

HISTORICAL ARGUMENTATION... *Geographic and Environmental Factors Shaping Pre-Colonial Societies*

From the 2012 Framework:

Historical Argumentation... Historical thinking involves the ability to define and frame a question about the past and to address that question through the construction of an argument. A plausible and persuasive argument requires a **clear, comprehensive, and analytical thesis**, supported by **relevant historical evidence** — not simply evidence that supports a preferred or preconceived position. In addition, argumentation involves the capacity to describe, analyze, and **evaluate the arguments of others** in light of available evidence.

Proficient students should be able to ...

- Analyze commonly accepted historical arguments and explain how an argument has been constructed from historical evidence.
- Construct convincing interpretations through analysis of disparate, relevant historical evidence.
- Evaluate and synthesize conflicting historical evidence to construct persuasive historical arguments.

From the 2015 Revised Framework:

Historical thinking involves the ability to create an argument and support it using relevant historical evidence. Creating a historical argument includes defining and framing a question about the past and then formulating a claim or argument about that question, often in the form of a thesis. A persuasive historical argument requires a precise and defensible thesis or claim, supported by rigorous analysis of relevant and diverse historical evidence. The argument and evidence used should be framed around the application of a specific historical thinking skill (e.g., comparison, causation, patterns of continuity and change over time, or periodization).

From the Period 1, 2015, Revised Content Outline:

As native populations migrated and settled across the vast expanse of North America over time, they developed distinct and increasingly complex societies by adapting to and transforming their diverse environments. Different native societies adapted to and transformed their environments through innovations in agriculture, resource use, and social structure. The spread of maize cultivation from present-day Mexico northward into the present-day American Southwest and beyond supported economic development, settlement, advanced irrigation, and social diversification among societies. Societies responded to the aridity of the Great Basin and the grasslands of the western Great Plains by developing largely mobile lifestyles. In the Northeast, the Mississippi River Valley, and along the Atlantic seaboard some societies developed mixed agricultural and hunter-gatherer economies that favored the development of permanent villages. Societies in the Northwest and present-day California supported themselves by hunting and gathering, and in some areas developed settled communities supported by the vast resources of the ocean.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus of Exam Questions)

MIG-2.0: Analyze causes of internal migration and patterns of settlement in what would become the United States, and explain how migration has affected American life.

GEO-1.0: Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of various communities, and analyze how competition for and debates over natural resources have affected both interactions among different groups and the development of government policies.

From the 2015 Revised Rubric for DBQ:

1 Point -Presents a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and 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.

Scoring Note: *Neither the introduction nor the conclusion is necessarily limited to a single paragraph.*

1 Point - Develops and supports a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.

From the 2015 Revised Rubric for LE:

1 Point - Presents a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and 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.

A Note to Students:

To effectively argue a point – to defend a thesis – we begin with ... you guess it... a thesis. Then we brainstorm evidence and categorize thematically before writing. Your thesis is not only your answer or stand on a question, it is your entire introductory paragraph which includes your answer/stand, analysis of an opposing viewpoint, context, and organizational categories/themes. Your introduction will typically be between 2 and 5 sentences, and it should clearly communicate your answer/stand and what you will be expounding upon in your body paragraphs.

Each body paragraph will focus on a category or theme and contain your exposition (defending your thesis) with specific, historical evidence relevant to the topic. The goal is to have at least three – five specific pieces of evidence for each category or theme. If answering a DBQ prompt, please remember we still need outside evidence independent from the documents. Within each body paragraph (or at minimum in your closing sentence) we will need to close the loop. Closing the loop means to explain *how or why* your evidence supports your thesis... always connect back to your thesis!

How to tackle the essay prompts for APUSHISTORY... an introduction to thesis writing...**A**

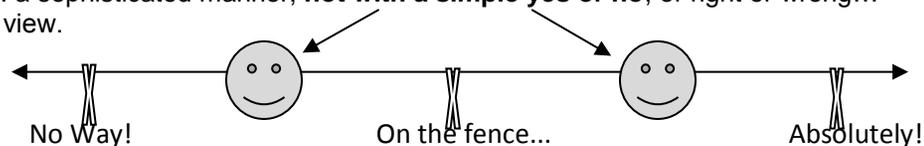
Step #1 Read the question or prompt carefully: The basic purpose is to answer the question. Read the question **three** times and be able to paraphrase the question and know the essential task demanded by it. Answering the question will be the central focus of your essay, and you want to be sure to **ATFP: Address The Full Prompt**.

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Many essay prompts will "suggest" a particular format to follow for organizing your response. Create a framework or hypothesis for answering the question.

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- Break the question down with dates, points asked for; make sure you are aware of the entire question
- Be mindful of the verb – what exactly are you supposed to do? Be sure that you understand the required task.
- Look for words that need defining: words like "effective", liberal/conservative, imperialism, etc.
- Look for ways to answer the question in with black and white; as historians we must learn to **dwel in the gray**... how true... or how false... rather than true or false. a sophisticated manner; **not with a simple yes or no**, or right or wrong...
- Look for multiple points of view.

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Step #2 Brainstorm on paper everything that comes to mind regarding the topic at hand. What do you know about the topic? Put this down on paper to get your brain in gear for writing the essay.

Step #3 Organize your thesis, clarify your thesis/view, identify your main points (if not already provided in the prompt), and identify an opposing view.

Step #4 Write your introductory paragraph. USE THE FORMULA! ...and remember it'll be more than just one simple sentence despite the formula being only one sentence.

X. However, A, B, C. Therefore, Y.

OR

Although X, Y because ABC.

'Y' represents the position you will be taking – in other words, your stand on the prompt.

'X' represents the strongest point against your argument OR explanation of the complexity of topic. This is your expansion portion of your thesis. Make sure your X has a specific fact or example.

'A, B, and C' represent the three strongest points for your argument. (strongest one first!). This is your list of themes (broad categories) for each of your body paragraphs.

Your introduction is essentially your thesis... nothing more. Just your THESIS! (2-5 sentences)

Additional Tips

NEVER REWRITE THE PROMPT AS PART OF YOUR INTRODUCTION!

Write in the **THIRD PERSON** and in the **PAST TENSE**.

Never say "proves" or "shows... **NO ABSOLUTES!**

Don't say "believe" or "feel"...you're presenting a historical analysis... not an editorial

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Step #1 Read the question or prompt carefully:

Read the question three times and be able to paraphrase the question and know the essential task demanded by it. Answering the question will be the central focus of your essay, and you want to be sure to **ATFP**:

Prompt: Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of various communities in North America prior to European colonization.

What type of prompt is this? What is your purpose?

Step #2 Brainstorm on paper everything that comes to mind regarding the topic at hand. Aim for at least 10 specific things.

What do you know about the topic? Put this down on paper to get your brain in gear for writing the essay. Once you have ample information, categorize it by theme. (ABC)

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Step #3 Clarify your thesis/view and identify an opposing view. Make sure your thesis ATFP! Don't restate the prompt!

Step #4 Write your introductory paragraph. USE THE FORMULA! Explain and Elaborate! ATFP!
