



3-Step Document Strategy!

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Why a 3-Step Strategy?

Document analysis skills are important not only for the DBQ but also for SAQs and MCs. This strategy was developed as a way to help new writers – *those new to AP and/or students who have never written essays using documents before* – develop skills. As students learn to write, it isn't about sophistication... it is about building skills that will help them on the road to sophistication. The strategy is also helpful for higher level writers, as they adjust the goals of each step to their own writing style.

This session will focus on analyzing documents in DBQ writing. The [3-Step handout](#) pictured below can be found at FFAPUSH. It is also included in the [full writing guideline packet](#).

How to Reference the Documents in the DBQ Body Paragraphs

Most students fail to earn the document analysis points on the DBQ because they simply string together facts they pull from documents which results in story-telling. Never lose sight of your purpose: defending an argument/thesis!

Using documents as evidence requires showing understanding of the content and then applying that understanding to the defense of your argument. Ask yourself questions such as, "How does this document address my prompt?" and "What is this document saying?"

DO NOT quote the documents. Go Beyond the Obvious! GBO!

It is okay to have separate paragraph for each document, or you may group them.

You *cannot* group them in order to *generalize* any one step, however.

If you do group them, add a couple of sentences explaining how they corroborate or contradict each other. This will help you get the complex analysis point.

Step 1: Describe the document... GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS AND DON'T QUOTE. You can say "Document 1..." or use the name of the document. Then... explain how it relates to the main topic of your essay. *Do this for every document, unless you are not targeting the use of six documents point.*

"Document # ___ shows/explains.... This document relates to _____ because..."
(Identify the number of the document you are describing and describe it GBO.) (Identify the main topic of your essay.) (Explain how or why it relates.)

Step 2: Use the HIPP strategy to analyze the documents. Choose 4 to thoroughly source, even though you only need three according to the rubric. Remember you only need *one* of the HIPP.*

Then... explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis. (CLOSE THE LOOP)

GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS, explain how it is evident (show the reader how you came to your analysis) and explain how or why it is relevant to the argument. *Tip: USE THE LINGO!*

"The _____ of document # ___ was.... because...."
(purpose/POV/audience/context) (Identify doc.) (Describe HIPP.) (Explain how/why the HIPP is evident.)
This is relevant to the argument that ... because..."
(Identify X or Y from your thesis or other relevant argument connected to it.) (Explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis)

Step 3: Apply your analysis to your essay. How does each document support your thesis or support an opposing view? To get this point you must use *at least six* of the seven documents AS EVIDENCE to support your X or Y. I recommend you use all seven in case you don't get credit for one.

Start with step 1 (description and explanation of how it relates to the topic), and then **CLOSE THE LOOP.**

If the document is one of the four you HIPPed, then start with steps one and two, and then close the loop.

"Therefore, document # ___ supports the argument that ... because...."
(Identify doc.) (State your X or Y from your thesis.) (Explain how or why it supports the argument.)

EXAMPLE of how to use the three steps to clearly and effectively target all three document points.

Document from the 2002 Released College Board Exam

Source: Fourth Annual Report, Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents in the City of New York, 1829.

We might feel a pride in the reflection, that our young country . . . was the first to adopt the penitentiary system of prison discipline, and the first to attempt to prevent the commission of crimes, by seeking out the youthful and unprotected, who were in the way of temptation, and by religious and moral instruction, by imparting to them useful knowledge, and by giving them industrious and orderly habits, rescuing them from vice and rendering them valuable members of society.

To confine these youthful criminals . . . where no, or scarcely any, distinction can be made between the young and old, or between the more and less vicious, where little can be learned but the ways of the wicked, and from whence they must be sent to encounter new wants, new temptations, and to commit new crimes, is to pursue a course, as little reconcilable with justice as humanity; yet, till the House of Refuge was established there was no alternative.

Revised Prompt/Causation:

Evaluate the extent to which Antebellum Era reforms expanded democratic ideals in the United States.

Step 1. Document Description:

Document #1 explains how prison reform for young people had a positive impact on society, because young criminals were nurtured as children rather than punished as adults. This relates to the topic of Antebellum reform movements, because it illustrates changes made in order to improve society.

Step 2. One HIPP:

The author's point of view in doc. #1 is that Christianity had effective solutions to societal problems. This is evident because the use of moral instruction is proposed as a tool to reform. This is relevant to the argument that reforms expanded democratic ideals, because the liberties of young people were being defended and valued more than they had been before.

Step 3. Supporting the Argument:

Therefore, doc. #1 supports the argument that reforms expanded democratic ideals to a large extent, because young people were provided instruction rather than simply punished for crimes which helped them become good citizens and future voters.

When using all three steps, it may seem redundant...

but keep in mind you will not be HIPPing all of the documents, and it is better to **clearly target each skill** rather than oversimplifying. ☺
Also remember that step 3, the second evidence point which requires successful usage of six documents, is a difficult and time-consuming point to get. Only target it if you are sure you can do it effectively (along with at least three other skill points) within one hour.

DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION (DBQ) Rubric, 7 possible points

<p>THESIS/CLAIM (1 point)</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a historically <u>defensible</u> thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning. <i>To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt rather than 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. <u>ATFP!</u></i></p>	◇
<p>CONTEXTUALIZATION (1 point)</p> <p>Describes a broader historical context <u>relevant to the prompt</u>. <i>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 reference. <u>Clearly link your contextualization to the topic of the essay!</u></i></p>	◇
<p>EVIDENCE (3 points)</p> <p>Using Evidence FROM the Documents:</p> <p>Uses the content of at least <u>three</u> documents to address the topic of the prompt. <i>To earn one point, the response must <u>accurately describe</u> — rather than simply quote — <u>the content</u> from at least three of the documents. <u>Make sure you explain its relevance to the topic of your essay!</u></i></p> <p>Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least <u>SIX</u> documents. <i>To earn two points, the response must <u>accurately describe</u> — rather than simply quote — <u>the content</u> from at least six documents. In addition, the response must <u>use the content of the documents to support an argument</u> in response to the prompt. <u>Close the loop!</u></i></p> <p>Evidence Beyond the Documents:</p> <p>Uses at least <u>ONE</u> additional piece of the specific historical evidence (<u>beyond</u> that found in the documents) <u>relevant to an argument</u> about the prompt. <i>To earn this point, the response must describe the evidence and must use more than a phrase or reference. This additional piece of evidence must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization.</i></p>	◇ ◇ ◇
<p>ANALYSIS AND REASONING (2 points)</p> <p>For at least <u>three</u> documents, explains how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is <u>relevant to an argument</u>. <u>HIPP at least three!</u> <i>To earn this point, the response must <u>explain how or why</u> (rather than simply identifying) <u>the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument</u> about the prompt for each of the three documents sourced.</i></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. <i>A response may demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables</u> • <u>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both cause and effect</u> • <u>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods</u> • <u>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes</u> • <u>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence</u> <p><i><u>This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</u></i> <i>start with your complex thesis using the formula and back it up in the body paragraphs using evidence from the documents!</i></p>	◇ ◇

DBQ Rubric

The standard rubric for the DBQ question has seven points. This document strategy is aimed at helping students develop skills for targeting three of the seven points. This rubric can be found on the last page of the [writing guidelines](#).

If College Board decides to once again use the 10 point rubric from the 2020 exam, There are resources outlining it on the [2020 Exam Resources page](#).

Three Step Document Strategy

Step 1

Step 1: Describe the document... GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS AND DON'T QUOTE. *(If the description is simple, that is okay as long as students do not quote.)*

Students can say “Document 1...” or use the name of the document. Many see this as unsophisticated, but please remember the exam is not testing sophistication.

Then... explain how the document relates to the main topic of the essay, Do this for at least five documents, unless you are targeting the use of six documents point.

“Document #___ shows/explains...”

(Identify the number of the document you are describing and **describe it GBO (go beyond the obvious if possible and don't simply quote.)**)

“This document relates to _____ because...”

(Identify the main **topic** of your essay.) (Explain how or why it relates.)

NOTE: This step can be taught individually and broken into three steps as well.

1. Identify the topic of the essay.
2. Describe the document.
3. Relate the document to the topic of the essay.

Describing Documents - Tips

In the Document Based Question for APUSH, students can earn one of seven points by showing they essentially understand at least three of the seven documents. In addition to showing that they understand what they are seeing or reading, they should also be able to explain how it relates to the topic of the essay.

Example: In the political cartoon, "Ograbme," a merchant is trying to sell his goods despite the embargo that had been placed on trade. This relates to the topic of Market Revolution, because the economic expansion in that revolution could not occur until the embargo was lifted.

Remember that the readers already know the documents inside and out... It should be clear to the reader that the student understands the document.



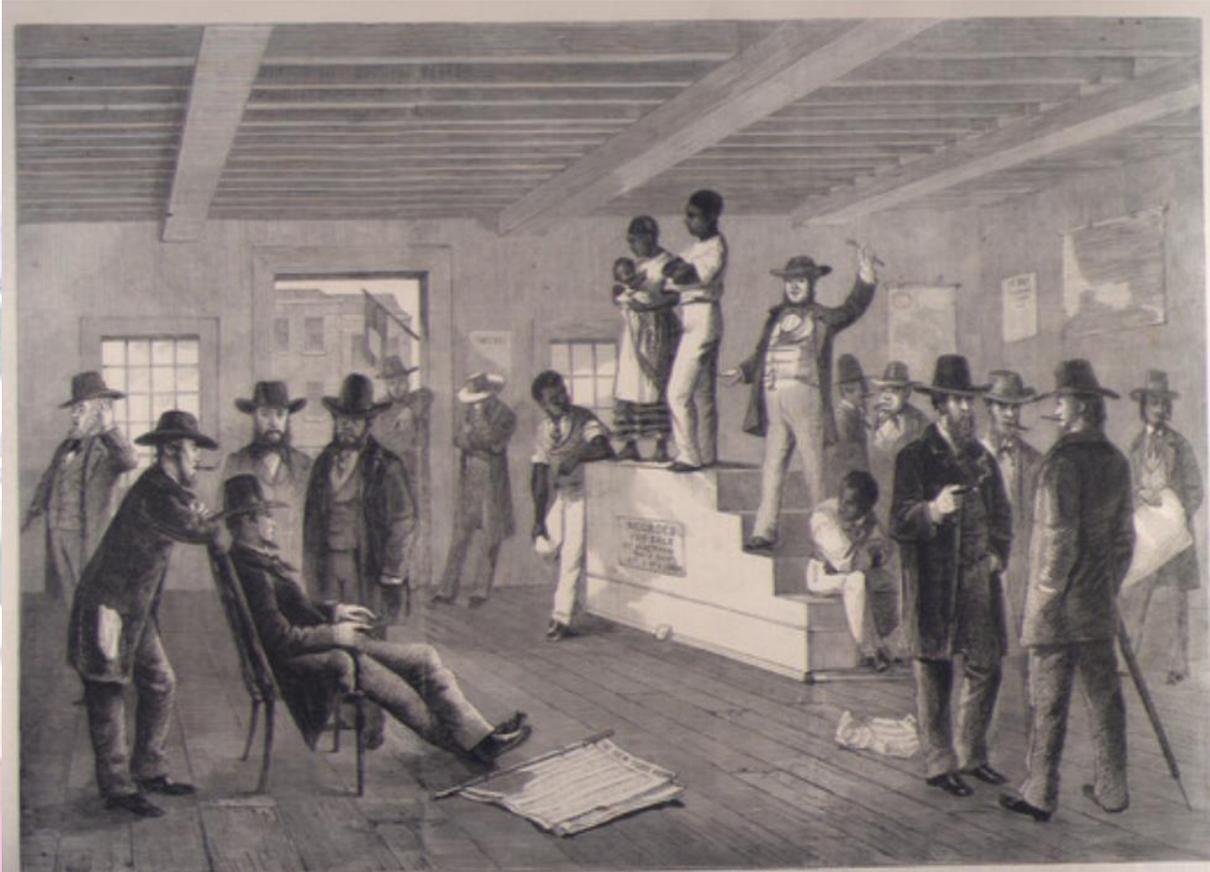
OGRABME, or. The American Snapping-turtle.

614 for the Proprietor, by D. Longworth, 11 Park.

Tip: Even though you only need three... go for four... Many bright and talented students are overconfident in their ability to understand documents.

Step 1 – Practice - Example

DOCUMENT 1



Prompt: To what extent did the institution of slavery in North America change from the Colonial Era to the Civil War?

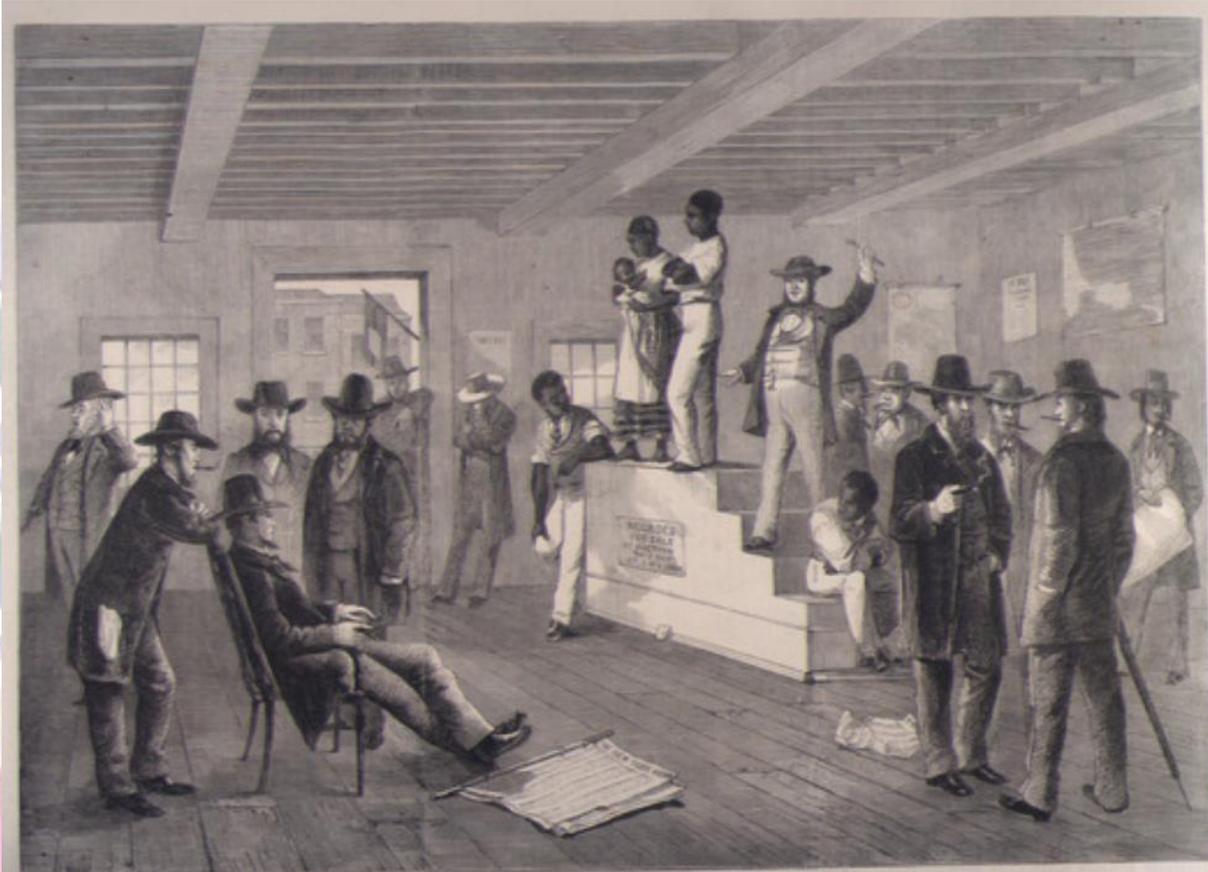
Source: George Henry Andrews, "Slave Auctions in Richmond, Virginia," *The Illustrated London News*, vol. 38 (Feb. 16, 1861), p.139.

1. Identify the topic of the essay.
2. Describe the document.
3. Relate the document to the topic of the essay.

A collection of slavery images can be found at <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/page/welcome>

Step 1 – Sample Response

DOCUMENT 1



1. The institution of slavery in North America.
2. Document 1 is a drawing showing slaves being auctioned off at a slave sale in Virginia.
3. This image relates to the topic of slavery in North America, because it shows slavery alive and well in the South.

Note: Having students practice this step before introducing the next two is a great way to scaffold document analysis.

Three Step Document Strategy

Step 2

Step 2: Use the HIPP strategy to analyze the documents. Choose four of the seven to thoroughly source, even though students only need three according to the rubric. Remember they only need *one* of the HIPP for each document.* Sometimes students waste time by analyzing more than one. Student should also explain how they came to their conclusion, showing the reader how or why they came to their conclusion or how they analyzed the document. This step is the most difficult to do well. Practicing it throughout the year is recommended.

Then... explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis. (CLOSE THE LOOP)

GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS and explain how or why it is relevant to the argument. *Tip: USE THE LINGO!*

“The _____ of document # _____ was.... because....”
(purpose/POV/audience/context) (Identify doc.) (Describe HIPP.) (Explain how/why the HIPP is evident.)

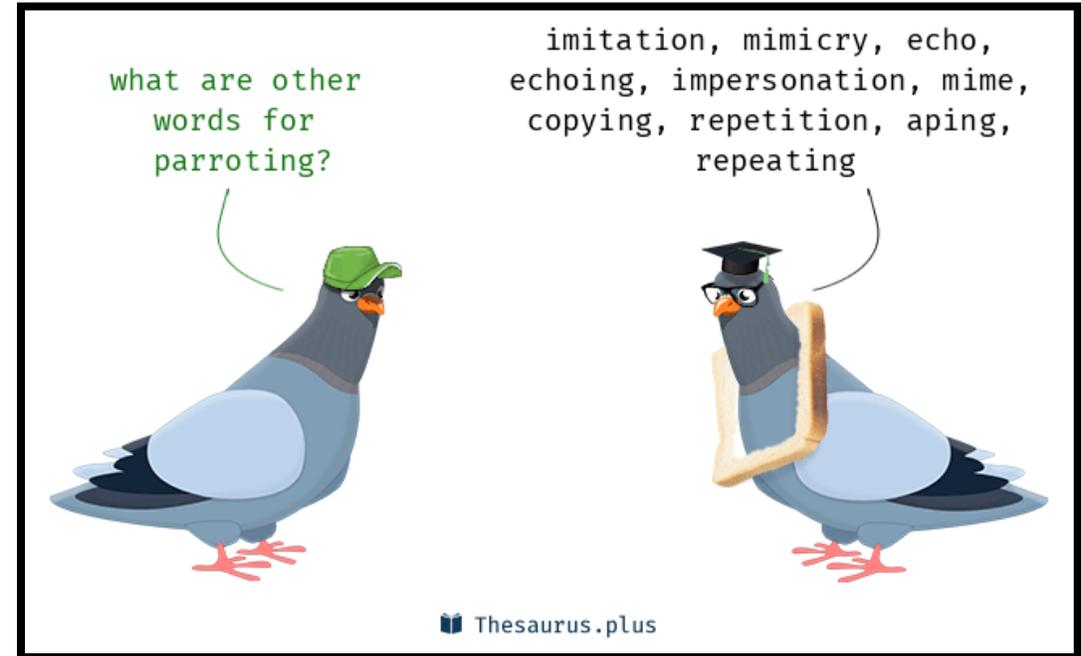
“This is relevant to the argument that ... _____ because...”
(Identify X or Y from your thesis or other relevant argument connected to it.) (Explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis... closing the loop)

***H: Historical Situation, I: Intended Audience, P: Purpose, P: Point of View**

HIPPING TIPS

On the DBQ essay for APUSH, students can earn one of seven points by successfully analyzing **h**istorical situation, **i**ntended audience, **p**urpose, or **p**oint of view for at least three of the seven documents.

- “use the lingo!”
If analyzing point of view...
say, “the author’s point of view was...”
- HIPP four if you can...
students are often overconfident in their understanding of the document. A fourth HIPP can act as an insurance policy should one fall short.
- It is important that students **do NOT parrot the document.** **Go Beyond the Obvious.**
- Quoting is a sign of weakness... unless you are briefly quoting in order to prove their analysis of the HIPP.
- **It is not enough to HIPP well... they must also explain how their analysis of the document relates to their argument... closing the loop! This means a typical HIPP is at least two sentences.**
- Stay within the parameters of the prompt even if documents written in other eras.



HIPPING STRATEGY

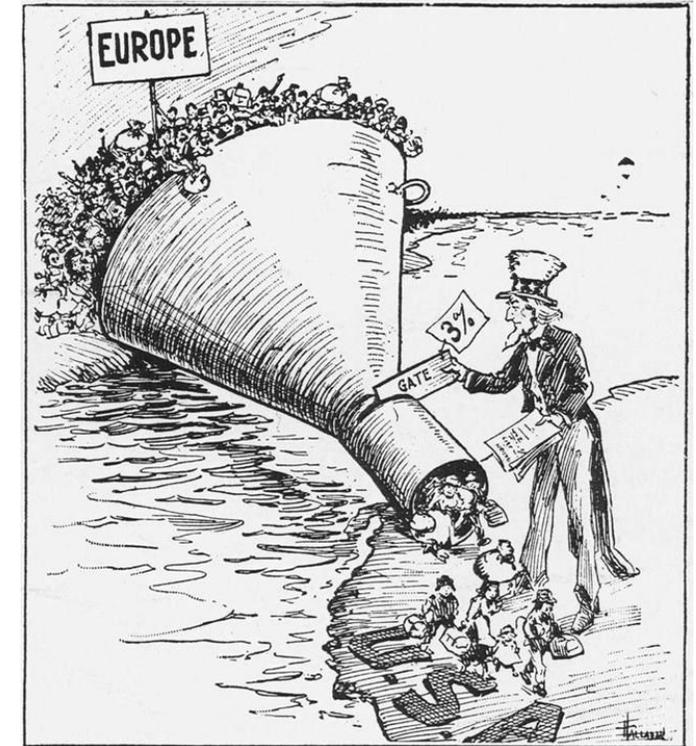
REMEMBER THE HIPP POINT IS NOT AN EASY POINT TO EARN, SO BE THOROUGH IN YOUR EXPLANATIONS.

One HIPP strategy to ensure thorough analysis is a **three step process** of:

1. **Choosing ONE** of the HIPP and describing your analysis of it **using the lingo**.
2. Adding a sentence explaining how or why you “figured it out,” such as **“This is evident because...”**
3. Closing the loop! **“This is relevant to the argument because...”**

Example:

The historical situation of the political cartoon includes the quota acts of the 1920s which limited immigration from places such as Italy. **This is evident because** the number of Europeans at the wide end of the funnel is much greater than the number actually emerging from the narrow end of the funnel where “3%” is applied. **This limitation is relevant to the argument** that immigration policies in the early twentieth century were very different from immigration policies in the later twentieth century, because such quotas were removed in the 1960s.



Step 2 – Practice - Example

DOCUMENT 5

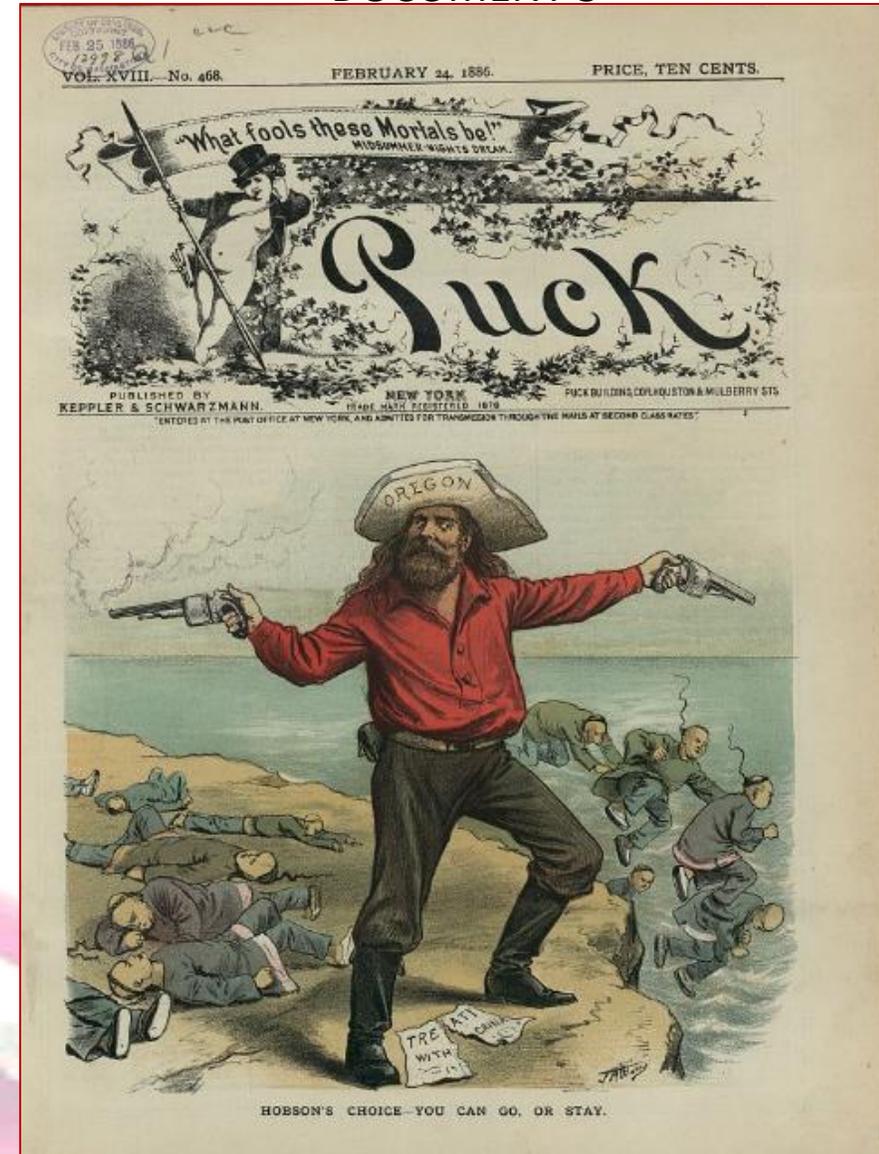
Prompt: Evaluate the ways internal migration and territorial expansion during the nineteenth century impacted those living in the West.

Thesis: Although internal migration and territorial expansion during the nineteenth century was partially responsible for the nativism toward Chinese immigrants, the impact of these events had a far greater effect on the lives of American Indians who were slaughtered and forced onto reservations.

Source: “Hobson's choice - you can go or stay,” J.A Wales, *Puck*, v. 18, no. 468, (1886 February 24), cover

1. **Choose ONE** of the HIPP and describe your analysis of it **using the lingo.**
2. Add a sentence explaining how or why you “figured it out,” such as **“This is evident because...”**
3. Close the loop! **“This is relevant to the argument because...”**

More resources on the Chinese Exclusion Act can be found at <https://guides.loc.gov/chinese-exclusion-act/introduction>



Step 2 – Sample Response

DOCUMENT 5

1. **The artist's purpose** in doc. 5 was to illustrate the lack of peaceful negotiations between land claims between American settlers and Chinese settlers in the state of Oregon during the Gilded Age.
2. **This is evident because** a document titled "Treaty with China" is torn in half.
3. **This is relevant to the argument** that internal migration impacted the Chinese because it led to increased nativism.

Extension: Add a piece of outside evidence to further support the argument.
This conflict resulted in the Chinese Exclusion Act which ended Chinese immigration into the United States for many decades. This act was the result of a desire among many Americans to reduce cultural and economic competition from foreigners especially on the West coast further showing the impact of internal migration.



Three Step Document Strategy

Step 3

Step 3: Apply your analysis to your essay. *How does each document support the thesis or support an opposing view?*

To get this point students must use at least six of the seven documents AS EVIDENCE to support an argument. *(The argument can be restating part or all of their thesis, or another argument can be presented.)* If students are aiming for this point, I recommend using all seven documents in case you don't get credit for one.

“Therefore, document #__ supports the argument that ... because....”
(Identify doc.) (State your X or Y from your thesis.) (Explain how or why it supports the argument.)

This step can be taught as simply a final closing statement for each document.

Using six of seven documents in a DBQ essay

Students can earn one of seven points on the APUSH DBQ essay if they **successfully use six of the seven documents to defend a thesis/argument**. If they are using the three step strategy, this point is in step three. Practicing this skill involves **first understanding the document and how it relates to their topic, and then using the document as a piece of evidence to defend their thesis or argument**. The argument may be present as a body paragraph topic sentence, or it may be evident in a “closing the loop” statement at the end of the paragraph.

One of my concerns about this point is that students often spend a great deal of their time on this step... much more time than on other parts of the directions/rubric. If they are not confident that they truly understand *and* can apply all (or almost all) of the documents to an argument, I encourage them to spend their time targeting other parts of the directions/rubric. Also, for dyslexic students without extended time... you may want to encourage them to focus on fewer than six documents.

It is good practice to use all three document steps for at least three documents, in my opinion... and you may want to remind your students that excellence does not require perfection. 😊 Teach them to be strategic with their time... and to be aware of the rubric.

“Excellence does not require perfection.”

- Henry James

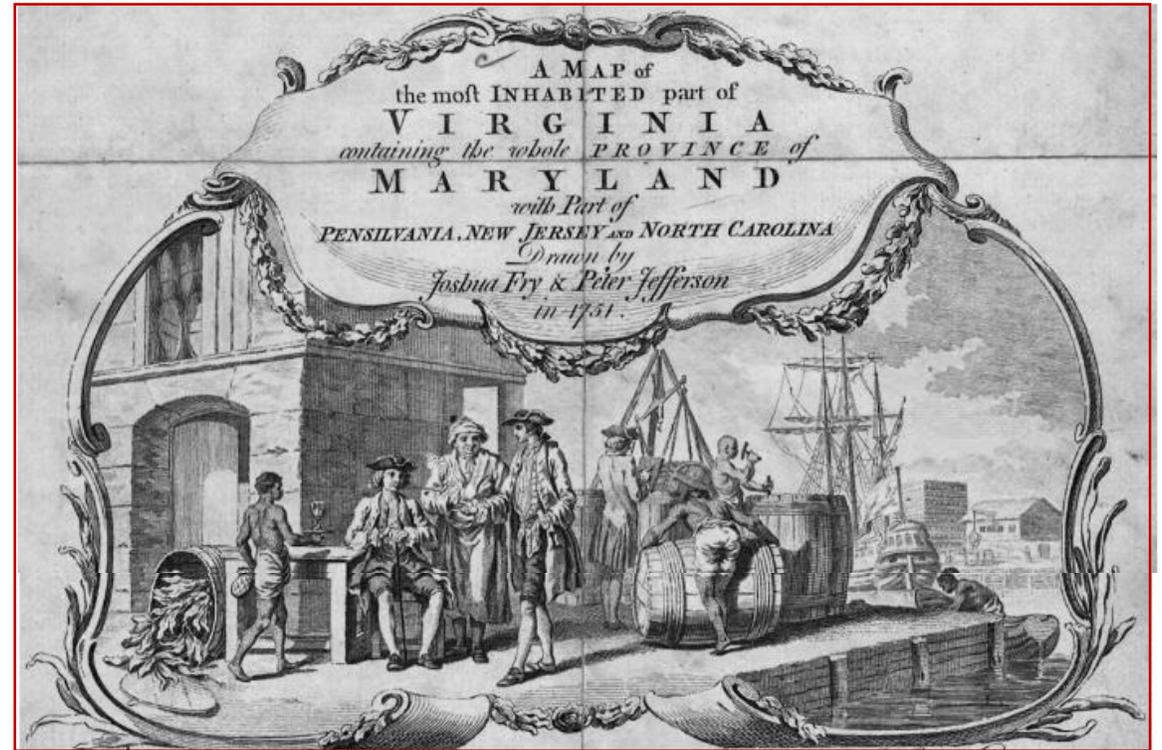
Putting it all together... 3 step practice!

DOCUMENT 1

Prompt: Evaluate the extent to which the institution of slavery changed in the period from 1754 to 1850.

Thesis: Although slavery remained unchanged from 1754 to 1850 as the institution continued in the South, the institution did change in this period as abolitionist groups increased challenging the institution and northern states ended the practice.

Source: Image from a Map of Virginia and Maryland, circa the mid-1750s. Library of Congress.



Directions: Consider the prompt, sample thesis, and source. Then use the three step strategy to analyze and use the document to defend an argument.

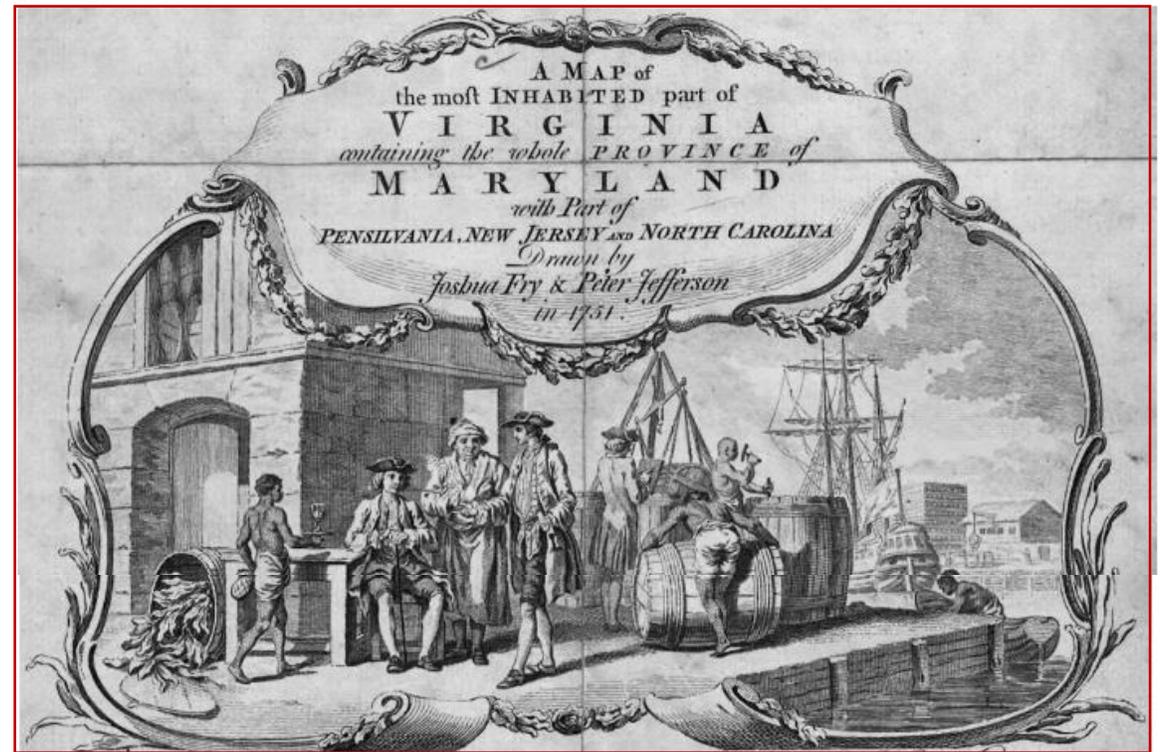
Sample Response – Using the 3-Step Strategy

DOCUMENT 1

Step 1: Document 1 shows some wealthy white men talking and resting while black men work unloading cargo and serving the whites. This relates to the topic of slavery, because the illustration portrays slaves serving their masters.

Step 2: The historical situation was the Colonial Era during a time where trade between England and the colonies was increasing. Slaves in Virginia were not just used on plantations, they were used on the docks. This is relevant to the argument that slavery remained unchanged, because just as slaves were used in Virginia in the 1750s, they were still used in Virginia in 1850.

Step 3: Therefore, the institution of slavery remained unchanged in the South from 1750-1850.



NOTE: Sometimes step three appears to be redundant, and students may worry about repeating themselves. Encourage them to consider each step as three separate arrows aimed at three separate targets. There is no “double dipping” so taking care to target each point is solid strategy.

Putting it all together... 3 step practice!

DOCUMENT 2

Prompt: Evaluate the extent to which the institution of slavery changed in the period from 1754 to 1850.

Thesis: Although slavery remained unchanged from 1754 to 1850 as the institution continued in the South, the institution did change in this period as abolitionist groups increased challenging the institution and northern states ended the practice.

Source: Advertisement, Pennsylvania Gazette, Philadelphia, 1762.

Directions: Consider the prompt, sample thesis, and source. Then use the three step strategy to analyze and use the document to defend an argument.

Just imported from the Coast of Africa . . . to be sold at Wilmington [in Delaware] . . . by Willing, Morris, and Company, [merchants] OF PHILADELPHIA, ONE Hundred and Seventy fine Gold Coast NEGROES.

. . . In the West Indies Islands, where Slaves are best known, those of the Gold Coast are in much greater Esteem, and higher valued, than any others.

Sample Response – Using the 3-Step Strategy

DOCUMENT 2

Step 1: Document 2 describes newly arrived slaves that will be sold in Delaware. This relates to the institution of slavery, because the advertisement discusses the sale of Negroes and describes them as highly valued.

Step 2: The purpose of this document was to persuade potential buyers that these Gold Coast slaves were worth a higher price than other slaves. The seller wanted to maximize profit. This is evident when the lot is described as “much greater esteem.” This is relevant to the argument that slavery changed, because slavery was outlawed in Delaware following the Revolution.

Step 3: Therefore, the institution of slavery changed in the North from 1750-1850, as places such as Delaware outlawed the practice.

Just imported from the Coast of Africa . . . to be sold at Wilmington [in Delaware] . . . by Willing, Morris, and Company, [merchants] OF PHILADELPHIA, ONE Hundred and Seventy fine Gold Coast NEGROES.

. . . In the West Indies Islands, where Slaves are best known, those of the Gold Coast are in much greater Esteem, and higher valued, than any others.

Putting it all together... 3 step practice!

Prompt: Explain how political debates on how to interpret the Constitution impacted American politics from 1789-1815.

Thesis: Political debates on how to interpret the Constitution impacted American politics from 1789-1815 to a large extent, because those debates resulted in the creation of political parties and instilled fear of division as expressed in Washington's Farewell Address.

DOCUMENT 1

Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bill for Establishing a National Bank, 15 Feb. 1791

"...I consider the foundation of the Constitution as laid on this ground that "all powers not delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution, not prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states or to the people..." To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the powers of Congress, is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition.

The incorporation of a bank, and other powers assumed by this bill have not, in my opinion, been delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution..."

Directions: Consider the prompt, sample thesis, and source. Then use the three step strategy to analyze and use the document to defend an argument.

After the strategy is mastered, encourage students to write with increased sophistication if they are ready.

Example of 3-step paragraph:

Document 1 highlights Thomas Jefferson's interpretation of the Constitution in regards to the First Bank of the United States. This relates to the topic of political debates, because as he debates Alexander Hamilton on the legality of the Bank division among politicians emerges. Jefferson's point of view regarding the Constitution was strict. He did not believe the government had to right to assert powers beyond those included in the document. He is very clear about this view as he quotes the 10th Amendment reserving powers to the states. This point of view is relevant to the argument that political debates on how to interpret the Constitution impacted American politics from 1789-1815 by causing division among politicians regarding the First Bank of the United States, because his views clashed with Hamilton's and led them down the path to political parties. Therefore, Jefferson's interpretation of the Constitution led to political debates that caused division.

A step up in sophistication.... Using topic sentence to introduce argument and understanding of the topic. The rest of the paragraph is in support of the topic sentence, and a final "therefore" statement is not needed:

Political debates regarding how to interpret the Constitution impacted American politics to a great extent, because those debates led to the creation of divisive political parties. One of those debates regarded the First National Bank. Jefferson recorded his opinion on the Bank in 1791 showing his fears that the new government would become too powerful (Doc. 1). His point of view was highly negative toward the bank. This is evident with wording such as "boundless field of power." He wanted the Constitution to be interpreted strictly, not loosely. These beliefs led to the first two party system, his beliefs pitted against those of Alexander Hamilton.

Putting it all together... 3 step practice!

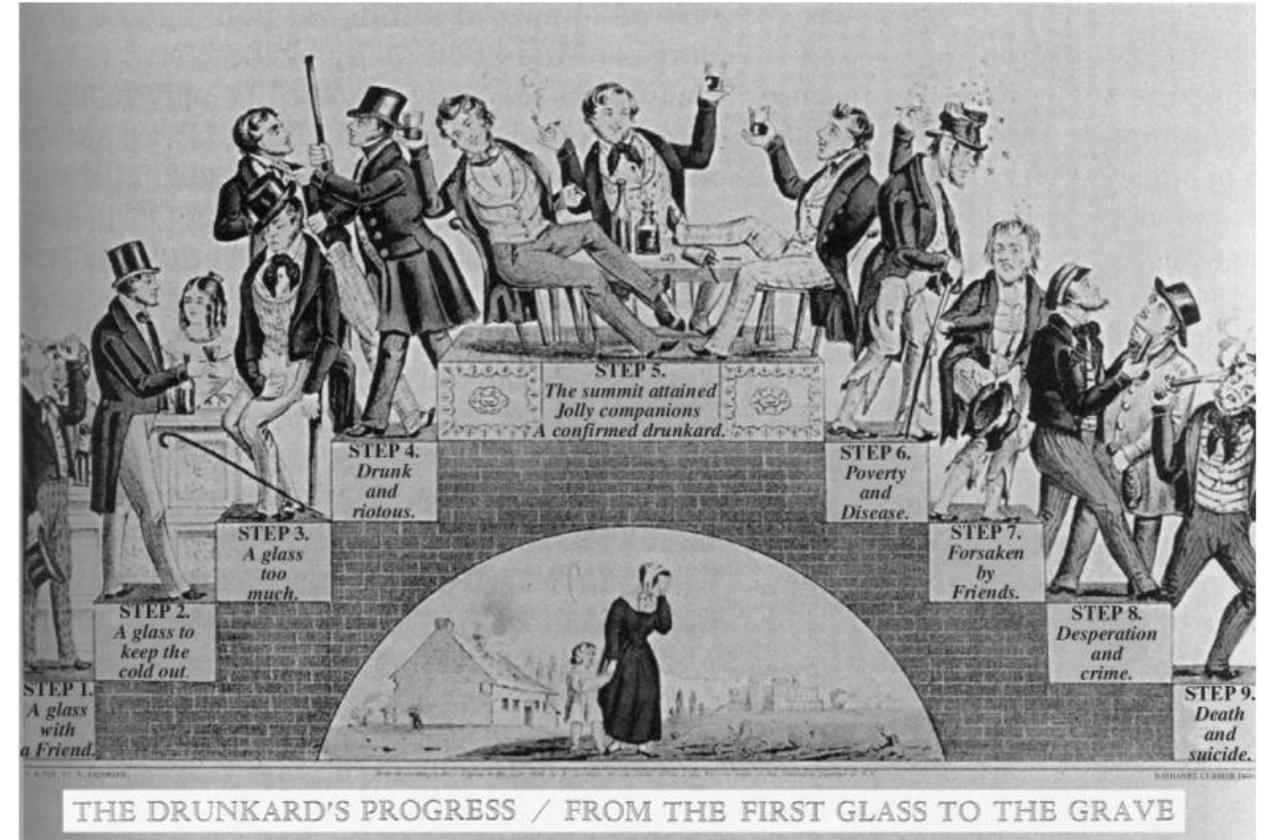
DOCUMENT 3

Source: "The Drunkards Progress. From The First Glass To The Grave," 1846.

Prompt: Evaluate the ways the Second Great Awakening impacted American society from 1800-1850.

Thesis: The Second Great Awakening from 1800-1850 had a dramatic impact on American society, as it inspired many reform movements such as abolition and temperance. These movements would lead to major changes in society including the eventual end of slavery and eventual end of alcohol.

Directions: Consider the prompt, sample thesis, and source. Then use the three step strategy to analyze and use the document to defend an argument.



Students can use the steps in any order!

The Second Great Awakening from 1800-1850 had a dramatic impact on American society, as it inspired many reform movements such as temperance. The artist's point of view in document 3 is clearly negative toward alcohol as it communicates a message that alcohol will destroy families, leaving women and children poor and alone. The Second Great Awakening motivated many people, especially women, to make the world a better place by encouraging men not to drink. The political cartoon illustrates the path of drinking as a sequence of events from having a drink with a friend to suicide. This is a document created by the temperance movement which was fueled by the Second Great Awakening. Therefore, the movement impacted society by causing a decrease in the use of alcohol.

DOCUMENT 3

Source: "The Drunkards Progress. From The First Glass To The Grave," 1846.

