

# THE DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION (DBQ)

Document based essays are designed to test a student's ability to use documents to support a historical argument. It corresponds roughly to writing a research paper and duplicates the work of historians, where the student is given the evidence and asked to write a paper – in one hour. And a DBQ essay *may* include compare and contrast, and/or change over time.

The Document-Based Question consists of a prompt with between five and nine primary source documents. *The question is not designed to test a student's knowledge about world history, so much as the student's ability to use documentary evidence to make and to support a written argument. Critical to this process are the concepts of bias (reliability) and use of all documents to support a thesis.* The graders will grade by the following criteria.

An *acceptable thesis* requires a simple thesis stating the point of argument, or what you will prove. An *expanded thesis*, which earns an additional point, requires a comprehensive thesis statement with point of argument and three ways you will prove it.

*Students need to use all but may misinterpret one of the documents in the essay.* Use is defined as citing, quoting, paraphrasing, listing, summarizing, mentioning, analyzing, interpreting, or critiquing the documents in any way. Students must *understand the basic meaning of the documents cited in the essay.* Students may misinterpret one document but two or more will cost one criterion point. Mistakes involving dates and names are not critical but misrepresenting a document can be fatal. Placing a document in a wrong group that leads to a wrong conclusion also counts as a misunderstanding.

*Students must support the thesis with appropriate evidence from the documents.* Students must analyze, interpret, and critique the documents. *Quoting, listing, summarizing, citing, or mentioning a document does not qualify for this criterion!* Students should support their thesis through the use of outside material not mentioned in their documents. If students know of facts and information relevant to the topic, which were not mentioned in the documents, they should include them. There is an upper and lower standard, namely uses all or all but one of the documents to support the essay, or uses all but two of the documents.

*Analyze point of view in three documents.* The rubric says students need to analyze only two documents but this is too few. Students should do three or more. In order to earn this point, students should attribute and analyze point of view, bias, purpose or intent, tone, or audience in an attempt to determine reliability. Analysis of point of view also constitutes supporting the thesis with appropriate evidence from the documents and using the documents, too! One method of analysis (and use) is based on the acronym, *S.O.A.P.P.S.*

*Students must analyze documents by grouping them depending on the DBQ prompt.* If the DBQ identifies groups in the prompt, students must use the mentioned groups. *Students must have three groups.* If the prompt only specifies two, students should create a third category. Once again, students must organize the evidence and arguments into three

**groups. These groups could be mentioned in the thesis statement. The better writers will create their own groups or categories based on the documents. Nevertheless, students might use the acronym *P.E.R.S.I.A.N.* or *S.C.R.I.P.T.E.D.* to help structure their thoughts. Other methods of grouping include organizing by gender, time, social class, occupation, geography, nationality, similar points of view, or religion.**

**For writing purposes each body paragraph constitutes a group. And each group should begin with a topic sentence which delineates the group. Evidence should fit into these three categories. When grouping a document, each group must contain at least two documents. If possible, use three because it prevents a failed group if you misinterpret one document.**

*Students will be asked to identify one additional type of document they could have used to support the essay prompt. One useful way to accomplish this is to identify a point of view or group missing from the discussion. For example, an essay on gender rights that does not include a woman's point of view is weak. You should mention this failing. At the same time, if all of the documents in the same essay are by women, a man's point of view might help balance the essay. Students should decide what is missing and mention what specific type of document or point of view might improve the essay. And they should ideally state how it would help the essay. They should place this sentence in whichever body paragraph will be most effective. This could also include bringing in outside information relevant to the topic. Other typically missing documents include charts, maps, or statistical information, social classes, and opposite points of view.*

**Students will have 50 minutes to write their essays. They should use 10 minutes to read the documents and to structure or outline their essay. They should spend 30 minutes writing and 10 minutes reviewing what they have written. Student should make sure they have used all the documents, have three groups, and performed all activities they are required to do. They should especially check their prompt to see that they have addressed all parts required.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHART: DOCUMENT BASED ESSAY QUESTION (DBQ)**

**GROUPING THEMES (3):** \_\_\_\_\_

*Based on the prompt and the documents, select three groups from SCRIPTED or create your own groups based on the prompt and documents. If the prompt asks for Change and Continuities over Time, the comparison groups should be time periods.*

| THEESIS                                   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| Use at least 2 (TWO) documents per group! | Using some of techniques from a SOAPPS-Tone, analyze the documents as they relate to the thesis. | Analyze Point of View in at least one of the documents in the group | What document is missing from the group and why is it needed? |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Group's Topic Sentence    |  |   |   |
|   |  |   |   |
|   |  |   |   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Group's Topic Sentence    |  |   |   |
|   |  |   |   |
|   |  |   |   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Group's Topic Sentence    |  |   |   |
|   |  |   |   |
|   |  |   |   |
| CONCLUSION                                |  |   |   |

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**ESSAY FORM**

**HISTORICAL  
INTRODUCTION**

**SUBSTANTIATED THESIS (3)**

| <b>SUB-TOPIC GROUP 1</b>                                      |  |  | <b>SUB-TOPIC GROUP 2</b>                                      |  |  | <b>SUB-TOPIC GROUP 3</b>                                      |  |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  | <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  | <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  |
| <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  | <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  | <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  |
| <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  | <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  | <b>DOCUMENT<br/>ATTRIBUTE<br/>SUMMARY<br/>ANALYZE<br/>POV</b> |  |  |
| <b>EXTRA<br/>DOCUMENT<br/>REASON<br/>NEEDED</b>               |  |  | <b>EXTRA<br/>DOCUMENT<br/>REASON<br/>NEEDED</b>               |  |  | <b>EXTRA<br/>DOCUMENT<br/>REASON<br/>NEEDED</b>               |  |  |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b>   |  |  |   |  |  |   |  |  |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **BEGINNING DEFINITIONS AND MEANINGS**

**Before students plan and write essays, they must understand the tasks that the prompts ask them to perform. It will be disastrous if students misread or perform the wrong action. Using a dictionary, define these tasks. List close synonyms.**

**1. ASSESS**

**2. ANALYZE**

**3. COMPARE**

**4. CONTRAST**

**5. DESCRIBE**

**6. DISCUSS**

**7. EVALUATE**

**8. EXPLAIN**

**9. SYNTHESIZE**

**10. CRITIQUE**

**11. CONSTRUCT**

**12. CREATE**

**13. CONTEXTUALIZE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## READING A PROMPT AND WRITING A THESIS

Use the following Document Based Question prompt to assist with these exercises.

Based on the documents, analyze the South Asian impact on and interactions with Southeast Asia during the Post-Classical period.

What types of additional documentation would help assess the importance and impact of Indian influence on Southeast Asia?

### PART A: READING THE PROMPT

1. One of the most frequent and most fatal mistakes that students make is failure to *read the prompt in its entirety and answer all of its portions*. Explain why this is fatal?
2. What themes and topics does the prompt ask you the writer to discuss?

### PART B: IDENTIFICATIONS AND DEFINITIONS.

1. Identify the key action verbs in the above prompt. What do they mean?
2. Does the prompt ask you to compare and contrast? If so, list them below.
3. Does the prompt indicate any evidence of change over time? If so, what is the evidence?

### PART C: TWO CRITERIA AND THESIS WRITING

The “*Basic Core*” on all AP World History rubrics include an acceptable thesis based on the documents. The thesis must include any points mentioned in the prompt. It should be qualified and quantified. The thesis may also be split into two sentences provided they are next to each other. A “*Expanded Core*” thesis is best defined as a well-articulated thesis paragraph. This type of the thesis identifies at least three qualities or policies by name that support your argument, includes sufficient detail and often begins with a hook which introduces the thesis.

1. Write an acceptable thesis based on the prompt.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

The introduction paragraph is the single most important paragraph you will write; the second most important is the first body paragraph. These two contain the first ideas and proofs a grader will read. Introduction paragraphs need contain only two sentences – a hook and a thesis sentence. *In fact, a thesis paragraph need consist of only one sentence, a thesis.* But hook sentences add color and are the attention grabbers that start an essay. They most resemble newspaper headlines. *The best hooks tell the history of the essay prompt's topic leading up to that essay prompt.* One student in particular, in her essay on who would win a war between Sparta and Athens used this hook and thesis:

*Once upon a time two boys were born in Ancient Greece. One was born in Athens and given a quill, a scroll and sent off to gymnasium; the other born in Sparta was given a sword and shield and sent off to army camp. While some dreamers argue that the pen is mightier than the sword, in the Peloponnesian War, Sparta's sword defeated Athen's pen for military, social, and economic reasons.*

### PART A: WRITING HOOK SENTENCES

Based on the essay prompt, can you think of some creative and interesting hooks about South Asian impacts on Southeast Asia? Please write two below.

- 1.
- 2.

### PART B: WRITING A DBQ HOOK OR HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Read the provided DBQ's included documents. Compose two different hook sentences or historical introductions that cover ALL of the documents in the DBQ and address the prompt.

- 1.
- 2.

### PART C: INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH – A HOOK AND A THESIS

Ideally hook sentences should act as signposts to the thesis. They should not be cryptic or difficult to understand. Using the thesis sentences you wrote in Exercise 3, select one of the hooks written above and write an introductory paragraph.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ANALYSIS

In the DBQ, the College Board says students must *use* and *analyze* the documents. Students must use *a majority of the documents* and *interpret the documents correctly with no more than one error in the interpretation of the content of a document*. A misinterpretation is one that leads to an inaccurate statement or grouping, or a false conclusion. Most misinterpretations occur because students do not understand key words from the prompt.

### I-China, Chinese Buddhist pilgrim from his travel journal describing Srivijaya, 671 CE

“In the fortified city of Fo-shih, here are more than a 1,000 Buddhist priests whose minds are bent on study and good works. They examine and study all possible subjects exactly as in Madhyadesa (India); their rules and ceremonies are identical with those in India. If a Chinese priest wishes to go to the west to understand and read the original Buddhist texts there, he would be wise to spend a year or two in Fo-shih and practice the proper rules there; and then go on to Central India.”

### PART A: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION (SOAPPS-TONE, OPTIC)

**Do not summarize, paraphrase, quote, cite, or list documents.** These actions do not constitute analysis. Instead do a SOAPPS-Tone or OPPTIC on the document. Using the above document, do the exercises below.

1. Identify the
  - a. Subject
  - b. Occasion
  - c. Audience
  - d. Purpose
  - e. Point of View
  - f. Speaker
  - g. Tone
2. Why do summaries, paraphrasing, quoting, citing or listing documents not constitute analysis?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## POINT OF VIEW

One method of interpreting and analyzing documents involves the identification and discussion of point of view. *In a World History DBQ, the student must address at least TWO or more points of view.* These are opinions, biases, interpretations, prejudices, beliefs, and personal views held by the documents' authors. Collectively they are points of view. Students often mistakenly feel interpretations or analyses means restate the facts; they often do not critique the documents for bias, accepting the statements at face value and as absolutely accurate.

### PART A: ATTRIBUTION

Attribution cites the authorship of the document by name of the writer, his or her social position or occupation, and tells something about the statement. The importance to attribution is that the student demonstrates that he or she knows it is the author's point of view rather than a fact. To be effective, the student must attribute all documents used in the essay.<sup>8</sup> Examples are *Christopher Columbus, a Spanish explorer believed* or *John Calvin, a French Protestant theologian felt* . . .

**Charles Lockyer, English merchant, from his *An Account of the Trade in India, 1711.***

“There are many Indians of the Coromandel (Tamil area of South India) coast ... slaves to the great men and merchants. To these the Aceheenes (Kingdom on the northern coast of Sumatra) owe the greatest part of their husbandry in managing their crops of rich, which was hardly known on this part of the island, until these men were driven here by the famine on the Coromandel coast.”

Write an example of attribution.

### PART B: POINT OF VIEW

Students must demonstrate that they understand that an author's point of view is influenced by many things, such as education, occupation, religion, social class, political persuasion, nationality, sex, and ethnicity. Note that some positions and occupations are more important than others. An example is *John Calvin, a French Protestant theologian, who had been a lawyer argued that the Bible was absolutely correct as written and popes were not infallible.*

Write an example of an author's point of view. Use the document from Part A.

## **PART C: TONE, PURPOSE, AUDIENCE**

**Students should point out how an author’s tone, purpose, or intended audience influences the understanding of the issue. Tone may include emotion, mindset, or a general quality or atmosphere, which pervades the document. All authors speak or write with an intended audience in mind. Often this effects what is said. And authors tailor their speech or writing to achieve a particular end.**

***The Merit of Temple Building, from the Hindu Agni Puranam, religious texts dedicated to the god Vishnu; the Puranas deal with worship and everyday applications, c. 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE***

“By building temples for other gods, a man reaps the same fruit which he does by building one for Vishnu. By building temples for Shiva, Brahma, Lakshimi, one acquires religious merit. Greater merit is acquired by installing images. In the sacrifice attendant upon the setting up of an idol there is no end of fruits. One made of wood gives greater merit than one made of clay; one made of bricks yields more than a wooden one. One made of stone yields more than one made of bricks. Images made of gold and other metals yield the greatest religious merit. Sins accumulated are dissipated even at the very commencement. One building a temple goes to heaven; he never goes to hell.”

**Give examples of the author’s tone, purpose, or likely intended audience. Try an ASAP sentence.**

## **PART D: THE ACRONYM A.S.A.P.**

**One technique I use is to teach students to use a document and write an analysis sentence, is to write an ASAP sentence or pair of sentences. Students attribute the summary and then analyze a point of view. For example, *Christopher Columbus, a Castilian explorer wrote in his diary that he believed he had found Asia – this was because the Europeans had no idea of the size of the globe or routes to Asia.***

**Write an ASAP sentence below.**

## PART E: TONE VOCABULARY

Tone is defined as the manner of expression in written documents or speech. It includes a general overall quality or atmosphere. Tone is also strongly related to point of view. If a student can identify the document's tone, he or she may be able to establish what the writer's or speaker's view point is. Teaching the words below will help a student see Tone. Also some verbs convey tone.

### POSITIVE TONE/ATTITUDE WORDS

*LIGHTHEARTED*  
*CONFIDENT*  
*AMUSED*  
*COMPLIMENTARY*  
*HOPEFUL*  
*CHEERY*

*ELATED*  
*PASSIONATE*  
*EXUBERANT*  
*OPTIMISTIC*  
*SYMPATHETIC*  
*PROUD*

*ENTHUSIASTIC*  
*LOVING*  
*COMPASSIONATE*  
*AMUSED*  
*TOLERANT*  
*REASONED*

*PIOUS*  
*RESOLUTE*  
*COSMOPOLITAN*

### NEGATIVE TONE/ATTITUDE WORDS

*ANGRY*  
*FURIOUS*  
*IRRITATED*  
*ACCUSING*  
*DISGUSTED*  
*WRATHFUL*  
*INDIGNANT*  
*BITTER*  
*OUTRAGED*  
*CONDEMNING*  
*THREATENING*  
*INFLAMMATORY*  
*DEROGATORY*  
*DISGRUNTLED*  
*INSULTING*  
*BELLIGERENT*  
*BELLICOSE*

*SCORNFUL*  
*SARCASTIC*  
*CRITICAL*  
*SATIRIC*  
*BANTERING*  
*TAUNTING*  
*IRONIC*  
*DISDAINFUL*  
*CYNICAL*  
*FACETIOUS*  
*SARDONIC*  
*IRREVERENT*  
*INSOLENT*  
*FLIPPANT*  
*CONTEMPTUOUS*  
*CONDESCENDING*  
*PATRONIZING*

*POMPOUS*  
*WHIMSICAL*  
*SOMBER*  
*SAD*  
*SOLEMN*  
*CONCERNED*  
*GLOOMY*  
*HOPELESS*  
*ELEGIAC*  
*DISTURBED*  
*SERIOUS*  
*FEARFUL*  
*SOBER*  
*STAIID*  
*MELANCHOLIC*  
*MOURNFUL*  
*APPREHENSIVE*

*DESPAIRING*  
*FOREBODING*  
*RESIGNED*  
*DISTRUSTFUL*  
*HAUGHTY*  
*ARISTOCRATIC*  
*ARROGANT*  
*INTOLERANT*  
*JUDGEMENTAL*  
*COMBATIVE*  
*SANCTIMONIOUS*  
*FALSE*  
*ALIENATED*  
*SEDITIONOUS*  
*PROVINCIAL*

### NEUTRAL TONE/ATTITUDE WORDS

*FORMAL*  
*CEREMONIAL*  
*RESTRAINED*  
*DETACHED*  
*OBJECTIVE*  
*CANDID*  
*CLINICAL*  
*QUESTIONING*

*INSTRUCTIVE*  
*MATTER OF FACT*  
*ADMONISHING*  
*LEARNED*  
*FACTUAL*  
*DIDACTIC*  
*INFORMATIVE*  
*AUTHORITATIVE*

*INCREDULOUS*  
*SHOCKED*  
*BAFFLED*  
*DISBELIEVING*  
*URGENT*  
*NOSTALGIC*  
*REMINISCENT*  
*SENTIMENTAL*

*LACONIC*  
*INTUITIVE*  
*CONCILIATORY*  
*DIPLOMATIC*  
*MARTIAL*  
*SUBMISSIVE*

### OTHER /ATTITUDE WORDS

*OPINIONATED*  
*BIASED*  
*PREJUDICED*  
*SUBJECTIVE*

*NATIONALISTIC*  
*PATRIOTIC*

*ASSERTIVE*  
*PHILOSOPHICAL*  
*DEFERENTIAL*  
*JUDICIOUS*

*CIVIL*  
*RIGHTEOUS*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO ANALYZE VARIOUS MEDIA

The task all historians perform and the one which students must address is the determination of the validity and accuracy of sources. Not all sources are equal or of equal value. Students who accept sources' opinions as valid or facts make a mistake. Some types of documents are more valid and accurate; others more biased. Using examples obtained from Internet sources listed in the Appendix, or using examples from your text, read the passages below and analyze the respective type of media.

### PART A: VISUAL MEDIA

Visuals are often difficult to interpret and to use. Although pictures are worth a thousand words, you do not have written words to interpret. Look for visual clues. Do an OPTIC.

*Pictures, paintings, and photographs* will depict a subject. You must decide what is depicted. How does it reflect time and place? Does it convey a point of view or perspective? What is the emotional impact (tone) of the work? Is the artist attempting to convey a special message? What is its title? This may be revealing.

*Cartoons* are satirical. Who are the characters in the cartoon? What are they doing? Are the characters realistic or exaggerated? If so, why? What are their expressions? What symbols are present? What is the overall impression of the cartoon? What is the title or caption? Who is the intended audience?

*Posters* are often political or artistic, or both. Who published it? For what reasons? What is the purpose? Is there any bias or specific perspective? What is the title or caption? And who is the intended audience?

### PART B: MAPS, DATA, CHARTS, AND GRAPHS

*Data, Charts, graphs, and maps* represent factual information in a graphic form. While data is rarely biased, the decisions based on them are. Look for patterns, trends, implications, and relationships.

*Maps* deal with a specific period of geographical, political, or historical time. They focus on a specific topic, event, or development. Maps place the subject in a specific location. Remember to note the different types and purposes of maps.

*Charts* illustrate a relationship between subjects and trends over a specific period of time. Check title and category headings. Are the numbers percentages or absolute? Use the figures as given – do not refigure them. Check to see if the numbers are used in an abbreviated form. Are the illustrated changes or facts significant? If so, what is the importance? Remember the possible influence of outside historical events. Be aware of missing periods of time or data that was left out.

*Tables* compare facts between several groups of related items. Much of the same information about charts applies to tables and graphs. Tables need not represent time or time changes. They display great amounts of data in a simplified form. Diagrams and flowcharts summarize an idea through the illustration of an idea's parts. Check the title and labels; examine the parts.

*Graphs* use data to represent comparisons and changes, frequently over time. With graphs, read the key, notice the title, and look for dates. Look for trends or patterns over time. Circle or pie graphs represent the total quality (100%) of something. The portions or slices represent a percentage. Notice if any of the parts are larger or smaller than the rest. Look for relationships between the parts and compare parts to the whole. Read both axes of bar and line graphs. One represents a value. The other represents time. They also may compare several different items for a quantity or value. Bar graphs are drawn to make a comparison, so make one!

*Time Lines* show the passage of time and trends in chronological order. They may compare items, too. They may be printed horizontally or vertically. All have dates, and unless it says BCE, you may assume it is CE.

## **PART C: PRINTED MEDIA**

The first instruments that dictators control are the various forms of mass media. Written media have been subject to extreme control or restrictions. Until recently, most media were censored. Additionally, dictators have often used the media to publicize their views and control populaces. All societies do the same to a greater or lesser degree. Be very observant to detail and biases. And remember, until recently, most humans could neither read nor write. Consequently, the printed media was often published for the more educated, richer, and socially important citizens.

*Newspapers* are a favorite DBQ document. But the parts of the newspaper vary in importance and reliability. What portion of the newspaper is depicted? Is it an editorial (opinion) or article (report of events and facts)? Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is hard to distinguish between the two. Remember, newspapers have no requirement to be accurate. Many are affiliated with political parties and display their points of view. Is it an interview? Interviews can be both opinionated and factual. Letters to the editors are another form of an editorial. Articles can reflect mass opinion or be an attempt to create it. Is there some evidence of a newspaper's economic or social bias? Is the paper an urban or a rural? Is the paper regional such as southern or western? Economic newspapers are for investors and the rich. Does the paper cater to a specific ethnic or religious group?

*Magazines and pamphlets* often address the same concerns and questions associated with newspapers. Both, but especially pamphlets, which are printed for mass distribution, can be very biased towards a specific view. What is the magazine's normal audience? Remember, readership is specific and less widely spread than a newspaper. The magazines people buy reflect the views people hold.

*Books* come in several types. Is the example fiction or non-fiction, and if non-fiction, what type is it? Generally non-fiction sources are more accurate, but this is not always true. Is the book a primary or secondary source? Primary source books are products of their times, while most writers of secondary sources, especially texts and academic treatises attempt to remain impartial. Then, too, secondary sources are reflective of their times. When was the book written? Is the writer an expert in his/her field? Is he or she opinionated? Is the book politically motivated? Novels can be very realistic about the life and times in which they are set.

*Poems* use language as an art and are not meant necessarily to convey information. Often they convey emotion. In point of fact, poems have much in common with paintings. They illustrate a spiritual, symbolic, or emotional event or idea. Notice the author and check for personal affiliations, biased, etc.

#### **PART D: SPEECHES**

Speeches are always public and before a crowd. You *must* determine who is the intended audience of speaker. Is the speech a rough, extemporaneous draft or professionally written? The first often more accurately represent the speaker's point of view, while the second is often polished and refined so it has an intended affect (or avoids backlash). Is the speech impromptu or was it formal, scheduled, public, or private? Is it a campaign speech? When you campaign, you say what gets you elected. If you know the speaker, does the speech reflect his beliefs or point of view?

#### **PART E: PERSONAL DOCUMENTS**

Personal by definition means private. Few people announce publicly what they will write in a private document. While the writings may be biased, you can assume that the opinions expressed are highly representative of the person's point of view. If it is published, it was probably edited for publication, It probably conforms to specific views and can be meant to arouse support. Hastily-written items without corrections are less refined and probably more representative of the writer's opinions.

*Diaries or memoirs including autobiographies* are private. People write what they feel or want or need in them. Generally, people do not seem to lie to diaries, but they do embellish memoirs. Note whether entries are before or after the fact? After the fact, people forget. They are not self-critical; people rarely criticize themselves. Memoirs are how the writers want to be remembered and they tender to be self-serving.

*Letters* can be private or public. If public, is it personal or official? Was the letter written to a subordinate or a superior? What is the relationship between the two people? Is the letter from an organization and for publication? Is the date significant? The purpose of the letter impacts its reliability.

## **PART F: POLITICAL STATEMENTS BY GROUPS AND PUBLIC RECORDS**

Political statements represent the people, society, and group goals and policies in power. Or they represent their groups' goals as they would have them if they could achieve power. Remember all are biased to one point of view: the person or group making it. Public records usually include laws and statutes. In that they must be implemented and enforced, such documents are usually more realistic and reliable.

*Party platforms or official party ideologies* are critical. Decide if the party is important. Minority parties rarely carry the same weight as a mass party. If the platform is during an election, remember the candidate agrees with the platform if he/she is in the party. Additionally, party platforms are compromises between conflicting interests in the party. Smaller parties' ideologies are more argumentative and flamboyant. Conventions are pep-rallies to win. If the state is a dictatorship, party ideologies represent the view in power. And remember, politicians proclaim publicly what will keep them in power or get them reelected.

*Laws, proclamations, orders, verdicts, legislative debates, parliamentary speeches, legal testimony, and legal statutes* are all common documents in a DBQ. And they are official. They represent the legal point of view of the government in power or official finding of a court. To analyze, decide why the law was passed? Laws are passed to solve or prevent a problem. What does it represent? Laws are victories for the man/party in power. Laws are guides to actions allowed and prohibited. Laws are generally representative of the majority's opinion. Some laws are symbolic. Is the document a commentary by a higher court or official? What type of law is it: civil, criminal, business, canon, international? Who signed or authorized the law? The simplest way is to discuss who passed the law, what was the intent of the law, and who will be affected by the law. Politicians place into official records what they want the public to hear. Court testimony is usually under oath and few societies tolerate lies to courts.

*Treaties* are favorites of DBQs. Notice the date and countries signing the treaty. What are the conditions of the treaty? Why was it signed? Treaties attempt to solve existing problems or conflicts. What actions or conditions does the treaty specify for fulfillment. Does the treaty specify consequences for non-compliance. Does the treaty mention a previous agreement or action? Treaties are often signed by weaker states, which had no choice – they lost. Winners write the treaties. Treaties can be harsh and unrealistic. The language of treaties is highly formalized and VERY specific. Diplomats have a language all their own.

## **PART G: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF THE MEDIA**

Based on the various types of media mentioned above, assign each student the task of locating one of them and presenting it to the class. Students should explain how they would analyze each “document.” Address its reliability, point of view, bias, etc.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## USING DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THESIS

Students should use the documents in their essay. Students may accomplish this through an analysis using SOAPPS-Tone or OPTIC. You may cite documents by number, but remember this is not analysis. Citing by numbers helps the reader identify documents used. The best way to reference a document is to attribute what is said to the author and how he or she views the situation relative to the prompt. This method not only uses the documents, it supports the thesis with facts and evidence consistent with outside knowledge, and analyzes. If interpreted correctly, the student demonstrates understanding of the meaning of the documents used.

On the DBQ, the grading rubric's *Basic Core* requires students to "use all but one" of the documents. But the *Expanded Core* criteria award points for the use of "all the documents." *Consequently, it is best to use all the documents in your essay.* If you do this from the beginning, you will never have to guess whether or not you used enough.

### Part A: USING DOCUMENTS

For this exercise, students can analyze documents individually or in groups of twos or threes. If you use groups, assign certain portions or sentences to different groups. There is no correct answer for this exercise. Each document may be used differently and in numerous ways and locations.

(Re)read each of the documents in any DBQ. Using the individual documents of the DBQ, write a one-sentence analysis of each and place it on a separate three-by-five (3x5) card.

If you use the included DBQ, go back to the earlier exercise and copy your thesis statement onto a 3x5 card and put each of the three main points of thesis on individual cards, too. Now arrange your analyses of the documents to support each of the thesis' main points.

### PART B: JIGSAWING PARAGRAPHS INTO A CLASS ESSAY

You will need one student to keep an official record of this. Beginning with any group's thesis, or a common class thesis, have students go to the board and write their supporting sentences underneath. Let them defend their interpretations and placements.

Decide as a class which documents are used and placed effectively and which are not. Remove the weaker sentences and support, and add stronger analyses. Look at the completed essay. Using the provided Document Based Question Essay Rubric, grade the essay for the College Board's criteria.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## GROUPING DOCUMENTS

One method of analysis and interpretation in the essay is to group your evidence or the documents. The Official DBQ Rubric states that students should “organize documents by grouping them in one (or two or three) ways, depending on DBQ question,” while the Expanded Core gives additional points for additional groupings. Students must group the documents by *three* different categories. *Your groups should be the three main points included in your thesis statement. Additionally, a group must contain at least two or more documents.*

### PART A: USE OF ACRONYMS TO TEACH GROUPING

Grouping is a higher level skill and, if done regularly in practice essays, students will have few or no problems doing it on the official exam. The simplest method is to use an acronym such as *PERSIAN*. Or use *SCRIPTED*, which is based on the themes of the College Board. Even if you do not use *PERSIAN* as a method of grouping, you must nevertheless group. All documents used in a DBQ will generally fall into three categories; some may fall into more than one category and students can use them in both places as appropriated provided they use all documents. Have students place the words in the categories below. What words do not fit? Why? What words or terms can you add to this list?

*War, human-environment interaction, courts, philosophy, leaders, technology, ideas about play and work dance, maps, trade, tariffs, human groups, currency, movement, science, regions, festivals, businesses, jobs, military, morals, diplomacy, graphs, ideas of heaven and hell, treaties, holy books, classes, marriage and divorce, government, gender, paintings, music, architecture, literature, poetry, mathematics, environment, location, charts, laws, salvation, place.*

|              |  |              |  |
|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| POLITICS     |  | SOCIAL       |  |
| ECONOMICS    |  | CULTURE      |  |
| RELIGION     |  | RELIGION     |  |
| SOCIAL       |  | INTERACTIONS |  |
| INTELLECTUAL |  | POLITICS     |  |
| ARTISTIC     |  | TECHNOLOGY   |  |
| NATURE       |  | ECONOMICS    |  |
|              |  | DEMOGRAPHY   |  |

## **PART B: GROUPING BY AUTHORS' SOCIAL CLASS**

Documents used in DBQs always state the author or originator of the comments you read. One method of analysis and comparing documents is to group the authors by common social groups. Groups often share the same points of view on subjects and events.

1. Examine the authors of your documents. Do they fall into any distinctive social classes, occupations, or categories? If so, what are they?
2. What common viewpoints do the above groups share? How might this influence the authors' understanding of the prompt's issue(s)?

## **PART C: GROUP DOCUMENTS THROUGH POINTS OF VIEW**

One strategy to help group documents is to match them up according to points of view. Some documents exhibit the same point of view on an issue while others take contradictory points of view on the same subject; they "pair up". You can analyze and interpret by comparing and contrasting different perspectives.

1. Read your documents. Try to match one document with a similar point of view.
2. Do any documents take a contradictory view on the same subject? If so, what is it?

## **PART D: GROUPING BY TIME PERIODS**

Always read the dates on the documents – if they cover an expanse of time broader than one of AP World History's chronological periods, organize documents by time period.

1. Read your documents. Do they cover more than one time period? If so, indicate the time periods represented in the documents.
2. Group the documents according to time period. How do viewpoints change across time?

## **PART D: GROUPING BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION**

Sometimes documents can group by similar geographic regions. A starting place is the AP World History cultural regions.

1. Do any of the documents for this exercise share a common geographic origin?
2. If so, do the documents have a common perspective on an issue? If so, what is it?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **AN EXTRA DOCUMENT & OUTSIDE INFORMATION**

When writing the DBQ, students are not expected to have prior knowledge of the topic. Nevertheless, *students must bring in relevant outside history.*

### **PART A: CALLING FOR EXTRA DOCUMENTS**

AP World History expects students to mention one additional document or point of view, which could have been included to facilitate better understanding. This document is ideally a document which is missing from the discussion and which will throw additional light on the discussion. It can be a document or something such as a chart, map, or graph.

Look at the documents. Are the authors male? Call for a woman's point of view. Are the writers all wealthy? Call for a poor person's point of view. Typically, a woman, poor worker or peasant, specific nationality, or non-elite personS are missing. Additionally, you could call for a specific type of document such as a graph, chart, map, treaty, or tax code to support your argument or refute one of the document's include.

Then students **MUST** tell what document they need **AND** why it is necessary **OR** how it will impact or improve the discussion. Students should be careful not to ask for a type of document from a social group which they already have. It is wise to ask for two or three additional documents to avoid asking for a mistaken document. If two or three requests are all valid it becomes evidence for the expanded core. I use the acronym XY for what extra (x) document do you need and why (y) do you need it?

Using the teaching DBQ packet, look at all of the provided documents. Name at least two additional documents you could use to support your prompt. Why do you need them?

### **PART B: OUTSIDE INFORMATION**

As you write your essay, bring in outside historical information. This can include historical facts you know about the topics and authors of the documents. This is elaboration. Additionally, never forget to mention relevant information from other academic disciplines, especially art, music, literature, and appropriate sciences.

Briefly summarize what outside information might be useful to assist with understanding your specific DBQ.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

This is the least critical paragraph you will write. National graders insist you can forget a conclusion and still receive the highest score. But when you write research papers later in college classes, you will learn you cannot do this. It is the last time you can tell your reader what your thesis or main idea was. Therefore, learn to conclude in some appropriate manner. Whatever you do, do not waste an inordinate amount of time concluding. The time is better spent on analysis and interpretation.

*Most critically, however, a conclusion can function as a thesis IF your thesis is missing or does not meet the criteria of the rubric for the point. Consequently, a conclusion is critical.*

### PART A: SIMPLE CONCLUSION

Conclusions can be one sentence. You can restate the prompt or paraphrase your thesis, which is adequate but simplistic. Your conclusion should resemble your thesis and contain what your essay was about and what three ideas you used to prove it. Reread your thesis used in previous exercises. Write a simple conclusion.

### PART B: LONG CONCLUSION

Reread your thesis from the Expanded Core. A superior conclusion of one sentence should mirror this type of thesis. As my students repeatedly point out, this may mean a “compound, complex sentence.” Write a long conclusion.

### PART C: ELABORATE CONCLUSION

Because of time constraints, elaborate conclusions are often too time-consuming to write. Nevertheless, they have their value and place. The best writers tend to follow this pattern. Restate your thesis. Take the most important subpoint or conclusion from each individual paragraph you wrote and restate it in your thesis. The last sentence foreshadows some future historical event, which your current DBQ influenced or is similar to the current DBQ. This means around five sentences.

*Example: Hapsburg Spain fought Elizabethan England for political, economic, and religious reasons. Politically, Spain could not stand any rivals. Economically, England was poor and her queen needed income furnished by colonies and raids on the richer Spanish. Religiously, Spain was Catholic; Anglican England supported Spain’s religious rebels in the Netherlands and Protestant enemies in France. Eventually, England would win and go on to have the world’s largest empire and face her own revolts and rivals.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **POLISHING TIPS**

There are several other tips to writing a superior essay. Each is listed below. Read the following prompt and thesis sentence.

**Based on the documents, analyze the South Asian impact on and interactions with Southeast Asia during the Post-Classical period.**

*In the early history of Southeast Asia around 200 BCE, interactions between Southeast and Southeast Asia already centered on trade and exchanges of goods. As the Post-Classical Age began and ended, South Asian exchanges expanded to include not only trade but warfare, movement of peoples and exchanges of ideas including philosophies and world views; all had significant local impacts.*

### **PART A: PARALLEL STRUCTURE AND INTERNAL ORDER**

Parallel structure organizes subsequent paragraphs based on the internal order of ideas outlined in the thesis sentence. When students write thesis sentences, *they should put their stronger points first and weaker points last*. Read the thesis above. Circle and number the points. Write the exact order below.

### **PART B: NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS IN A DBQ**

At the minimum, students need four paragraphs – the thesis, the conclusion, and at least two if not three body paragraphs. The body paragraphs should not conflate ideas into one paragraph. Different themes should be separated into their own paragraphs. The number of paragraphs should match the number of points in your thesis plus introduction and conclusion paragraphs. Based on the above thesis sentence, how many paragraphs would an essay require?

### **PART C: TIME TO PREPARE, TIME TO WRITE, TIME TO CORRECT**

Students have one hour to read and to write the essay. Within this time, you must read and structure your essay. Spend fifteen minutes reading and organizing. Use forty minutes to write. But save time to reread the essay and to make corrections. Check to see that you have addressed all portions of the prompt. If you have left something out, and want to add ideas, insert them in the margin or at the end of the essay but find some way to tell the reader where the new portion goes.

**DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION:  
SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING THE POST-CLASSICAL ERA**

**DIRECTIONS**