

## **Larry Krieger’s Response to David Coleman’s E-mail: “A note from David Coleman about the AP U.S. History course”**

[Click here](#) to read Mr. Coleman’s e-mail.

One week ago we published an [Open Letter to Mr. Coleman](#). The letter called on him to address the flaws in the redesigned AP U.S. History Framework and Exam.

We welcome Mr. Coleman’s willingness to seriously consider our recommendations. Like Mr. Coleman we share a deep commitment to liberty and to human dignity.

One of our recommendations concerned the existence of a “Secret Test” that was only available to certified AP U.S. History teachers. The Secret Test prevented an open public debate on the new APUSH Exam and its relationship to the redesigned College Board Framework and to state curriculum standards. We congratulate Mr. Coleman on his decision to release this test for public scrutiny. We will soon post a detailed analysis of the Exam.

We would like to take this opportunity to correct misleading statements in Mr. Coleman’s letter. The Sample Test does open with an excerpt from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. However, the excerpt describes Franklin’s impression of a sermon delivered by George Whitefield. Neither the excerpt nor the three following multiple-choice questions have anything to do with Franklin’s life and achievements. Thus, a student could know the answer to the question without ever having heard of Benjamin Franklin.

The Sample Exam does contain an excerpt from Washington’s Farewell Address that generates four multiple-choice questions. The questions do not require students to articulate the influence of Washington’s words on American foreign in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The multiple-choice question that Mr. Coleman refers to (Question 33) simply asks students to know that World War II marked the time when Washington’s Address ceased to influence American foreign policy. This also marked the only time that World War II appears on the Exam.

Mr. Coleman asserts that, “every question on the new AP U.S. History Exam now requires students to demonstrate an understanding of America’s historical documents and leaders.” This statement is contradicted by the actual Exam questions. For example, Questions 18 – 20 ask students to respond to a passage written by a contemporary historian on the Immigration Act of 1924 – obviously not something that requires knowledge of historical documents and leaders. This is true of many other questions on the Exam.

Mr. Coleman insists that “the new Framework does not remove individuals or events that have been taught by AP teachers in prior years.” Unfortunately, facts are stubborn things. The redesigned Framework omits Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Dorothea Dix, William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Roosevelt, Jonas Salk, Rosa Parks, Dwight Eisenhower, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other notable American heroes. And unlike the previous APUSH five-page Topic Outline, the new Framework does not rely on state

history standards to fill in the content. Rather, it makes it clear that students will be required to know ONLY the material contained within the Framework itself. So a student will not have to learn anything about any of these individuals to do well on the AP Exam.

The dramatic expansion of the document governing the APUSH course from five pages to 98 pages makes it even more significant and troubling that so many American heroes have been excluded. We call upon Mr. Coleman to explain why the anonymous authors of the redesigned Framework had space for Chief Little Turtle but not for Dwight Eisenhower, or why they had room for the Black Panthers but not for Dr. King.

Releasing the Sample Test is a positive step. But it is only one test and one step. One year ago, AP teachers had access to 8 released exams and 680 multiple-choice questions. In addition, AP Central provided a trove of information that included 26 Document-Based Questions, 104 essay questions, and almost 400 graded sample essays. These materials are all outdated by the new APUSH Exam. The lack of graded sample essays is a particularly significant problem.

We continue to urge Mr. Coleman to delay the implementation of the new APUSH curriculum. The delay will give the College Board an opportunity to fully address the program's flaws and create additional preparation materials.