**BASIC “HOW TO” AP LONG ESSAYS: “A lot of this; however, there was a little of that.”**

**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 Essay choices will have the same historical skill:**

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. **So your thesis and your essay should be about “A lot of this; however, there was also some of that.”** (A lot of change, but a little continuity; a lot of similarities, but some differences.”

**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 (“However, not everything changed. For example….”)

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**“How many specific pieces of evidence do I need?”** The answer is, as many examples of SPECIFIC EVIDENCE as you can think of. You don’t go to a fast food place and say, “I want food.” You say, “I want a double meat cheeseburger with extra pickles and no lettuce.” By the way, if some of your “evidence” is wrong, graders don’t count points off. They only score what you get right.

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.

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**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” is not correct.

“Most people in China feared the invading Mongols” is a more defensible argument.

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**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 does everything right, and more.