**Instructions for Document Based Question of the AP Test (DBQ)**

1. The Particulars
   1. Students will write one essay.
   2. The DBQ will be scored on a 0-7-point analytic rubric.
   3. They suggest you spend 60 minutes on the DBQ. There is a suggested reading period of 15 minutes, use it. The writing time for the DBQ would therefore be 45 minutes.
      1. Proctors are instructed to not communicate to you when the 15 minute planning period and the 60 minute writing period are over.
   4. Will be on topics from Periods 3-8. (1754-1980)
   5. The DBQ is 25% of your AP exam score.
2. Structure of the Essay
   1. **Thesis**: (1 point)
      1. It must respond to what the question asks, addressing all parts of the question. It must be a defensible claim. It cannot simply restate the question.
      2. It is important for your thesis to contain **WHY** you have reached the conclusion about what the question asks.
      3. E.g. If the question asks if Jefferson was an effective president. Your thesis must answer the question… “Jefferson was an effective president.” This, however, is not enough. Tell me why he was effective. “Thomas Jefferson was an effective president because his expansion policy and his strong belief in limited federal government helped to strengthen America.”
      4. Your thesis should be the last sentence(s) in the intro.
      5. **Historical Thinking Skills** - Apply historical thinking skills as directed by the question in your thesis and as the structure of the essay. There are three types of historical thinking skills that you might encounter in a DBQ. They are…
         1. Comparison – describe similarities AND/OR differences among historical events
         2. Causation - Describes causes AND/OR effects of a historical development
         3. Continuity and change over time - Describes historical continuity AND/OR change over time
   2. **Contextualization:** Accurately and explicitly connect the argument to broader historical events, developments or processes from the time period. This is worth 1 point.
      1. Usually placed in the introduction. That’s where I would put it.
      2. Provides the reader information as to what is happening in the region, in America, or in the world in the same timeframe as the question to establish some frame of reference for the reader.
      3. To get the point you cannot simply write a phrase. You must write an explanation of the context typically consisting of multiple sentences.
      4. The context must use information outside of the documents.
   3. **Complex Analysis and Reasoning:** Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the question, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question. This is worth 1 point.
      1. You will want to put this in one of your body paragraphs.
      2. You only need to do this once in your paper.
      3. This should not simply be a one sentence statement. It should be about three to five sentences demonstrating that you have a fairly complex understanding of the topic.
      4. Make sure you connect what you say to the argument that you are making.
      5. So, how can you do this? Do one of the following…
         1. Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables.
            1. Discuss some of the things that you learned that demonstrate your knowledge of the period, support your argument and are insightful. Don’t just list a bunch of facts, discuss what was happening historically, how people thought, and relate it to your thesis or argument(s).
            2. For example, if you are discussing the colonial angst toward taxes in the pre-revolution period, specifically the Tea Act, you might want to expound on that by discussing how it was not simply the tax that led to colonial frustration, but the monopoly that the British created and how that could establish a precedent that would give parliament the authority to create more monopolies.
         2. Reflecting the historical thinking skill of the question, explain
            1. both similarities and differences or
            2. both continuity and change, or
            3. both causes and effects.
            4. The question will likely ask for one, for example a question might ask for the causes of a war. To fulfill the complex knowledge requirement, you might want to discuss the impact or unintended consequences of the war to reflect an effect.
            5. Tie this to the thesis.
         3. Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods
            1. Compare what you are arguing to another time period in American history (or something that had an impact on American history). Tie it to your argument or thesis.
            2. For example, the sentiments of the Revolutionary-era American colonials could be compared to the feelings that Southerners felt during the secessions of 1860-1861 …breaking from a tyrannical government.
         4. Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes.
            1. This would reflect using a different historical genre to corroborate your argument.
            2. E.g. if you argued that the creation of a national bank was harmful to the United States from an economic perspective, you could cite evidence to support that claim by using cultural evidence and say that the bank led to the formation of American industry, taking men out of the home and forcing women into gender roles that ultimately led to economic stagnation.
         5. Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence
            1. You would be addressing the opposite side of the argument.
            2. E.g. You might argue that the Louisiana Purchase was a positive for the formation of America in that it allowed us to expand and removed a foreign power from our borders. But, on the other hand, it did not have federalist support as they felt it violated the Constitution since Jefferson did not get Congressional approval and the territory would not likely be part of the US in the future.
   4. **Document Analysis**:
      1. The DBQ will have seven documents to analyze.
      2. There are three points to be earned associated with document analysis.
      3. Analyze your documents in the body paragraphs. Never analyze them in the introduction or conclusion.
      4. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, EVER, under any circumstances, quote from the documents, whether they be a picture or written document. You will earn 0 analysis points if you do this. Make sure you interpret the document and put in your own words your analysis. This is critical.
      5. Do not analyze the documents in numerical order. Logically organize them into the body paragraph that best reflects the document.
      6. **Evidence from the Documents**
         1. If you describe three documents and connect each to one of the arguments that you are making to address the question, you will get 1 point. The response must accurately describe — rather than simply quote — the content from at least three of the documents. This is undesirable, you can do better.
         2. If you describe at least six documents and connect each to one of the arguments that you are making to address the question, you will get 2 points. 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. This is what you want.
      7. **Analysis and Reasoning**
         1. Your analysis must include one of the following for three of the documents. Explain the significance of the author’s context, audience, purpose or point of view. Only choose one of these to analyze. (Think CAPP to remember) This is worth 1 point.
            1. C – Context – Where and when was the document produced? What events of the time may have influenced the author’s viewpoint? How does the context affect the reliability of the document?
            2. A – Audience – who is the intended audience of the author? How might the audience have influenced the author’s message? How might the audience have affected the reliability of the document?
            3. P – Purpose – Why did the author create the document? Why was the document created at this time? How does the purpose affect the reliability of the document?
            4. P- Point of View - What is the author’s point of view; what beliefs does he hold? Does the author’s point of view have an impact of the reliability of the document? Is the document biased? How can you tell?
         2. It is beneficial to preface this analysis with the type that you’re selecting. For example, “The author’s point of view is…”
   5. **Evidence Beyond the Documents (Outside Knowledge)**: Introduce information beyond what is included in the DBQ documents and explicitly use that information to support an argument you are making in support of your thesis. You are only required to use one example of outside knowledge, however if you can introduce more than one… that can only help. This is worth 1 point.
      1. If you introduce no outside knowledge, you’ll get 0 points
      2. If you introduce outside knowledge that is not relevant to the question, you’ll get 0 points.
      3. To get the point the outside knowledge must be relevant to the question and it must support one of the main points (arguments) that you are making to prove your thesis, so it should go in a body paragraph.
      4. You only need to have one piece of evidence outside the documents.
      5. You cannot use the same information that you use in your contextualization or complex reasoning as your outside knowledge.
3. **Side Notes about DBQs**
   1. Do not reference the document by the document number in your writing. For example, do not say “In document 1, Jefferson ….” If you want to introduce the document, use the author’s name. “Jefferson’s perspective, in his Wall of Separation letter…”
   2. Having said that, make sure that you add a parenthetical notation for each document you analyze at the end of your analysis. AP readers like this. For example, “In Jefferson’s letter to Madison, his audience is clearly a fellow Democratic-Republican who undoubtedly affirms Jefferson’s views… (Doc 1).”
   3. Do not stack documents when analyzing them. Treat each document individually. For example, you do not want to say, “Both Webster’s letter to Madison and the political cartoon detailing the embargo act both clearly give the reader the impression that the embargo act was unjust…” You want to analyze each document separately.
   4. Stay within the scope of the question. If the question asks you to analyze the American colonies between 1763 and 1776, do not discuss policies or events outside of that timeframe. E.g. you would not want to analyze the Constitution (1789).