Period 9: Long Essay Question

**Compare and contrast the patterns of immigration in the period 1880 to 1928 to the patterns of immigration in the period 1965 to 2000.**

* State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
* Support the argument with evidence, using specific examples.
* Apply historical thinking skills as directed by the question.
* Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay that extends the argument, connects it to a different historical context, or connects it to a different category of analysis.

Student Sample Response:

Prior to the 1880s, a large majority of the population in the United States was made up of “old immigrants” from North Western Europe, and had long since made their lifestyles in the country. However, throughout the of 1880-1928 there were many new patterns of immigration occurring in the US., starting with a new wave at south eastern Europeans immigrating. Another situation would occur later in US history, when times of crisis in hispanic countries would also cause an immigration spike in 1965 to 2000. It is easy to compare and contrast these eras because despite of some similarities in Americas response to immigration, they remained mostly different in the immigrants difficulties with assimilation and the different types of people. Similarities can be clearly seen in both periods establishments of Immigration Acts in attempts to limit it.

During the time periods of 1880-1928 and 1965-2000 there was some clear parallelism in the ways America responded to immigration. When new immigrants started arriving, there was a lot of hostility between the new and old people and committees, like the Dillingham Commission that was formed to study the consequences of immigration, concluded that immigrants threatend American society and jobs. These conclusions led to legislations, such as the immigration Quota Act that limited immigration to 350,000. Similar responses to immigration could be seen decades later in the late 1960s to 2000s, when Americans also prejudiced the growing number of immigrants. Many Americans believed that immigrants were taking “American jobs”; therefore, many Immigration Acts were instated to try to limit immigration. Another similarity between both the periods was their response to a poor economy by deporting Mexicans.

Despite some similaties, the two periods were also very different in the challenges they faced to assimilate into American culture. In the 1880s when “new immigrants” began arriving to the U.S., the American people felt threatend because of the customs, different beliefs, illiteracy and poverty. This produced a strong sense of nativism within Americans when they left superior over other ethnicities.
Leagues such as the Immigration Restriction League and the American Protective Association were formed in response, attacking immigrants and the Catholic church. Immigrants had to turn to Americanization, adapting to American Lifestyle, in order to assimilate. This was different in the later years of 1865-2000 when theories as meltingpot/mosaic rose and some people believed different races could live in unity keeping cultures alive. This could be seen in many places such as “Chinatown” and “Little Havanna” where some cultures still remained.

Another big difference among the times where the types of immigrants and reasons why they moving to America changed dramatically between the time periods. During 1880s-2000, a shift in immigration occurred where more Central, Southern and Eastern Europeans came. These people were pushed from their countries because of genocides, as well as extreme poverty. They were also drawn to the U.S. because of religious freedom and economic opportunities, which was evident by immigrants taking low-wage jobs. An example at that was the Immigration Quota Act attracting thousands of Mexicans to work in the U.S. However in the 1960s-2000 immigrants largely stemmed from Asian and Latin American backgrounds. In Mexico and Latin America there was intense poverty, corruption and crisis, along with drug cartel scandals. This ultimately led to a huge immigration crisis in the US. Where many legal and illegal immigrants crossed the border. Another type of immigrant were the refugees, often times Cubans fleeing harsh dictatorship under Fidel Castro.

It is clear that although there were some similar patterns at immigration in 1880-1929 and 1965-2000, they remained mostly different in the ways that immigrants faced assimilation and the varying types of immigrant. The struggles with immigration will not stop in the year 2000 and eventually the U.S.’s openness to immigration will lead to the plane crash into the twin towers on September 11, 2001.

SCORING

### Thesis – 1 point available

The essay earns 1 point for thesis. This essay presents a clear thesis that is consistently supported throughout the essay.

### Support for Argument – 2 points available

The essay earns 2 points for support of argument. While its does not have an overabundance of factual support, it does utilize much of it well in supporting the thesis. It remains consistently solid throughout all parts of the essay. While some of the connections are stronger than others, the student demonstrates the connections to evidence. For example, the essay does well when comparing the motives for nativist backlash between the time periods. The author perhaps could have been more clear in the last body paragraph, as the contrasts could be drawn more sharply – if both groups are moving to escape poverty, it would be best to include perhaps different causes for the lack of economic opportunities in immigrants’ home nations.

### Comparison – 2 points available

The essay earns 2 point for comparison. This essay nicely provides examples of both similarities and differences between immigration in the two time periods. In addition, the student discusses the assimilation of immigrants in the first period and the movement to Americanization in response to nativism. The student includes some analytical structure that indicates sophistication – explaining why immigrants had to use different strategies to assimilate in the different time periods.

### Synthesis – 1 point available

The essay does not earn a point for synthesis. While the essay is well constructed overall, it does not extend in a method appropriate for the synthesis point. Had the author included some comparison to the attempts made by previous waves of immigrants to assimilate, or had the twists and turns of governmental policy been situated within a discussion of the larger historical context, s/he would have been able to achieve this point.

 Score – 5/6 points