by building railroads: “China will likewise enjoy great benefits from them in the future.” They also argue that the railroads will be: “quite beneficial to the poor people now.” This reveals that there would be both smart and long-term benefits to the construction of railroads in the Qing Empire. Likewise, in Document 3 the author argues that, “to construct a railway in this region, both to solve these problems and to show the power of the caliph” would be beneficial to the ottoman empire. The problems referred to in the quote are in order for Muslims to get to mecca and Medina they must either suffer embarrassment on foreign ships or travel the dangerous roads by came. The author is a government report written in 1993 addressing a proposal for a railroad from Damascus to Mecca. Both the Qing official and Ottoman report reveal that railroads were not only used by European Powers and that they could be used for reasons other than control and exploration. The railroad provided key functions to maintaining and benefitting empires and empire building.

There are, however, some drawbacks to the railroads as demonstrated in Document 1 and 5. Document 1 is a petition from high-caste Indians to the British governments in 1866 and addresses the problem that second-class and third-class citizens are not given due respect when an trains. They claim, “The miseries suffered equal the horrors of the ‘middle

The response earned 1 point for **thesis/claim** because it claims that railroads promoted greater centralized control of movement in the empire.

The response earned 1 point for **contextualization** because it describes a broader historical context of transportation technology and European expansion relevant to the role of railroads in the process of empire- building in Afro-Eurasia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The response did not earn the point for using **evidence beyond the documents** because the nondocument discussion in this essay is quite limited and mostly lacking in specific historical evidence; the tangential reference to the Middle Passage is only loosely connected to the topic of the essay.

The response earned 2 points for using evidence from the documents because, although document 7 is absent from the essay, the remaining six documents are used to support an argument in response to the prompt.

The response did not earn the point for **document sourcing** because although it analyzes the sourcing of document 4 and attempts to analyze the sourcing of document 6, it does not meet the required three-document threshold for this point.

passage”. Referring to the transportation of slaves across the Atlantic Ocean. This Document goes to show that the railroads had negative effects on the native population of imperialist colonies. Another negative effect brought about by the railroads is increased rivalry among large empires. As seen in [document 5](#): “powers that have enormous interests at stake in the far east... will wake to find a new, solid, impenetrable, self-sufficient Russia” ... This Document is from Sir Henry Norman, an English politician in 1901 who was discussing the Trans-Siberian Railroad and its benefits to Russia and drawbacks for other imperialist powers.

To conclude, Railroads allowed for greater control of colonies by imperialist nations as well as better transportation for large empires and their people while at the same time creating class and race conflict as well as increasing the tensions and rivalries among powerful nations.

The response **did not** earn the point for demonstrating a complex understanding because the mechanical links between documentary evidence and the thesis of the essay only demonstrate a straightforward, competent argumentation lacking in nuance.