**Sample Essay**

**UNITED STATES HISTORY SECTION II  
Part A  
(Suggested writing time—45 minutes) Percent of Section II score—45**

Directions: The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A-J and your knowledge of the period referred to in the question. High scores will be earned only by essays that both cite key pieces of evidence from the documents and draw on outside knowledge of the period.

1. How successful were African Americans in achieving equality on the Home Front as well as the military? Explain your answer.

America was greatly challenged in the 1940s with the advent of World War II. Though America tried at first to take a neutral stance, the government soon realized that this would not be possible and joined WWII as an Allied Power. Many soldiers went off to war, leaving their jobs behind for women to fill. WWII also created a chance for African Americans to show their true potential by aiding the war cause and fight against the lingering discrimination after the Civil War. The African Americans were ultimately successful in achieving some equality, which is particularly conveyed in the American employment, military, and social life as African Americans fought for what they deserved.

Although African Americans were still discriminated against after the Civil War, America began seeing positive changes in employment that gravitated towards racial equality after African Americans began to help the in war cause. Only with racial equality would America be successful in producing goods, as demonstrated in the picture of an Black and a White American working together with the slogan, ‘United We Win’ (Doc C). Such an idea was especially prominent with the example of Black leader A. Philip Randolph, who threatened a massive "Negro March on Washington" in 1941 to demand equal opportunities for African Americans in war jobs and in the armed forces. Roosevelt had no choice but to issue an Executive Order 9981 forbidding racial discrimination in defense industries. This gave the African Americans their first major victory towards equality in America and also helped Blacks work more efficiently and not worry about White workers discriminating against them. Another legislation that helped establish Black equality was the Fair Employment Practices Commission, which monitored whether or not the African Americans were being mistreated. Blacks were all too used to the government promising something but not carrying through, so this helped assure the African Americans that they would be protected. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) shot up to half a million marks, as changes began positively affecting Black equality. Without these efforts, African Americans would not have achieved such feats that guaranteed their employment.

African Americans also made outstanding contributions in the military. For example, the Tuskegee Airmen were African American pilots that served in United States air forces; they were honored and commemorated for their bravery (Doc A). The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American military aviators in the United States military, and they were celebrated for their successful missions and attacks. Before this, African Americans did not have the chance of becoming pilots due to existing racial problems. However, the concept of inability of flying airplanes due to race had been reshaped. The Tuskegee Airmen showed that the African Americans had once again moved towards equality since, for the first time, African Americans were given the opportunity to serve in the U.S. Army. In addition, the first African American air force general, Benjamin O Davis, was the first African American general officer in the U.S. Army. Hence, the Blacks were well on their way to convincing the world that the African Americans were equal to others.

Without a doubt, social injustices were the greatest struggles that African Americans had to face. Although the Whites heavily discriminated against African Americans, Black civilians worked to improve their social level within the United States. During the Second Great Migration, the United States experienced a drastic drift in demographics, as African Americans moved from the South and the East to the North and the West (Doc D). Even though Blacks had fewer advantages than the Whites, they were able to unionize and find jobs in the industries. This is evidence of African Americans trying to ameliorate their lifestyle by entering the middle class. About 1.6 million of these African Americans entered war-industry cities where they would help accelerate the economic development of the region. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was an organization established to protect the rights of the African Americans. This had been a big part of the Civil Rights Movement and it was well planned: because of this organization, African Americans had protection against racist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan.

World War II created a two-front war for the Americans at home; the term ‘Double V’ equated the fight over the Axis powers in World War II and over racial prejudice in the United States (Doc F). Despite these challenging obstacles, African Americans were able to defeat most of the racism existing in the United States and come out of World War II as winners. Not only did they gain equality in the employer’s arena, but also rid many racial prejudices prominent in the military and everyday society. African Americans truly created a difference during World War II and became successful individuals in a previously prejudiced land.