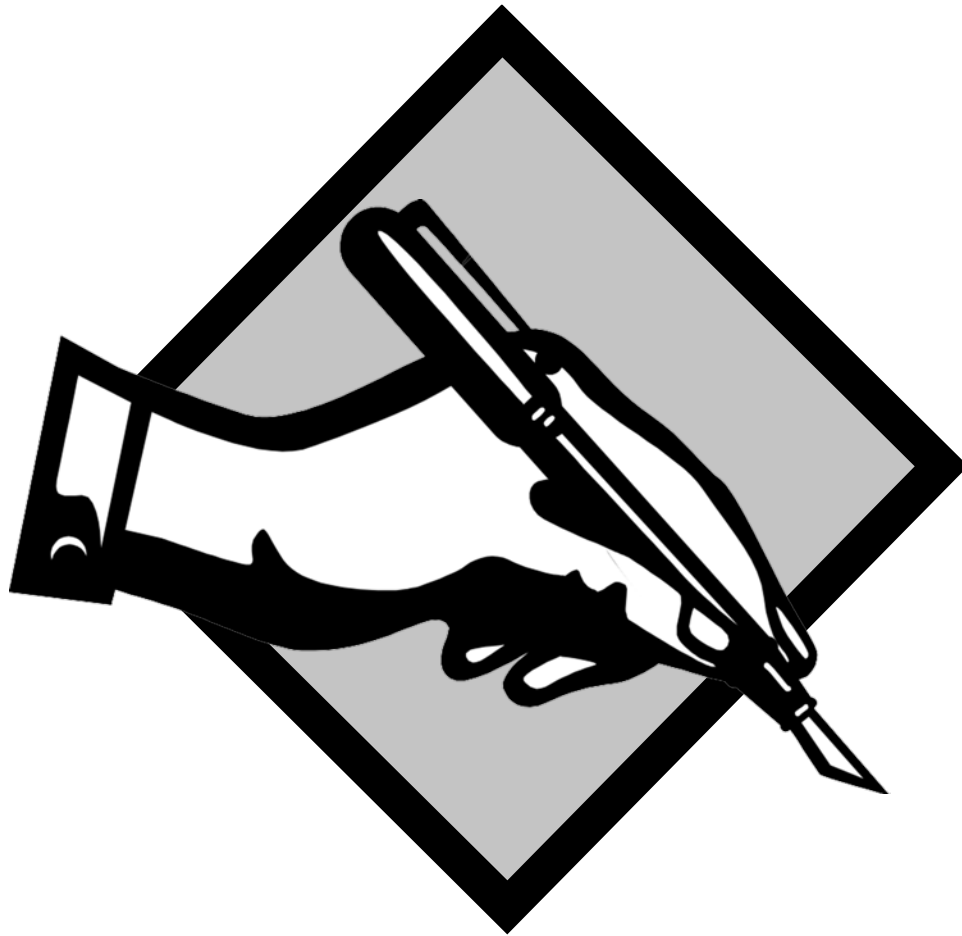# Writing in AP U.S. History
Updated for 2018

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A Bit O' Irish

APUSH Essay Writing Guidelines and Tips

The AP U.S. History Exam is 3 hours and 15 minutes long and includes both a 100-minute multiple-choice / short-answer section (Part I) and a 95-minute free-response section (Part II). Each section is divided into two parts, as shown in the table below. Student performance on these four parts will be compiled and weighted to determine an AP Exam score. The majority of the score comes from writing. This document outlines some basics to approaching and conquering the LE (Long Essay) and DBQ (Document Based Question).

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Timing	Percentage of Total Exam
I	Part A: Multiple-choice	55 questions	55 minutes	40%
	Part B: SAQ	4 questions	50 minutes	20%
	BREAK			
II	Part A: DBQ	1 question	55 minutes	25%
	Part B: LEQ	1 question (chosen from a pair)	35 minutes	15%

College Board Historical Thinking Skills… these are the skills you will employ when writing your essays

Historical Argumentation: Historical thinking involves the ability to define and frame a question about the past and to address that question by constructing an argument. A plausible and persuasive argument requires a clear, comprehensive and analytical thesis, supported by relevant historical evidence—not simply evidence that supports a preferred or preconceived position. Additionally, argumentation involves the capacity to describe, analyze and evaluate the arguments of others in light of available evidence.

Use of Relevant Historical Evidence: Historical thinking involves the ability to identify, describe and evaluate evidence about the past from diverse sources (including written documents, works of art, archaeological artifacts, oral traditions and other primary sources), with respect to content, authorship, purpose, format and audience. It involves the capacity to extract useful information, make supportable inferences and draw appropriate conclusions from historical evidence while also understanding such evidence in its context, recognizing its limitations and assessing the points of view that it reflects

Contextualization: Historical thinking involves the ability to connect historical developments to specific circumstances in time and place, and to broader regional, national or global processes.

Interpretation: Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, analyze, evaluate and create diverse interpretations of the past — as revealed through primary and secondary historical sources — through analysis of evidence, reasoning, contexts, points of view and frames of reference.

Synthesis: Historical thinking involves the ability to arrive at meaningful and persuasive understandings of the past by applying all the other historical thinking skills, by drawing appropriately on ideas from different fields of inquiry or disciplines and by creatively fusing disparate, relevant (and perhaps contradictory) evidence from primary sources and secondary works. Additionally, synthesis may involve applying insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances, including the present.
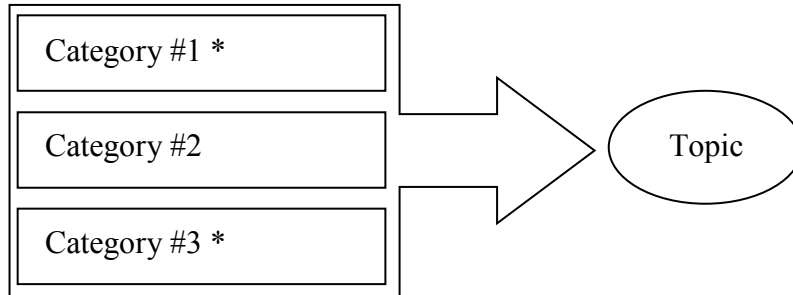
The Big Three Archetypes

1. Historical Causation (Cause or Effect): CE

Prompt: Evaluate the relative importance of causes/effects which . . .

Step One: Organize the causes/effects around three Themes or Categories (connect to the Learning Objectives).

Step Two: Rank or prioritize the categorized causes/effects in order, determine the two major causes (*) and the one minor cause.

Step Three: Within the body of your essay, you must address why these were the causes/effects of the topic under investigation.

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Category #1 *              │
├─────────────────────────────┤                    ⬭
│  Category #2                │   ⟹              Topic
├─────────────────────────────┤
│  Category #3 *              │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

Sample Essay Prompts:

Evaluate the extent to which politics led to the American Revolution.

Evaluate the extent to which the development of a National Identity resulted from the American Revolution.

Evaluate the relative importance of causes which led to a change in American Foreign Policy in the second half of the 19th century.

NOTE: You will ONLY be asked to write on either cause or effect, NOT both.

2. Historical Continuity and Change Over Time: CCOT

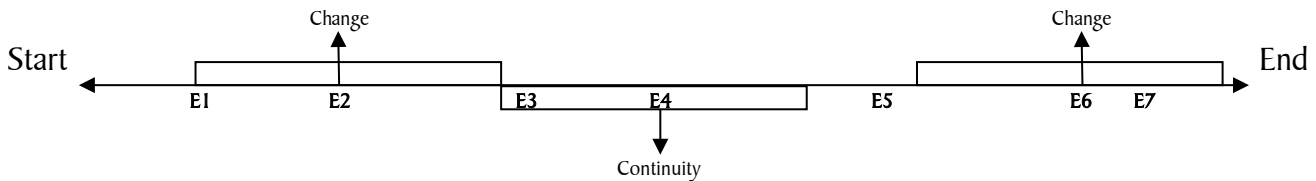Prompt: Evaluate the extent of change/continuities of . . .

Step One: Label start and stop dates on timeline.

Step Two: Identify significant events (5-7) on the timeline, related to the topic and address all aspects of the date range.

Step Three: Determine whether there was MORE continuity or change within the period.

Step Four: Select three of the most significant events. Make sure you maintain the 2/1 ratio (e.g., if you are arguing there were more continuities, then you need 2 examples of that, for 1 change, etc.). Make sure you address the beginning and end of the date range.

Step Five: Within the body of your essay, you must address why there were continuities and changes.

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              Change                                      Change
                ↑                                           ↑
Start  ┌────────┼────────────────┐        ┌────────────────┼────────┐   End
  ◄────┼────────┼────────┬────────┼────────┼────────┬───────┼────────┼───►
      E1       E2       E3       E4       E5        E6      E7
                                 ↓
                             Continuity
```

Sample Essay Prompts:

Evaluate the extent of change in the lives of American women from 1800 to 1860.

Evaluate the extent of continuity in American policy with regard to expansion from 1800 to 1860.

NOTE: You will ONLY be asked to write on either change or continuity, NOT both.

3. Historical Comparison (Compare and Contrast): CC

Prompt: Evaluate the extent of similarities/differences between _____ and _____ . . .

Step One: Bisect your Venn diagram in half and organize the similarities and differences around two Themes or Categories
(Connect to the Learning Objectives).
Step Two: Determine whether there are more similarities or differences between the two concepts of the topic.
Step Three: Within the body of your essay, you must address why there are similarities and differences.

Topic   Topic

Topic / Category #1

Topic / Category #2
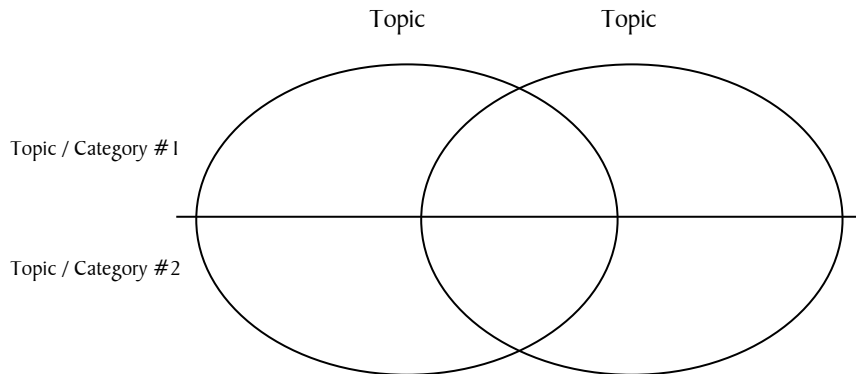
Sample Essay Prompts:

Evaluate the extent of similarities between the Chesapeake and New England colonies.

Evaluate the extent of differences between immigration in the 1840s & 50s with immigration in the 1880s & 90s.
__NOTE__: You will ONLY be asked to write on either similarities or differences, NOT both.

Demonstrating the Skill of Developing a <u>COMPLEX</u> Argument: the "X" Statement

One point on the LEQ and the DBQ rubric is demonstrating the skill of developing a COMPLEX argument. This will be accomplished by developing an "X" statement and incorporating that statement into one of the body paragraphs.

<u>CAUSATION</u>: the "X" statement for a causation essay will come in the form of explaining either causes/effects by incorporating multiple causes/effects; by ranking them and showing multiple variables which brought about those causes/effects the student will be adding complexity for the topic under investigation.

<u>CONTINUITY AND CHANGE</u>: the "X" statement for a CCOT essay will come in the form of a counter-example, students will be asked to discuss either continuities or changes, the "X" statement will add complexity to the essay by adding either continuity or change and arguing which had more significance for the topic under investigation.

<u>COMPARISON</u>: the "X" statement for a comparison essay will come in the form of a counter-example, students will be asked to discuss either similarities or changes, the "X" statement will add complexity to the essay by adding either similarities or differences and arguing which were more common for the topic under investigation.
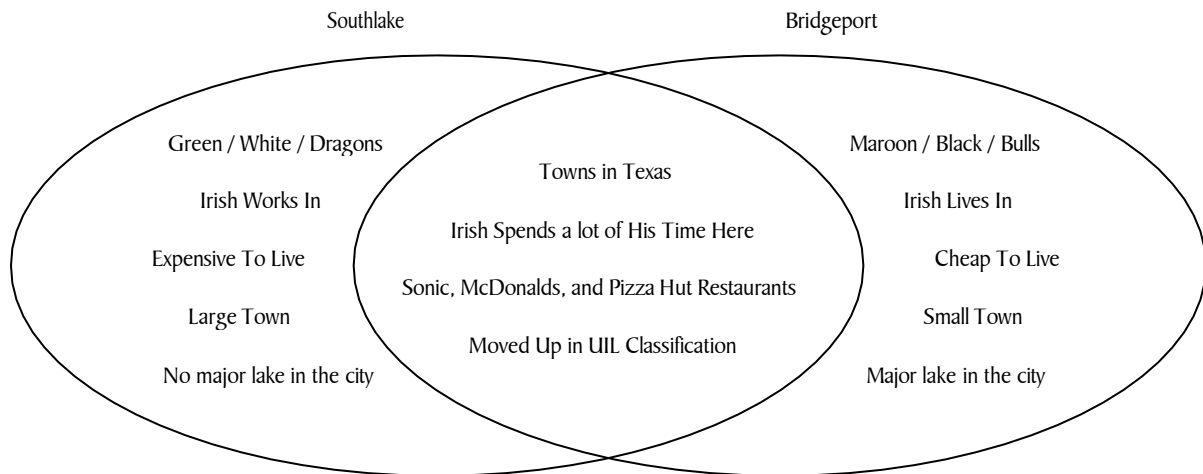
The <u>Thesis</u> Statement (3/4 solid sentences) – What Is It?

The Thesis Formula: X. However, A and B. Therefore, Y. ***<u>NOTE</u>***: These are not necessarily standalone sentences, they are ***<u>concepts</u>***.
'X' represents the strongest point against your argument. We call this the counter-argument (it does not have to be a counter-argument, it can qualify as well).
'A and B' represent the two strongest points for your argument. We call these your organization categories.
'Y' represents the position you will be taking – in other words, your stand on the prompt.
<u>NOTE</u>: INCLUDE MODIFYING ADVERB in your assertion with regard to the prompt.

Let's take a look at a basic prompt, a simple way to set up the essay, and a sample of a thesis statement. In a compare / contrast essay your argument is whether there are more similarities or more difference between the two things under investigation.

Prompt: Evaluate the extent of similarities between the towns of Southlake and Bridgeport.

Southlake   Bridgeport

Green / White / Dragons   Towns in Texas   Maroon / Black / Bulls

Irish Works In   Irish Spends a lot of His Time Here   Irish Lives In

Expensive To Live   Sonic, McDonalds, and Pizza Hut Restaurants   Cheap To Live

Large Town   Moved Up in UIL Classification   Small Town

No major lake in the city   Major lake in the city

Thesis Statement: Southlake and Bridgeport are both towns in Texas that have similar eating restaurants and will face the similar challenges of moving up in UIL classifications this year. However, the locations and size of each city vary greatly, they have different mascots and school colors, and Irish spends different parts of his day in different capacities within each town. Therefore, despite some common features, Southlake and Bridgeport are incredibly different cities. (thesis)

<u>Levels of Specificity</u> / Developing a Summary Statement – How Much Do I Say?

How much specificity to include in the Summary Statement should be a balancing act, on the one hand, you don't want to be too general (Level Three Generalization), but on the other hand you don't want to be too specific (Level One Specification). Let them know where you are going, but don't give away all your information. We want the reader to keep reading! We will call the right amount of specificity **Level Two Specificity**.

Consider the following prompt:

Evaluate the relative importance of causes which led to an American Revolution.

Level Three Thesis (not enough): The economic factors were considered improper by the Americans. However, the political and social conditions caused more anger and frustration. Therefore, while economic factors were important, political and social factors were significantly more important in bringing about the American Revolution. (thesis)

Level Two Thesis (just right): The taxes which were implemented following the French and Indian War were viewed by Americans as improper and unfair, leading to anger and frustration. However, it was the denial of basic political rights along with a beefed up presence in enforcing policies which had long been ignored which gave rise to a new sentiment within the American conscience. Therefore, while economic factors like taxes were important, political and social factors were significantly more important in bringing about the American Revolution. (thesis)

Level One Thesis (too much): The Stamp Act, Tea Act, and Intolerable Acts were very harsh on the Americans which led to great anger and frustration. However, "no taxation without representation," the Admiralty Courts, enforcement of the Navigation Act to counter piracy and smuggling, the Quartering Act, and the Boston Massacre, were important factors which caused more stress on the Americans. Therefore, while economic factors were important, political and social factors were significantly more important in bringing about the American Revolution. (thesis)

Contextualization (Broader Context) – the <u>Opening & Closing Paragraph</u> (3/4 solid sentences)

Pre-Contextualization (OPENING PARAGRAPH)

This is to set the stage of the essay. It should include information that came BEFORE the essay topic, a good rule of thumb would be about 20 years prior to the event. It should be immediately relevant to the essay topic. It is not just random events, dates, facts, etc., it is information that establishes the relative historical context of the essay. Pre-contextualization of the essay comes in the opening paragraph (along with the thesis) and should NOT be a separate paragraph. It is the first 3/4 solid sentences of the opening paragraph.
How to understand pre-context:

"Previously on . . . " – many TV shows give you a glimpse into what were on the previous shows, to help give you context to the current show you will be watching. You should NOT say "previously on . . ." instead this is a way of helping you understand what it is that you need to convey to the reader.

Post-Contextualization (CLOSING PARAGRAPH)

This is to continue the thought of the essay. It should include information that came AFTER the essay topic, a good rule of thumb would be about 20 years following the event. It should be immediately relevant to the essay topic. It is not just random events, dates, facts, etc., it is information that continues the relative historical context of the essay. Post-contextualization of the essay comes in the closing paragraph. It is the ONLY thing that occurs in your conclusion, It is also 3/4 solid sentences.
How to understand post-context:

"Next time on . . . " – many TV shows give you a glimpse into what will happen on the next show. In the history essay this is to demonstrate that you understand the historical significance of the event and recognize that issues, problems, etc. simply don't end with the conclusion of the event. You should NOT say "next time on . . ." instead this is a way of helping you understand what it is that you need to convey to the reader.

How to <u>USE the Documents</u> in the DBQ?

The most unsophisticated way to reference a document in a DBQ essay is to do the following, "According to 'Document 1' blah, blah, blah." "Document 1 says this, document 2 says this . . . etc." Instead, you should show the reader that you ***understand*** the documents and more importantly you understand the content of the document and employed it properly within the argument of your paper.

DO NOT Quote the documents. In order to get full credit (2 points) for document usage on the DBQ, you must be ***HIPP*** and you must use ALL of the documents. Document usage in the DBQ will include (at least one of the levels of analysis must be employed):

H: historical context; I: intended audience; P: purpose; P: point of view.

It would look like: "The Clayton Antitrust Act was passed under Wilson's administration when progressives were desperately seeking help in enforcing anti-trust legislation under a relatively inefficient Sherman Antitrust Act. The purpose was to give some enforcement power over anti-trust legislation to the federal government, even though the actual usage of the law was used against labor unions. (doc 1)"

How to <u>Bring in Outside Information</u> (3/4 solid sentences) in the DBQ?

Evidence BEYOND the Documents equals one point on the DBQ rubric. The example must be different from the evidence used to earn other points on the rubric. The point is not awarded for merely a phrase or reference. **Responses need to reference an additional piece of specific evidence and explain how that evidence supports or qualifies the argument.** This is not simply name-dropping; you cannot just rattle off a list of proper nouns expecting to receive OI credit. You also cannot give context to a document and expect to get OI credit; this is a much larger element. This is bringing in something, not found in the documents, which is used to help support your overall argument. It does NOT have to be a separate paragraph; it can be used to support either your X or A/B (preferred) paragraphs, but needs to be a substantial contribution to the overall argument.

Substantial contribution = 3/4 solid sentences, which add to the main point you are making.

As with other parts of the DBQ, you will also reference this at the end of the usage in a parenthetical reference. (outside information)
The ***required references in the DBQ essay*** are as follows: (contextualization), (thesis), (documents), and (outside information).

The Thesis Statement – What are you defending?

Your thesis is not only your answer or stand on a question, it is you entire introductory paragraph which includes your answer/stand, analysis of an opposing viewpoint, context, and organizational categories/themes. Your introduction will typically be between 2 and 5 sentences, and it should clearly communicate your answer/stand and what you will be expounding upon in your body paragraphs.

Thesis Formula:

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

OR

Although X, Y because ABC.

'X' represents the strongest point against your argument. We call this the counter-argument.
'A, B, and C' represent the three strongest points for your argument. We call these your organization categories. 'Y' represents the position you will be taking – in other words, your stand on the prompt.

For example, if you were addressing the prompt, "Evaluate the extent to which westward migration in the later 19th century contributed to maintaining continuity as well as fostering change in the United States," your thesis might include the following:

Y: led to dramatic changes
ABC: geographically, economically, and politically
X: maintained continuity culturally

Weak Thesis: Although westward migration maintained continuity, it fostered change to a greater extent because of changes in politics, economics, and geography.

Strong Thesis: Although westward migration in the later 19th century propagated the spirit of manifest destiny and white dominance, the movement westward fostered change to a greater extent than it maintained continuity. Change came economically with new technology, resources, and labor, politically with new, western political organizations and agendas, and geographically with dramatic changes to the environment.

Overkill Thesis: Although westward migration in the later 19th century maintained continuity in that it propagated the spirit of manifest destiny and white dominance by enclosing the territories between east and west as well as implementing the Reservation system, the movement westward fostered change to a greater extent than it maintained continuity. Change came economically as new technology, resources, and labor expanded production and opportunity, politically as farmers faced new problems and formed new organizations which influenced state and federal government, and geographically as new states were added and the environment was altered in many areas with new farming and ranching techniques such as long drives and irrigation systems.

Formulas for the BIG THREE

The formula is essentially the same, but there are different ways to use it depending on what type of question you are answering.

1. **Historical Causation:**
   What are the major causes or consequences of "event" and what were the most important causes or consequences of "event"?
   X = least important cause or consequence, with an explanation why
   A, B, C = most important causes / consequences, explanations why, broken up into organizational
   categories Y = your assertion statement

2. **Continuity and Change over Time:**
   What are the major patterns of continuity or change over the time period and was there more continuity or change over that time period?
   X = continuity or change, your counter-argument
   A, B, C = continuity or change during the specified time period, broken up into organizational
   categories Y = your assertion statement

3. **Compare and Contrast:**
   What similarities and differences are there between the two things, are there more similarities or differences, and why, account for those similarities or differences?
   X = more similar or different, your counter-argument
   A, B, C = similarities or differences between the two things, broken up into organizational
   categories Y = your assertion statement

Body Paragraphs – What are you saying?

Each body paragraph will focus on a category or theme and contain your exposition (defending your thesis) with specific, historical evidence relevant to your topic. Your goal is to have at least three – five specific pieces of evidence for each category or theme. If you are including document analysis, remember you still need outside evidence independent from the documents.

One last thing about your body paragraphs… end each one with "Close the Loop!"

Closing the loop means to explain _how or why_ your evidence supports your thesis… always connect back to your thesis!

How to Reference the Documents in the DBQ

The most _unsophisticated_ way to reference a document in a DBQ essay is to do the following, "According to 'Document 1' blah, blah, blah." "Document 1 says this, document 2 says this… etc." Don't do this!

Instead, you should show the reader that you understand the documents and use them effectively within the argument of your paper. **DO NOT quote the documents.** In order to get full credit (3 points) for document usage on the DBQ, you must be **HIPP*** and you must use **ALL or ALL BUT ONE document**. Document usage in the DBQ will include (at least H + one of the other levels of analysis must be employed):

*H: Historical Context + I: Intended Audience _or_ **P: Purpose** _or_ **P: Point of View**

Suppose you had a document that was excerpt from the Clayton Antitrust Act. Your **HIPP** may look something like this:

H: Historical Context – Progressive Era, President Wilson signed, Act of Congress to limit monopolies
I: Intended Audience – The United States of America (adding new laws) and businesses
P: Purpose - help the government break up trusts/monopolies, fix the problems of the earlier Sherman Anti-Trust Act
P: Point of View – It is in the nation's best interest to support competition and fair business practices, therefore government needs the power to force trusts to bust up

YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE ALL FOUR COMPONENTS… JUST H + ONE OF IPP

What would it look like in an essay? If you had a paragraph addressing ways the federal government implemented progressive reform in the early 1900s, you could include the document like this: "The **historical context** of the Clayton Antitrust Act (1) was passed under Wilson's administration when progressives were desperately seeking help in enforcing anti-trust legislation under a relatively inefficient Sherman Antitrust Act. **The purpose** was to give some enforcement power over anti- trust legislation to the federal government."

Conclusion – How much should you say?

Your concluding paragraph should NOT simply restate your thesis. You want to conclude with higher level analysis; however your conclusion does not need to be extensive. For your essays in this class, your conclusions will have three requirements.

Conclusion Formula: **Therefore, Y + BC. BC is similar/different to OC, because E.**

First: Restating your thesis with broad context… **Therefore, Y + BC.** (one sentence)
BC = Broad Context… what is the _big picture_ within the era you are writing about?

Second: Synthesis… or _Other Context_ (similar in kind but in a different time)… One sentence connecting and comparing, then OC = Other Context… what other time period experienced a similar or different big picture/theme?

Third: Explanation… One sentence explaining _how_ your theme/topic is similar or different than that same theme/topic in a different era. E = explanation (at least one strong piece of evidence to support your comparison)

Long Essay (LEQ) RUBRIC

Thesis: Introductory Paragraph ***Must use thesis formula!*** *X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.* **or** *Although X, Y because ABC.* *Don't forget to ATP!*	◊
States a thesis that **directly** addresses **ALL parts** of the question. The thesis must DO MORE than restate the question, it must have **complex** analysis including opposing viewpoint or evaluation of significance [depending on prompt]	
Support for Argument: Body Paragraphs ***Explain Your Evidence + Close the Loop!*** ***Stay within parameters!***	◊
Supports the stated thesis (or makes a relevant argument) using specific evidence ***from relevant era (at least 3 specific pieces of evidence per paragraph)*** and Clearly and consistently states **how** the evidence supports the thesis or argument, and establishing clear linkages. ***(close the loop… connect back to your thesis!)***	First Point Must Be Earned Before Second Point Possible
Application of Targeted Skill: Body Paragraphs ***Apply the Skill with Evidence!***	
Change Over Time Describes historical continuity **AND** change and Clearly and thoroughly analyzes *at least 3 specific examples* that illustrate **both** continuity and change	◊
Comparison Describes similarities **AND** differences among historical developments AND clearly and specifically analyzes **at least 3 specific reasons** for **BOTH** similarities and differences or, [depending on prompt], and evaluates the significance of the historical developments.	Earned
Causation Describes causes **and/or** effects of historical development and clearly and thoroughly analyzes *at least 3 specific examples* that illustrate cause **and** effect of the historical development	◊
Contextualization & Synthesis: Concluding Paragraph	◊
Use conclusion formula! **Therefore, Y + BC. BC is similar/different to OC, because E.**	First Point
Accurately and explicitly **connects** historical phenomena relevant to the argument to **BROADER** historical events and/or processes.and **Connects** the topic of the question to **OTHER** historical periods, geographical areas, contexts, or circumstances within United States history.	◊

Grade Conversion: 7 = 100 ; 6 = 95; 5 = 90; 4 = 80 ; 3 = 70 ; 2 = 60; 1 = 50   TOTAL: _____

Document Based Question (DBQ) RUBRIC

Thesis: Introductory Paragraph
Must use thesis formula!

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y. or Although X, Y because ABC.
Don't forget to ATP!

◊

States a thesis that **directly** addresses **ALL parts** of the question. The thesis must DO MORE than restate the question, it must have **complex** analysis including opposing viewpoint or evaluation of significance [depending on prompt]

Document Analysis & Support for Argument: Body Paragraphs
Analyze Documents & Use Them To Defend Your Thesis! Cite Docs! Close the Loop! Stay within parameters!

◊

or

◊◊

or

◊◊◊

	Doc. A	Doc. B	Doc. C	Doc. D	Doc. E	Doc. F	Doc. G
a. Offers plausible analysis in support of the stated thesis or relevant argument							
b. Includes extended HIPP analysis (Historical context + *one* of IPP) (not found in source)							

1. Point: At least 4 documents used effectively in category a.
2. Points: 4-5 documents used effectively in both categories.
3. Points: At least 6 documents used effectively in both categories.

Analysis of Outside Information: Body Paragraphs

Additional evidence to defend thesis NOT found in the documents! Stay within parameters!

◊

Offers **plausible analysis** of at least *3 historical examples per paragraph* that go **beyond/outside the documents in support** of the stated thesis or relevant argument; *evidence is beyond outside information in HIPP analysis and is inside parameters,* incorporation of evidence successfully addresses argument using relevant historical thinking skill

Contextualization & Synthesis: Concluding Paragraph

Use conclusion formula!   **Therefore, Y + BC. BC is similar/different to OC, because E.**

◊

First Point Must Be Earned Before Second Point Possible

Accurately and explicitly **connects** historical phenomena relevant to the argument to **BROADER** historical events and/or processes (within parameters of prompt)
and
Connects the topic of the question to **OTHER** historical periods, geographical areas, contexts, or circumstances within United States history. (outside parameters of prompt)

◊

Grade Conversion: 7 = 100 ; 6 = 95; 5 =90; 4 = 80 ; 3 = 70; 2 = 60; 1 = 50

TOTAL: _____

Grade Scale for Essay Scores

DBQ: 7 = 100 – 94 | 6 = 93 – 87 | 5 = 86 – 80 | 4 = 79 – 73 | 3 = 72 – 66 | 2 = 65 – 60 | 1 = 59 – 50

LEQ: 6 = 100 – 90 | 5 = 89 – 80 | 4 = 79 – 70 | 3 = 69 – 60 | 2 = 59 – 50 | 1 = 49 – 40

Forms of <u>Analysis</u> and the <u>Learning Objectives</u> – BAGPIPE (The Themes)

<u>B</u>elief Systems: Culture and Society
- Ideas
- Religion and Philosophy
- Art and Literature
- Cultural Values
- Science
- Morality and Moral Values

<u>A</u>merica in the World: Global Context
- Competition for Resources
- Foreign Policy and Diplomacy
- Expansionism and Imperialism
- Global Conflicts (World Wars)
- Military and Economic

<u>G</u>eography & Environment: Physical and Human
- Climate, Environment, and Geography
- Natural Resources
- Exchanges: plants, disease, animals

<u>P</u>eopling: Migration and Settlement
- Movement to, from, within the U.S.
- Nativism
- Immigrant groups impact on Society

<u>I</u>dentity: Gender, Class, Racial, Ethnic Identities
- Gender
- Class
- Racial and Ethnic Identities
- National and Regional Identities
- Nationalism and Patriotism
- Assimilation

<u>P</u>olitics and Power
- Role of State in Society
- Political Process
- Role of Political Parties
- Struggles over / for Freedom
- Federalism
- Liberty and Rights
- Citizenship
- Authority and Power

<u>E</u>conomy: Work, Exchange, Trade, Technology
- Agriculture and Manufacturing
- Commerce and Trade
- Technology and Innovations
- Labor Systems
- Transportation
- Land Distribution

Tackling the <u>Short Answer Question</u>

- Always label your answer (e.g., (a), (b), (c))
- 3/4 solid sentences per task (so a total of 9 – 12 solid sentences per item)
- IDE: <u>I</u>dentify (Proper Noun), <u>D</u>escribe the PN, <u>E</u>xplain (connect the PN to the task)
- Answer in order
- Stay inside the box
- Always write in PEN and in sentences
- Don't panic, you got this . . .