**DBQ Rules, How-to, and Rubric**

General DBQ rules to know:

DBQ counts for 25% of your AP Score

55 minutes (15 minute “reading period” 40 minute “writing period”)

There will always be seven docs

At least one will be a visual doc

You must use at least six of the docs

KEY TO SUCCES: SPEND GOOD TIME ANNOTATING THE DOCS WITH THE PROMPT IN MIND!!!!

Groups must have more than one doc

Most people mess up on the thesis by not having it answer the prompt

Don’t forget the topic sentences

Don’t forget transition sentences

Don’t put your name on the paper

Writing history essays stuff:

* Font = Times New Roman 12pt
* Double Space
* If you hear a pause, put a comma there.
* Read your paper aloud before you submit it.
* Have someone read your paper before you submit it.
* When you first mention someone in the paper, use their first and last name. After that, just use their last name.
  + Example: Herbie Brock is one of the greatest men who ever lived. Brock, a teacher at Rockcastle County High School is probably made of birthday cake because he is so awesome.
* Spell numbers under 100
* Don't use contractions
* Don't use forms of "I". This includes I, you, me, us, we.
* Don't ask direct questions of the reader.
* Don't say "I think". I know this is what you think because your name is at the top of the paper. Rewriting the sentence by removing the "I think" part makes it sound better, right?

**Writing the DBQ**

Paragraph 1:

Must set the stage using contextualization.

Give some background information that would help the reader situate your argument within the **broader historical event/developments** of the prompt. In other words, how would you set up what is going on in the world for the beginning of your essay?

Thesis will be invalid **if it does not answer the question.** This happens all the time!

Thesis must be at least three groups of documents that answer the question in three ways.

i.e. Docs 1, 2, and 3 say X. Docs 4 and 5 say Y. Docs 6 and 7 say Z.

\*Can’t have a group of just one doc.

Paragraph 1 must have a transition sentence linking the first paragraph to paragraph 2. Check the Guatemala Paper for an example.

Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4:

Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 are about a group of docs that answers the question in a certain way.

Use the table on the Guatemala Paper to help you organize.

\*Pro tip: The Guatemala Paper is your friend.

Each paragraph should have a topic sentence that is basically a third of the thesis regarding those docs and the way they answer the prompt.

e.g. The car is orange as shown in docs 4, 5, and 6.

The following must be done for each doc in each group:

Each doc must be discussed in each group and must focus on how it supports your thesis.

e.g. Doc 5 explains the color of the car as being a shade between red and yellow. The color found directly between the colors red and yellow is orange.

Each doc must be sourced. You can choose from any of the four H.I.P.P items below to earn this point. You don’t

have to use all four to get the point.

H.I.P.P.

**Historical Context** – What was going on in the world/region that led to this doc being created? It can’t be listed in the doc. MUST EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE of the context of the doc. Why does it matter?

*e.g. When considering the publishing of the magazine, one must remember that the author was a member of the Communist Chinese government which was very restrictive regarding what materials were distributed at the time. This may have led this document to being more of a view of the Chinese government’s idea of what a young woman should believe in China than the actual views of what a young woman in China actually believed.*

**Intended audience** – Who was intended to read this doc? How did that alter or influence the author’s creation of the doc? MUST EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE of the author’s intended audience. Why does it matter?

*e.g. The intended audience of this autobiography is that of survivors of the Holocaust as stated in the foreword provided from the excerpt. It is crucial to understand that, though the author may have historical aspirations for his work, he may have been persuaded to exclude facts criticizing members of the Jewish leadership during the time.*

**Purpose** - Why was this document really written? What was the author’s underlying reason for writing this document? MUST EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE of the author’s purpose. Why does it matter?

*e.g. It is clear that this letter was written for the sole purpose of persuading the emperor to ban Buddhism from China. Though it may be an effective snapshot of some members of the Scholar Gentry’s view of Buddhism in China, it should not be taken as an unbiased view of the impact of the religion in China, especially on that of the peasant class.*

**Point of View** – The author’s point of view. This is the situation where the author is coming from and how it informs what she or he is writing. MUST EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE of the author’s POV. Why does it matter?

e.g. Ibn Batutta was a devout Muslim who was focused on learning about how Islam was practiced around the world. However, being born and raised in Morocco, an almost entirely Sunni Muslim region, and his point of view may have impacted his criticism of Shia Muslims when he encountered them in the Middle East.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 need transitions to the next paragraphs. Examples are in the Guatemala Paper. There is no transition needed from paragraph 4 to paragraph 5.

Paragraph 5:

Paragraph 5 kills three birds with one stone.

Bird 1: Conclusion: A simple restating of the thesis statement. Don’t fall into the trap of just copying and pasting it from the first paragraph. Don’t be that guy.

Bird 2: Outside info: You have to give a **fourth answer**to the prompt that is not found in the docs. This can be vague as long as it answers the question. The good thing about DBQs is that they are so broad, you probably already know something that you can list here.

\*Pro tip: People often forget that they have to explain how the outside info answers the prompt. It can be as simple as the “orange is between red and yellow” example I gave earlier.

Bird 3: Synthesis: This is where you have to connect your essay, the prompt, or your answers to something outside.

You have three choices and they are below with an example paired with each.

1. A Development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area:

*A group of warring city-states was not just an Afro-Eurasian phenomenon, though. Some*

*centuries later, with no contact with the Old World, the Mayan civilization seemingly mimicked the political organization of Mesopotamia.*

1. A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (think SPICE category, but

must be different than your answer to the first question)

*While the Aborigines of Australia interacted with their environment in a number of unique ways in*

*regard to economic gain, the cultural and religious aspect of those same interactions may be just as important. The harvesting of certain hallucinogenic plants for religious ceremonies, for example, were certainly sold to practitioners, but the purpose of those sales better illustrates the transactions.*

C) A different discipline or field or inquiry

*To view the interactions of Europeans and natives through the lens of a genealogist could further demonstrate the impact that the introduction of Europeans to North America had on the native populations. A study showing to what extent did the races mix during the first century after the arrival of Europeans could not only show interactions of the two, but also the extent of cross-racial relationships and biracial peoples.*



