**WRITING AP HISTORY LONG ESSAYS 40 minutes, 15% of the total exam grade**

**For APWH: Pick ONE Long Essay prompt from Periods 1-2, OR periods 3-4, OR from periods 5-6.**

**For AP US History: Pick ONE Long Essay prompt from Periods 1-3, OR periods 4-6, OR from periods 7-9.**

**For AP Euro: Pick ONE Long Essay prompt from Periods 1, OR periods 2-3, OR from periods 3-4.**

**All of the Long Essays will have the same historical skill, like CCOT, Comparison or Cause/Effect.**

There are three kinds of Long Essays:

**Comparison** (similarities and differences),

**Causation** (cause and/or effect),

**Continuity and Change Over Time**

ALL of these types of essays are **argumentation essays** because you must take a stand based on the prompt (“a historically defensible claim”) and provide evidence and arguments to support your stand. For example, a prompt in AP World History could be:

“Evaluate the extent to which trade fostered change in West Africa in the era c. 600-1750.”

A successful essay could argue that trade fostered a lot of change (“a lot of” being a minimal “extent to which” argument) in West Africa c. 600-c.1750, but also offer examples of things that didn’t change (“On the other hand, not everything changed. For example….”)

Students often want to know, “How many specific pieces of evidence do I need?” The answer is, as many as you can think of. AP history is not about how little you can do and get credit. AP history is about showing how much you know. If some of your “evidence” is wrong, graders don’t count points off. They only score what you get right. So load up on evidence.

It doesn’t matter which side you pick as long as you can back up your argument with facts. The idea here is to show complexity in your thinking, and not write about history all one way or the other.

Avoid terms like, “everyone”, “always”, “all”, “nobody”, never”, “none” and instead, use terms like, “most”, “usually”, “sometimes”, “rarely”, “a few”. For example, “Everyone in China feared the invading Mongols.” Really? You know for a fact that every…single…person in China feared the Mongols? NOBODY was pro-Mongol? That’s why, “Most people in China feared the invading Mongols” is a more defensible argument.

**Long Essays** are graded on a **6 point scale:**

* **Thesis/Claim (1 point):** Present a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim that responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.
* **Contextualization (1 point):** Relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question.
* **Evidence (1 or 2 points):** Provide specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of prompt (1 point); Support an argument in response to the prompt, using specific and relevant examples of evidence. (1 point).
* **Analysis and Reasoning (1 or 2 points):** Use historical reasoning (such as: comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame an argument that addresses the prompt ( 1 point); and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify or modify an argument that addresses the question. (such as: using additional reasoning skills in an argument, explaining connections across time periods—i.e. synthesis, considering alternate views or evidence) (1 point)

(This 6th point is awarded to the rare Long Essay that is so thorough and stellar, it makes the reader glad they majored in history)

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**“How to” guides for success on the AP History Long Essay**

**Important! You must adapt these suggestions to fit THE terms of THE question.**

**1.The Comparison Long Essay**

**Paragraph 1:** (thesis): “There were many similarities and differences in (name the 2 things/eras/events being compared).  For example, there were similarities in (provide an example or two) and differences in (provide an example or two). Perhaps the greatest (sim or diff) was (provide an example of your greatest sim or diff).

**Paragraph 2:** Put the question in historical **context.** What was happening in this question’s world? Define key terms of the prompt, too.

**Paragraph 3: “**Perhaps the **greatest similarity** between (name the 2 things) was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Other similarities include (name as many similarities as you can think of). They were similar **because** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

**Paragraph 4:** :Perhaps the **greatest difference** between (name the 2 things) was \_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_. Other differences include (discuss as many differences as you can think of). They were different **because** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

**Paragraph 5:** (2nd chance at Thesis) Conclude with a summary that accurately reflects all the terms of the question, with specificity.  In other words, re-write your thesis in another way.

**2.** .**The Causation Long Essay (Causes and/or Effects of an event or movement, for example)**

**Paragraph 1:** (Thesis): “There were many causes (or effects) of (name the event). Causes (or effects) include (name 2). Perhaps the most important cause (or effect) was (name a 3rd cause/effect) because of its impact on history.”

---You should also offer a counter argument right here. For example, “However, (the event) had little effect on….”)

**Paragraph 2:** **Define the event itself and put it in historical context:** What was happening in this question’s world? Define key terms of the prompt, too.

**Paragraph 3**: **Discuss** **as many** **causes and/or effects (depending on the question)** of the event as you can come up with. Name the **MOST** significant cause (or effect) and tell WHY it is so significant. What else was going on in this time period?

**Paragraph 4: “However, (the event) had little effect on….because….”**

**Paragraph 5:** (2nd chance at thesis) Write a conclusion that summarizes all parts of the question, with specificity, like in your thesis but worded differently. If your thesis is not “all there”, but your conclusion is, it could count for a thesis point.

**3. The Continuity and Change Over Time Long Essay**

**Paragraph 1**: (thesis) “There were many continuities and changes in (insert the topic of the question) in the era (insert the years of the question). Continuities included (1 specific example) and changes were in (1 specific example). Perhaps the greatest (continuity or change) was in…. “

**Paragraph 2: Define the topic and put it in historical context:** What was happening in this question’s world? Define key terms of the prompt, too.

**Paragraph 3**: “Continuities in **insert the terms of the question** in this era included: **discuss as many specific examples you can think of.**  Perhaps the most important continuity was \_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. These largely remained the same over time **because** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  **Provide as many relevant examples as possible**

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**Paragraph 4**: “Changes in **insert all tasks of the question** in this era included….”: **discuss as many specific examples you can think of.***Perhaps the greatest change* was\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_\_. This changed over time **because** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  **Provide as many relevant examples as possible**

**Paragraph 5:** (2nd chance at Thesis) Conclude with a summary that accurately reflects all the terms of the question, with specificity.  In other words, re-write your thesis in another way.

**Final Note:** It is to your advantage to repeat THE terms of THE question throughout your essay.

Don’t get fancy with synonyms for Similarities and Differences, Cause or Effect, or Continuity and Change. This helps your essay reader target your arguments.