



LEQ Breakdown and Skill Review

Reviewing the LEQ rubric,
strategies for students,
and student sample essay.

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LEQ Rubric

On the AP exam, you will NOT be provided with a rubric. Use the directions to help you link to the essential components on the rubric. Strategically target each point, and use the directions as a checklist.

Long Essay (LE) Rubric, 6 possible points

<p>THESIS/CLAIM (1 point)</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning. ATFP!</p> <p>To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt, rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.</p>	◇
<p>CONTEXTUALIZATION (1 point)</p> <p>Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. (Consider the “backstory”)</p> <p>To earn this point, the response must 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. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or a reference.</p> <p>(Three sentences, at least!)</p> <p>Don't forget to LINK it to the topic of the essay!</p>	◇
<p>EVIDENCE -- Support for Argument (2 points)</p> <p>Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</p> <p>To earn one point, the response must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. “Stuff Happened”</p> <p>Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.</p> <p>(close the loop!)</p> <p>To earn two points the response must use specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt. “Stuff Happened Because... and this supports the argument because...”</p>	◇ ◇
<p>ANALYSIS AND REASONING --Targeted Skill – Argumentation, Causation/CCOT/Comparison (2 points)</p> <p>Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.</p> <p>To earn the first point, the response must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced.</p> <p>Demonstrates 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.</p> <p>To earn the second point, the response must demonstrate a complex understanding. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables• Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects• Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods• Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes• Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.	◇ ◇

The rubric is your friend!
Become familiar with it, and
Target as many points as you can.

Breaking Down the Rubric

THESIS/CLAIM (1 point)

Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning. *ATFP!*

*To earn this point, the thesis must **make a claim** that responds to the prompt, rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either **in the introduction** or the **conclusion**.*

Thesis Formula Adapted for a Causation Prompt: **Although X..., Y because... AB.**

X = least important cause or consequence, with brief explanation why

A, B = most important causes / consequences, with brief explanation why

Y = your assertion statement, most important cause or consequence, including a qualifier if applicable

Breaking Down the Rubric

CONTEXTUALIZATION (1 point)

Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. (*Consider the “backstory”*)

To earn this point, the response must 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. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or a reference. (Three sentences, at least!)

Don't forget to LINK it to the topic of the essay!

If creating an introductory paragraph with both thesis and contextualization, consider adapting your formula:

LC and BC. This relates to the topic of _____ b/c...

Although X..., Y because... AB.

LC = Local Context

BC = Broad Context

Breaking Down the Rubric

EVIDENCE -- Support for Argument (2 points)

Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. **At least two!**

To earn one point, the response must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt and within the parameters of the prompt.

“Stuff Happened”

Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.

(close the loop!)

To earn two points the response must use specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.

“Stuff Happened because... and this supports the argument because...”

Make sure you thoroughly explain your evidence... shoot for at least four sentences.

Breaking Down the Rubric

ANALYSIS AND REASONING --Targeted Skill – Argumentation, Causation/CCOT/Comparison (2 points)

Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.

*To earn the first point, the response must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced. **Target the Skill!***

Demonstrates 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. **Unicorns are Real!**

To earn the second point, the response must demonstrate a complex understanding. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:

- *Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables*
- *Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects*
- *Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods*
- *Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes*
- *Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.*

THESIS	1
CONTEXTUALIZATION	1
EVIDENCE	2
ANALYSIS/SKILL	2

Before we move on... how confident are you in your understanding of the six points?

Breaking Down the Prompt:

Read the prompt not once, not twice, but thrice!

Make sure you understand your purpose, topic, and skill!

Identify your parameters!

1. The parameters are ...

(remember all evidence in your body paragraphs must fall within the parameters)

2. The central topic is...

3. The skill being tested is...

(Remember two of the six points come from your use of the skill; if you do not target the skill being tested, make sure you are using one of the big three: causation, comparison, or change and continuity over time)

4. The purpose of this essay is to...

(When you are writing an essay... it is essential that you remained focused on your purpose!)

Breaking Down the Prompt:

5. Does the prompt provide organizational categories?

If so, how many?

6. Does the prompt have a qualifier?

(if yes... do you know how to address it?)

Breaking Down the Prompt btw...

THIS FIRST STEP IS IMPORTANT!

*IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE
PROMPT, THE SKILL, YOUR PURPOSE...
YOU WILL NOT WRITE AN ESSAY THAT
ADDRESSES THE FULL PROMPT!*

TAKE YOUR TIME TO PLAN!





Tips on Thesis Writing



STUDENTS ARE YOUNG HISTORIANS! YOU ARE DEVELOPING AND DEFENDING YOUR HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS IN RESPONSE TO A PROMPT.

On the DBQ essay, the thesis can earn one of seven points. On the LEQ essay it can earn one of six points. This point and process is essential to a successful essay, and students should begin their planning with development of a complex thesis.

TIPS

- **No Absolutes!** Do not say things like “all, none, always, never...” Absolutes are NOT historically defensible claims. *History is GRAY.* There is always an opposing view!
- **ATFP!** (Address The Full Prompt) Many students fail essays because they are not answering the question! Identify the skill, qualifiers, eras, and categories.
- **SLOW DOWN** in preparation and ensure you are addressing the entire prompt. Many students score low because they jump in without proper processing and planning of their argument. Using the lingo of the prompt, including all topics and categories, and **targeting the skill are essential!**
- **Identify parameters** of prompt and stay within it.
- **FIRST or LAST PARAGRAPH!** *The thesis should not appear in the second paragraph, for example.*
- **BOTH SIDES!** Targeting the skill includes addressing both sides of the skill. I encourage my students to target both sides even if the prompt only addresses one side (especially for LEQ). John P. Irish’s thesis formula is recommended. It is essentially:

Although X (what there was less of), Y (what there is more of) because...

Comparison – similarities AND differences and what there was more of

Causation – causes AND effects and which was greatest or more significant

CCOT – continuities AND changes and which there was more of



More on Thesis Writing



Thesis statements must have some meat to them. Students should not rely on generic categories... gone are the days of “political, economic, and social” as generic categories. Instead, students should have categories that clearly relate to the prompt and topic. If students are using generic categories... encourage them to follow it up with a “because” statement. For example: Although the American Revolution was caused by social issues because the Patriots resented the way the British military looked down on them, the war was caused by political and economic issues to a greater extent as many colonists desired more freedom to live and work as they pleased. A thesis of “Although the American Revolution was caused by social issues, it was caused by political and economic issues to a greater extent,” will NOT be adequate.

The Importance of Defending an Argument

Once you develop an argument and state your thesis, it is important that you **remain focused on defending that argument** as you write the essay. If you do not keep in mind the purpose... you may end up storytelling instead of analyzing history and defending an argument. **The purpose is to defend an argument** that clearly addresses the prompt and illustrates historical analysis.

Over-simplification is a common pitfall. Practice defending arguments with evidence and explanations of how or why. Avoiding absolutes can also help you avoid an over-simplified essay.

Close the loop! Connect back to the X and Y throughout the body paragraphs.



Before we move on... how confident are you in your understanding thesis statements?

Although X..., Y because... .

Sample Prompt:

Evaluate the extent to which the Seven Years War (French and Indian War) affected the relationship between Great Britain and its North American colonies.

Sample thesis:

Although Britain's victory in the French and Indian War led to a short period of celebration among colonies, to a greater extent the war led to new taxes and methods of control that damaged the relationship between Great Britain and its North American colonies. The broken relationship led to the American Revolution.

Contextualization Tips

Your teacher/reader is looking for evidence that you understand what is going on in the era ...and can relate that knowledge to their overall topic in their essay!



- It can appear anywhere in the essay.
- It can include evidence and connections from other eras, but they must explicitly link it to the topic/era of the essay.
- Needs to include at least ONE piece of specific evidence. If they cannot identify something specific it is okay to focus on developments... *[And encourage them NOT to include that evidence anywhere else in their essay... not in their thesis... not in their body paragraphs.]*
- As with most analysis... **EXPLAINING HOW OR WHY IS IMPORTANT!**
- Rarely is there a length requirement; however, try for at least three sentences.

Contextualization Strategy

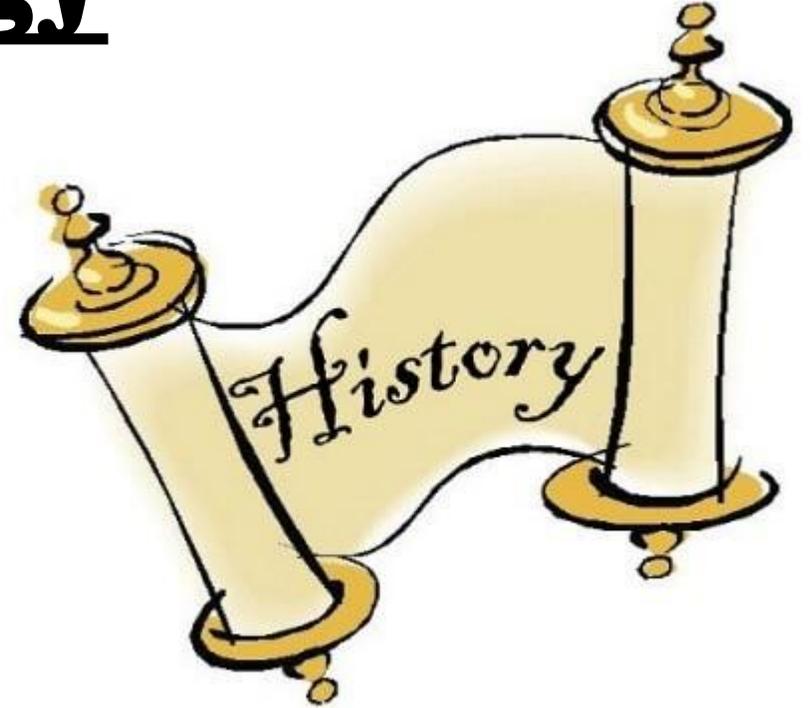
If you are struggling to “set the scene” by explaining the historical context of the essay topic, here is a question to consider:

What do you need to know in order to understand the historical significance of this topic? “Brain-dump” who, what, when, where, why, how. You might also begin your contextualization with...

In order to understand the historical significance of (topic), one must consider...

Remember that chronological framing is not enough, but is a good start. You need to show understanding of the topic in the big picture.

Also ask yourself, “Why is College Board asking this question? What do they want me to understand or know about history?”



Before we move on... how confident are you in your understanding contextualization?

LC. BC. This relates to the topic of _____ b/c...

Sample Student Contextualization:

During the French and Indian War, the British and her colonies fought against the French and her Indian allies over territory and resources. This war led to dramatic changes in North America. The French lost the war and were forced to cede their territory in North America to the British. This resulted in Britain becoming the predominant power in the New World and the decline of French influence in the Americas. This relates to Britain's new imperial policy because after the French and Indian War, the era of salutary neglect was ended and Britain became more involved in the governance of the colonies.

Putting it together... intro. paragraph:

During the French and Indian War, the British and her colonies fought against the French and her Indian allies over territory and resources. This war led to dramatic changes in North America. The French lost the war and were forced to cede their territory in North America to the British. This resulted in Britain becoming the predominant power in the New World and the decline of French influence in the Americas. This relates to Britain's relationship with its colonies because the era of salutary neglect was ended, and Britain became more involved in the governance of the colonies. Although Britain's victory in the French and Indian War led to a short period of celebration among colonies, to a greater extent the war led to new taxes and methods of control that damaged the relationship between Great Britain and its North American colonies. The broken relationship led to the American Revolution.

Tips on Outside Evidence & Targeting the Skill

On the LEQ essay for APUSH, students can earn two of six points by using historical evidence to defend their thesis/argument. There are also two points for skill usage. There are a few strategies that can help earn these points, and I encourage all to try to include at least two pieces of outside evidence in their essays. (they only need two)

- The pieces of evidence MUST **fall within the parameters of the prompt.**
- It **should not be a brief comment or passing reference.**
- Students should **thoroughly explain how or why the evidence supports their argument.**
- **Include specific evidence any time you think of something.** It is fine to go beyond two pieces.
- Understand **your purpose includes a skill:** Causation, Comparison, or CCOT
- Write **using the lingo of the skill.**
- Ensure you are using the evidence to **support an argument that includes the skill.**



Body Paragraphs – A Simple Strategy

X Paragraph:

1. Take your X and turn it into a topic sentence.
2. Use one or two pieces of specific historical evidence to support the argument presented in your topic sentence.
3. Close the loop with a final “Therefore, ...”

Y Paragraph:

1. Take your Y and turn it into a topic sentence.
2. Use one or two pieces of evidence to support the topic sentence.
3. Close the loop with a final “Therefore, ...”

You are shooting for 4 points in your body Paragraphs... two for evidence and two for skill!

X Paragraph Example:

Britain's victory in the French and Indian War led to a short period of celebration among colonies.

Many colonists desired land and access to the fur trade in areas such as the Ohio Valley. France had dominated that region, and the war gave that territory to Britain. This celebration was short lived as actions such as the Proclamation Line created conflict, because it told colonists they could not move into the territory they supposedly won in the war. **Therefore, the war led to a short period of joy but soon sent the colonists and mother country down the road to a damaged relationship and revolution.**

Sample Y Paragraph:

To a greater extent the war led to new taxes and methods of control that damaged the relationship between Great Britain and its North American colonies. The Intolerable Acts included the closure of Boston port following the Boston Tea Party. This led to colonists losing jobs and income. That economic impact, along with many other things like increased taxes, created conflict and rebellion. Before long, the words "no taxation without representation" were heard and boycotts commenced. Therefore, British polices created economic and social conflict. Those conflicts led to rebellion and eventually the War for Independence.

Before we move on... how confident are you in your understanding the X – Y paragraph strategy?

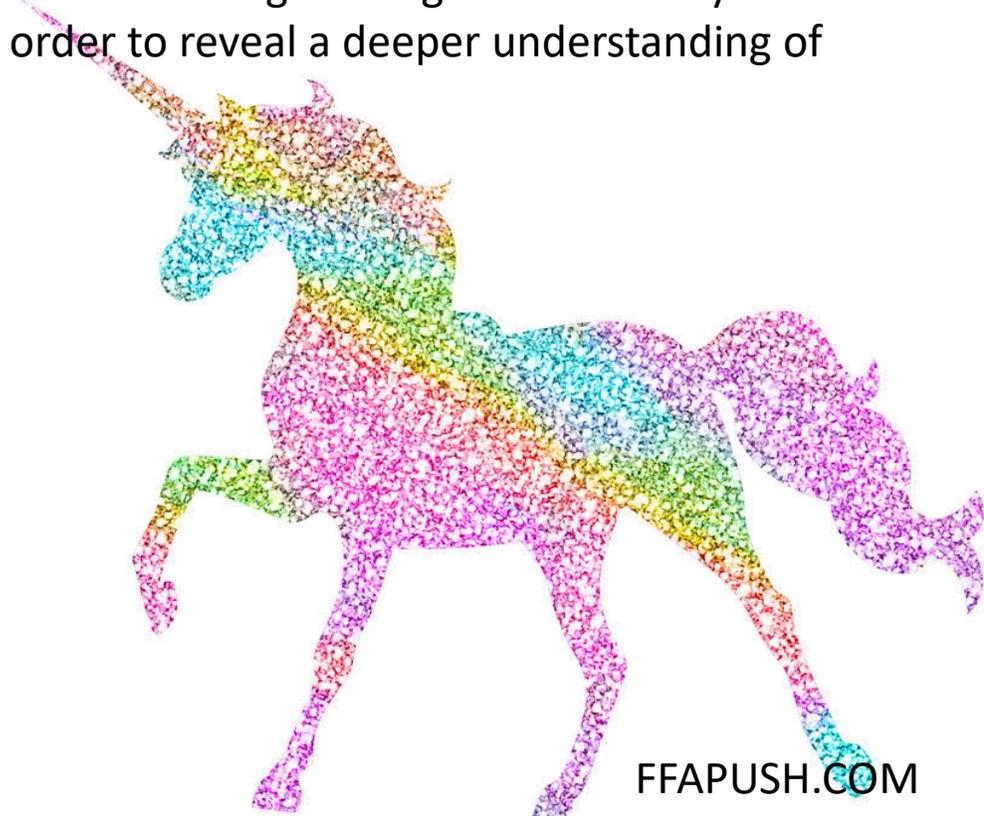
Tips on Complexity

The “unicorn” point is a site to see! If aiming for a **truly complex essay**, demonstrate evidence that you **understand deeply... understand nuances of topics...** can write a **sophisticated essay...** and is clearly one of the most talented writers among peers.

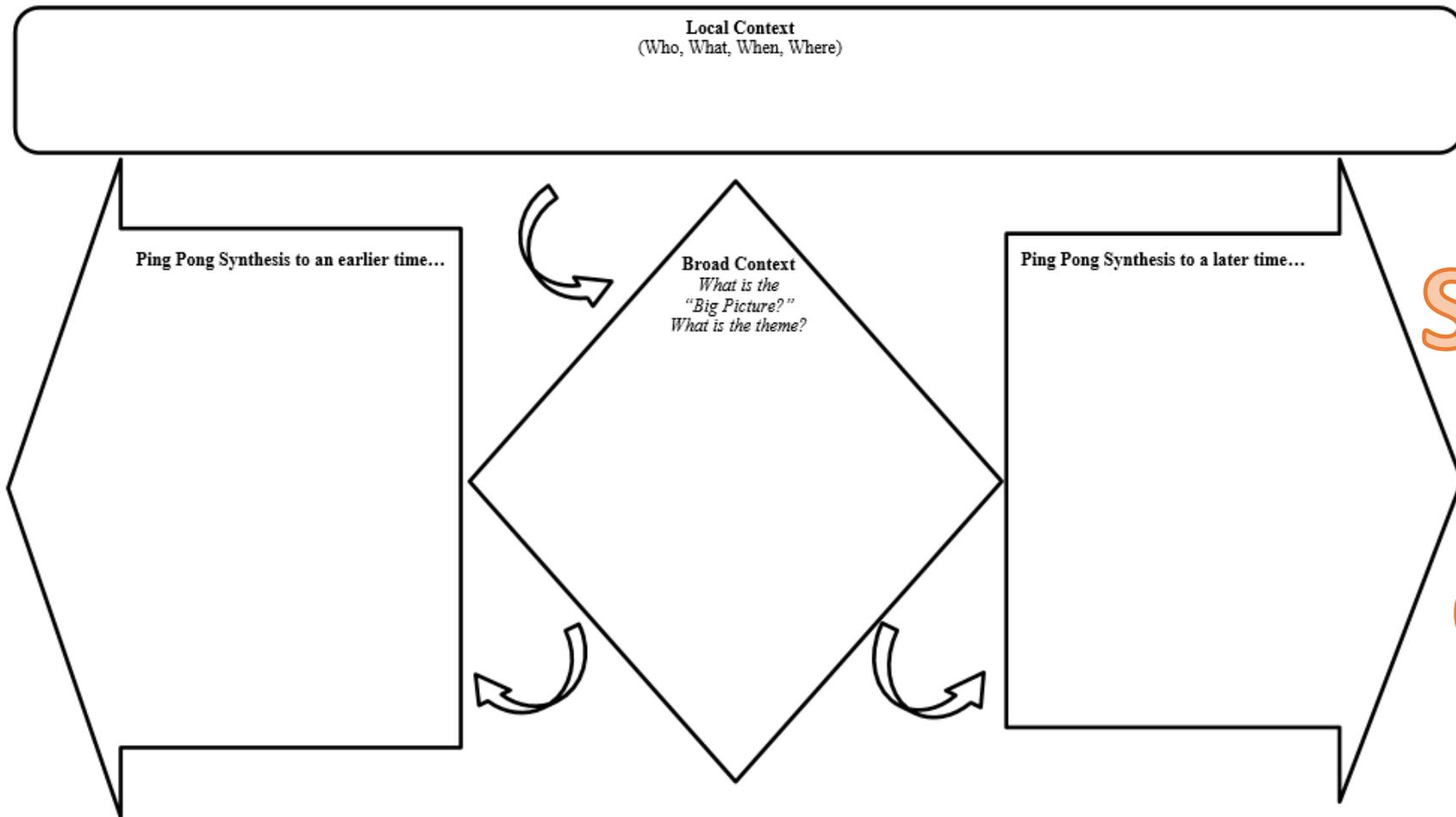
Synthesis is no longer part of the rubric, but it is a skill that can reveal deeper understanding and higher-level analysis. The ping-pong approach is a tool to go back and forth between two eras/topics in order to reveal a deeper understanding of the historical significance of a topic.

Other tips for increasing complexity:

- Multiple pieces of evidence.
- Multiple viewpoints.
- Explaining THOROUGHLY connections among evidence.
- Making connections to other eras/topics along the way.



Contextualization & Ping-Pong Synthesis... _____



Ping-pong
Strategy for
increased
complexity

Contextualization & Ping-Pong Synthesis...

French and Indian War/Seven Years War -> conflicts → War for Independence

Local Context
(Who, What, When, Where)

During the French and Indian War, the British and her colonies fought against the French and her Indian allies over territory and resources.

Ping Pong Synthesis to an earlier time...

The conflict between Britain and France in the 1800s was similar to the conflict in the 1700s. By the time the Seven Years War ended, these two nations had been at war for about 100 years. What started as small colonies of Jamestown (Britain) and Montreal (France) escalated to a battle to dominate large portions of North America.

Broad Context

What is the "Big Picture?"
What is the theme?

This war led to dramatic changes in North America. The French lost the war and were forced to cede their territory in North America to the British. This resulted in Britain becoming the predominant power in the New World and the decline of French influence in the Americas.

Ping Pong Synthesis to a later time...

The War for Independence that culminated from these conflicts resulted in an independent U.S.A., but the conflicts between America and Britain continued. This resulted in the War of 1812 which is sometimes called the Second War for Independence. Both wars pitted Americans against the British regarding conflicts such as economic barriers to trade.

LINKAGE: This relates to Britain's new imperial policy because after the French and Indian War, the era of salutary neglect was ended and Britain became more involved in the governance of the colonies.

If using ping-pong strategy, it could become part of your planning process. Or... simply add connections to other eras as you write.

This can be a separate paragraph or additions to paragraphs.

As you practice, aim for at least four of the six points. You don't have to earn all six to have a successful essay.

Are you ready to write?

LEQ Abbreviated Rubric	Points
Thesis	1
Contextualization	1
Evidence/Closing Loop	2
Analysis/Skill	2