

## **A NOTE ON MY APPROACH TO ANSWERING THIS QUESTION:**

The prompt asks students to focus on the development of a “national culture.” This term could be defined either broadly or narrowly. I anticipate that a narrow definition, which would only give credit to students who focus primarily on specific “cultural” developments related to artistic and philosophical movements, such as the Hudson River School or Transcendentalism, would deny points to most students who would answer this question. I believe that there will be a large number of essays that will focus on a broader definition of “national culture” that will include American nationalism. I do not think that these students will be denied credit.

I say this to note that I have not unintentionally confounded national culture with the idea of American nationalism, but have intentionally constructed these samples around what I believe will be a broad set of scoring guidelines, which would accept a wide range of arguments and supporting evidence that include American nationalism along with American national culture. In the event that the scoring guidelines reflect a narrower definition of “national culture,” I will make adjustments to these sample responses.

Tom Richey  
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**EXEMPLAR ESSAY (6/6)**

588 Words

After the American Patriots won the Revolutionary War, the country quickly divided into factions. During the debates about the ratification of the Constitution, the Federalists (supporters) and the Antifederalists (opponents) of the Constitution argued over whether or not the Constitution should be ratified. After George Washington was sworn in as president, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson divided the country into competing political parties: The Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans. Although Jefferson told Americans that “we are all republicans, we are all federalists,” Americans continued to be divided during his presidency – especially about the infamous Embargo Act that cut off all trade. However, the War of 1812 brought the United States a new opportunity for cultural unity. The most important event that contributed to the growth of national culture in the United States between 1800 and 1848 was the War of 1812 because it built up a sense of pride and nationalism among Americans. Another contributing development was Jacksonian Democracy because it involved more Americans in the political process. Sectionalism undermined the development of national culture during the same period.

Although many Americans did not support the War of 1812, the war’s aftermath brought about a great deal of national unity compared to what existed before it. Andrew Jackson’s victory in the Battle of New Orleans convinced a lot of Americans that the United States had whipped the British. Americans, who like to win, felt a great deal of pride about this development (and Americans across the country began to idolize Andrew Jackson). After James Monroe was elected president in 1816, political parties ceased to exist during his presidency. This was called the “Era of Good Feeling” because Americans began to see each other in a more unified national sense. During this time, Henry Clay proposed the American System, which was a plan to give Americans a national bank, internal improvements (funding for roads, bridges, and canals), and a protective tariff (to help American industry develop). Americans seemed set for a new wave of national unity. Right after the war, Americans largely supported industrialization in the Northeast.

Another development that helped to create a national culture in the early 1800s was the development of Jacksonian Democracy, which involved allowing all white males to vote and participate in politics even if they did not own property. During the time of the Founding generation, politics was mostly reserved for people who had a lot of money and education. Americans often discussed politics. This was noted by Alexis de Tocqueville, a French visitor, in his book, *Democracy in America*. He mentioned how Americans loved to discuss politics and read newspapers. This became a key part of national culture.

Of course, there were some developments that undermined the growth of national culture in the United States during this period, with most having to do with sectionalism. During this time, slavery was phased out in the Northern states, while slavery grew in the Southern states because of the cotton boom. Debates about slavery and temperance (banning alcohol) divided Americans during this time. Abolitionists denounced slavery in such strong terms that Southern politicians began defending it as something good. This would eventually divide the country and lead Southern states to secession.

The War of 1812 was the most important event in the growth of national culture between 1800 and 1848 because it gave Americans a sense of pride and national unity. Jacksonian Democracy also played a role in developing mass politics as part of national culture. Sectionalism undermined national culture.

**ABOVE-AVERAGE ESSAY (5/6)**

400 Words

In the Gettysburg address, Abraham Lincoln spoke of the United States of America as a nation, but America wasn't always a nation. "Four score and seven years ago," the Declaration of Independence had referred to the United States as "free and independent states. Although Americans cooperated to win the American Revolution, Americans were more attached to their states than they were the country as a whole. When he stepped down from the presidency, George Washington worried that Americans were too divided because of political parties and sectionalism. Between 1800 and 1848, a national culture developed in the United States because of new technologies because these technologies made it easier for Americans to travel and to communicate with each other.

New technologies allowed Americans to travel across the country and to move to other parts of the country, which allowed Americans to interact with each other more than they had before. Steamboats allowed Americans to travel up and down large rivers, such as the Mississippi River and the Ohio River. Vanderbilt helped to start a steamboat line that went between New York and New Jersey. New York tried to shut down the steam boats, but the Supreme Court ruled in *Gibbons v. Ogden* that this was part of interstate commerce. This interstate commerce helped build a national culture. The federal government also invested in the Cumberland Road, which went through Maryland, Indiana, and other states. When John Deere invented the steel plow, Americans moved to the West to farm. John Deere even became a national brand that people can still see today. The whole idea of American expansion became a part of American culture with "Manifest Destiny."

New communication technologies also helped create a national culture. With the telegraph, Americans could get messages to each other quickly. Because of the post office and better roads, Americans could also read newspapers from other parts of the United States. This helped Americans know what was going on in other parts of the country, which helped build a national culture. When Andrew Jackson became president, Americans all over the country read what was going on in the federal government. They even voted in elections as part of Jacksonian Democracy.

New technologies invented during the Market Revolution helped to bring about a national culture between 1800 and 1848 because they helped Americans move around the country and communicate better with other parts of the country.

<b>CONTEXTUALIZATION</b>	1	<i>Discussion of Gettysburg Address &amp; early national America provides background.</i>
<b>THESIS</b>	1	<i>The thesis makes a historically-defensible claim supported by a line of reasoning.</i>
<b>EVIDENCE I</b>	1	<i>The essay includes multiple pieces of specific evidence relevant to the prompt.</i>
<b>EVIDENCE II</b>	1	<i>Evidence presented in the essay is clearly supportive of claims in topic sentences.</i>
<b>REASONING</b>	1	<i>Cause-and-effect relationships are examined in the body paragraphs.</i>
<b>COMPLEXITY</b>	0	<i>The essay does not indisputably demonstrate a complex understanding.</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b><i>The essay could be improved with more sophisticated argumentation.</i></b>

**BELOW-AVERAGE ESSAY (2/6)**

101 Words

The most important cause of the growth of a national culture between 1800 and 1848 was the Second Great Awakening because it made Americans more committed to religion in every region of the United States.

During the Second Great Awakening, preachers used fire and brimstone sermons in order to scare their audiences and make them afraid of Hell. These preachers would often preach at camp meetings, which were large gatherings where people pitched tents and spent days listening to preachers. In New York, an area was referred to as the “burned-over district” because so many preachers had preached about hell there.

<b>CONTEXTUALIZATION</b>	0	<i>No attempt is made to contextualize this essay.</i>
<b>THESIS</b>	1	<i>A historically-defensible thesis with a valid line of reasoning is present.</i>
<b>EVIDENCE I</b>	1	<i>The essay offers multiple pieces of specific evidence relevant to the prompt.</i>
<b>EVIDENCE II</b>	0	<i>The essay is narrative-driven rather than thesis-driven.</i>
<b>REASONING</b>	0	<i>The body of the essay does not apply any reasoning – only states facts.</i>
<b>COMPLEXITY</b>	0	<i>The essay does not demonstrate a complex understanding.</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<i>The essay would benefit from a clear thesis and an argumentative structure.</i>