**How to DBQ for the 2018 AP History Exam**

With the Document-Based Question, your job is to incorporate the documents *and your knowledge of World or U.S. or European history* into an essay that addresses all parts of the question. It is worth 25% of your total score. You have 60 minutes to write it. (This includes a 15-minute prep period). There will be seven documents. The DBQ will focus on periods 3-6 in AP World History, periods 3-8 in APUSH and in AP Euro from 1600-2001. The DBQ is scored based on a rubric up to 7 points.

It’s easy to check on your progress as you work through the DBQ and the Long Essay. Just above the question on the exam you will see bulleted reminders of the scoring rubric. Check off each bullet as you complete the corresponding task in your essay.

The basic rubric is:

* The essay has a **thesis** with an historically defensible claim that responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must be in one place, either at the beginning or end of the essay1 point
* The essay places the question in the correct historical **context**: 1 point (see paragraph 2 below)
* The essay uses the content of at least **three documents** to address the prompt (1 point)
* supports an argument in response to the prompt in at least **six documents.** (another point)
* The essay uses **evidence beyond the documents** (“outside information”) in its argument 1 point
* The essay explains **Point of View** in at least 3 documents: 1 point
* The essay demonstrates a complex understanding of the focus of the prompt. (1 point) This means you’ve gone above and beyond the “good” essay and made your AP reader cry with joy.

**FIRST:**

Read the question. Pause. Take a deep breath. **Read it again, slower this time.** Make sure you *understand and underline all the tasks of the question.*

**SECOND:**

**Write down everything that pops into your head from the era of the question.** You will use this as a source of outside information in the essay.

**THIRD:** **Take notes next to the documents:**

1) How does each document relate to THE tasks of the question?

2) Examine the SOURCE line for POV info like the TIME, AUTHOR and SETTING. What info in the SOURCE line relates to the info in the DOCUMENT itself?

3) What OUTSIDE information is the document pushing you into providing?

**NEXT: START WRITING**

Paragraph 1, Thesis: includes 1) **all parts of the question with specific examples** and 2) **makes an historically defensible claim**

Example:

**A question for APWH might ask, “Evaluate the extent to which cultural and political effects of Christianity effected change in the Americas in the era c. 1500-c. 1800 “**

**This would be a really good thesis:**

**“There were many cultural and political changes because of the introduction of Christianity in the Americas in the era c. 1500-c. 1800. Culturally, the greatest effect was the blending of native religious practices with Christian ones. Politically, the Church had great influence in government in the Americas. However, in many places, the old religions remained in some form.”**

Of course, the content of the documents will help guide you through your thesis.

**Paragraph 2, Context: Briefly put the topic of the question in historical context.**

**Context= “How did we get to the time and place of this question?”**

1. Define the focus of the question. In this example, give a brief overview of the history of Christianity in the Americas, c. 1500. How it arrived, how it spread---2-3 sentences.

2. In addition, you could briefly describe other big social/political/economic/environmental things that were happening in the era of the question. This information **must** connect to the question in some way.

Paragraph 3, Make your strongest argument, based on the question. Which side do you think there is more of? That’s your strongest argument.

A. Name this group/argument with a topic sentence that introduces this paragraph;

B. Use the documents and outside information to address the terms of the question. Tip: The “source” line in the document and the document itself will provide big hints for outside info and POV.

C. **Name the source of each document** (who said/wrote it, why?)

D. **Summarize** for the reader what each document is saying in your own words. Quoting the document is not necessary. Write **‘THIS SHOWS”** (“**This**

**Shows**….”tells the readers you are “wrestling” with the document—good

E. Attach point-of-view (POV) to at least one document in this

group (Why was this document written? In what context? Who is it intended for? How does the author’s status affect his/her opinions in this document?)

Paragraph 4, Second Argument Group (repeat the structure of paragraph 3):

A. Name this group/argument with a topic sentence that introduces this paragraph;

B. Use the documents and outside information to address the terms of the question. Tip: The “source” line in the document and the document itself will provide big hints for outside info and POV.

C. **Name the source of each document** (who said/wrote it, why?)

D. **Summarize** for the reader what each document is saying in your own words. Quoting the document is not necessary. Write **‘THIS SHOWS”** (“**This**

**Shows**….”tells the readers you are “wrestling” with the document—good

E. Attach point-of-view (POV) to at least one document in this

group (Why was this document written? In what context? Who is it intended for? How does the author’s status affect his/her opinions in this document?)

Paragraph 5, Third Argument Group (repeat the structure of paragraphs 3 and 4):

Remember, the minimum standard is discussing POV in 3, but if you attempt explaining the POV in 6 or 7 documents, you leave yourself room to get a couple wrong and still get the minimum 3 right, and if you get more than 3 POV right, and have many examples of outside information, you might earn the difficult-to-get 7th DBQ point.

Paragraph 6, Write a conclusion that includes:

A. All parts of the question; and (see below)

B. Three named groups of documents based on the prompt of the question.

(This will substitute for your opening thesis paragraph in case it is insufficient.)

Be sure you finish your essay with a brief conclusion that addresses all parts of the question. It might count as your thesis if the one at the beginning of your essay falls short.

If you finish your essay ahead of the 60-minute time frame, go back and review your work and make any necessary corrections. Readers understand it’s a first-draft essay in a high-pressure situation. If you have extra time, don’t waste it—add information, cross stuff out, and rewrite whole paragraphs, if you need to.

But if you’re done, you can move on to the Long Essay.