

DBQ Rules, How-to, and Rubric

General DBQ rules to know:

DBQ counts for 25% of your AP Score

60 minutes (15 minute “reading period” 45 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 SUCCESS: 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 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.

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.*

Paragraph 5:

Paragraph 5 kills two birds with one stone. (Your writing skill is the 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.

****see and pay close attention to the rubric on the next page. That is the only thing I can use for your score. It is truly your friend.

AP History DBQ Rubric (7 points)

| Reporting Category | Scoring Criteria | Decision Rules | | |
|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| A THESIS/CLAIM (0–1 pt) | 1 pt. Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible 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.</i> | | |
| B CONTEXTUALIZATION (0–1 pt) | 1 pt. Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. | <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.</i> | | |
| C EVIDENCE (0–3 pts) | Evidence from the Documents | <i>To earn one point, the response must accurately describe — rather than simply quote — the content from at least three of the documents.</i> <i>To earn two points, the response must accurately describe — rather than simply quote — the content from at least six documents. In addition, the response must use the content of the documents to support an argument in response to the prompt.</i> | | |
| | <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">1 pt. Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt.</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">OR</td> <td style="width: 33%;">2 pts. Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least six documents.</td> </tr> </table> | | 1 pt. Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt. | OR |
| | 1 pt. Uses the content of at least three documents to address the topic of the prompt. | OR | 2 pts. Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least six documents. | |
| Evidence beyond the Documents | <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> | | | |
| D ANALYSIS AND REASONING (0–2 pts) | 1 pt. For at least three documents, explains how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument. | <i>To earn this point, the response must explain how or why (rather than simply identifying) the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument about the prompt for each of the three documents sourced.</i> | | |
| | 1 pt. 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables</i> • <i>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both cause and effect</i> • <i>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods</i> • <i>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes</i> • <i>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence</i> <i>This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</i> | | |