**How to DBQ for the AP History Exam updated Nov 2019**

"**A lot of *this;* however, a little of *that."***

With the **Document-Based Question**, your job is to incorporate the documents *and your knowledge of 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 events from 1450--2001 in AP World History, from 1754--1980 in APUSH and in AP Euro from 1600-2001. The DBQ is scored based on a rubric up to 7 points.

All DBQ's and Long Essay Questions ask you to discuss "to what extent?" So your answer will include something like,

"To a greater extent, it was like *this*, however, there was also some of *that.*" (a lot of this; a little of that)

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 essay) (1 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 **SIX** **documents** to address the prompt in support of your thesis (1 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) Some ways to get this point: Adding extra complexity (say, by discussing the topic using a different historical thinking skill), or comparing the historical process/development in the prompt to another time period.

**FIRST thing to do:**

**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 thing to do:**

**Write down events from the era of the question.** You could use this as a source of

outside information in the essay.

**THIRD:** **Take notes next to each document:**

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

B) **Examine the SOURCE line** for POV info like the TIME, AUTHOR and SETTING.

C) 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. **Think, "A lot of this; however, some of that."**

Example:

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

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

“There were many political and cultural 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 over government in the Americas, especially in Spanish colonies. However, in some cases, parts of Native American religions remained.”

**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. Do a "Star Wars" crawl, like the yellow words at the beginning of those movies. Catch the reader up to the beginning date of the question. MUST CONNECT TO THE TASKS OF THE QUESTION.

or

2. 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.

**Paragraph 3,** **Make your strongest argument, based on the question. Which side do you think there is more of? "A lot of *this*...."**

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 what's in the doc or wrote it?)

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 and can be evidence.)

E. Attach point-of-view **(POV)** to at least 3 documents in your essay overall (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)**

**("However, a little of *that....")***

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 what's in the doc or wrote it?)

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 and can be evidence.)

E. Attach point-of-view **(POV)** to at least 3 documents overall in your essay (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,**

Compare (either similarity of difference) the main topic and processes of the essay prompt to another era,

("This is similar to when ...." with examples)

OR

Change the Historical Thinking Skill of the question here. (For example, If the question asks you to compare, here you might write about Continuity and Change)

**Finally,** write a conclusion that includes:

All parts of the question with specific examples. In other words, re-state your thesis in a different way.

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.