

# AP European/World History

## How to write a DBQ – Mrs. Rivas

### Pre-Planning - Follow these steps:

1. Read and mark up the question. Circle the command words – analyze, compare, causes, effect. Underline the topic of your entire essay. In other words, if the command is to compare then underline what they want you to compare.
2. Read and mark up each document. The documents will create your arguments which together will create your thesis. You should be able to see common threads connecting one document to another by the time you get to your third or fourth document, sometime even sooner. Make sure you create arguments that answer every part of the question. You should have at least THREE arguments make up your thesis.
3. Keep track of your documents and the ones you want to pair up to create your arguments. Draw and fill in this chart on a blank space in your document packet:

Write in first arg.	Write in second arg.	Write in third arg.
List the docs. that will support this arg.	List the docs. that will support this arg.	List the docs. that will support this

4. Keep track of your documents by listing them and checking off when you have used them in an argument and when you have used them in a POV or CAP. This will remind you that you have to use all SEVEN (7) documents and write FOUR (4) POVs or CAPS. It may look like this:

1.	X	X
2.	X	
3.	X	X
4.	X	X
5.	X	
6.		
7.	X	X

In this example the student has used all documents and written POVS or CAPS for docs 1, 3, 4 and 7.

**Don't do this if you think it will keep you from finishing your essay in the time given.**

5. You may also want to jot down outside evidence next to documents that bring up something that you know something about. Identify key facts that you can connect to what the document is saying to elaborate or add on to its message.

Your Pre-Planning should take 15 to 20 minutes, 30 minutes max. and your document packet should be very messy, filled with all your personal annotations – markings when finished.

## 1. Introduction paragraph – Writing contextualization

In 2 – 4 sentences, provide a context within which the question arises. You should provide specific terminology, vocabulary, places, time-periods, individuals, events, etc. so as to show sufficient knowledge of the event.

For example: Question – Analyze the responses to the spread of Buddhism in China.

Contextualization:

*Buddhism began in India around 500 B.C.E. Its founder, Siddharta Gautama developed this belief as a reaction against what he saw as a strict Hindu faith. The Buddhist faith spread outside of India through trade routes, especially the Silk Roads. Merchants and Buddhist monks travelled along these routes and by the time the Han Dynasty of China collapsed around 200 C.E., Buddhist practices had already reached China.*

## 2. Introduction paragraph – Writing a Thesis

Use the words that you underlined in the question as being the topic of that question and include them in the arguments you can up with after reading the documents. Include time and place in your thesis and if it applies, add a change over time component to it.

Also when writing your thesis:

- Make sure you have an ARGUMENT and COUNTER-ARGUMENT. Try using WADE – While, Although, Even though, Despite to begin your sentence(s). This will force you to include your argument and counterargument in one sentence.
- Make sure you analyze your answer as most questions ask you to ANALYZE something. ANALYZE means to explain HOW or WHY something is happening. BECAUSE is a great word for getting this done. Try also DUE TO, AS A RESULT OF, etc.

For example:

Question – Using the following documents, analyze similarities and differences in the mechanization of the cotton industry in Japan and India in the period from the 1880s to the 1930s.

*While there existed some similarities between Japan and India in the mechanization of their cotton industry between 1880s and 1930s such as the fact that both were able to increase their production but at a high cost since both also produced poor working conditions for their laborers, one distinct difference between them is that while Japan used primarily female workers, Indian used mainly men.*

Coming up with a thesis is a complex step which will take some time but once you are able to do so, the rest of the essay should flow out easier and faster. Be patient and careful in creating your thesis as it will set the rest of your essay in the right direction. How do you know if your thesis will earn the point? Ask yourself:

- Does my thesis answer ALL parts of the question?
- Does my thesis contain SPECIFIC arguments that relate to the question?
- Can all the arguments that make up my thesis BE SUPPORTED BY THE DOCUMENTS PROVIDED?

## 3. Body Paragraphs:

- Begin with your argument or topic sentence. Rewrite the part of your thesis that you will be arguing in this paragraph – only one of your several arguments that made up your thesis.
- Beginning using the documents ONE AT A TIME. Begin with your summary of the main points of your first document for this argument. You may want to say something like.... “According to a German peasant.... (doc. 5).” The parenthesis and number at the end is referencing the source.
- Next, write your analysis. Connect what this person is saying to the argument you are trying to prove in this paragraph. You may want to say something like.... “This shows that....” “This proves that....”
- If it is one of the documents that you want to write a POV or CAP for, do this next before you go on to the next document that supports the argument of this paragraph. (See separate handout on writing POVs and CAPS.)
- Next, write a phrase or a complete sentence that will connect the document you just finished writing about to the document you will be writing about next. You may want to say something like... “The German peasants’ criticism of nobles was also reflected in a document by a French peasant.” Don’t just write the word, “Similarly,....”
- Next, begin your summary/analysis of the new document and follow the same steps listed above.

- When all documents for that argument have been discussed in the paragraph, bring the paragraph to a close. You may want to say something like.... “Therefore, these documents prove that....” “These documents show that....”

#### 4. **Writing body paragraphs – the short version.**

You may want to switch to this format if you are having trouble finishing your essay in the time given.

- Begin your paragraph with the argument you intend to prove and finish the argument by saying something like, “and this can be proven with evidence from documents # 5 and 6.”
- For each document, state how it supports the argument. You may want to say something like.... “Document 7 supports this argument by proving/showing/illustrating that [provide ANALYSIS of this document]. It does this when the speaker makes the point that... [summarize the points the speaker raises IN YOUR OWN WORDS, DO NOT QUOTE.]”
- This is not good writing but if you are pressed for time it’ll help you earn points by getting through the each document much faster and finishing the body paragraphs earlier.
- Remember you still need to add POVs and CAPS and outside evidence

#### 5. **Body paragraphs – adding outside evidence**

You only need to do this once. Choose an argument that you know lots of information about that maybe the documents did not bring up and add it as supporting evidence to your argument. You must do THREE things to get this point:

- Identify the evidence – name – proper nouns or specific vocabulary is usually a sign of a strong piece of evidence
- Describe or define it to show you know what you’re writing about
- CONNECT it to the argument – show how it FURTHER PROVES YOUR POINT

#### 6. **Conclusion Paragraph:**

- Restate your thesis. Don’t simply copy the exact thing you wrote in your introduction paragraph. You have now written out your entire essay so trust that you are much clearer about the topic and so will write a stronger thesis than when you first stated in your introduction.
- Write your synthesis. This is where you take the topic of the question BEYOND the parameters of the question by extending the topic to:
  - Another era
  - Another region
  - Another category. For example, the question asks you to analyze political and economic consequences of an event and in your synthesis you are now including social consequences not asked for in the question.
  - Another discipline such as art history (for AP Euro classes only)
- Tips for synthesis:
  - Connect the topic of your question with what will happen next. What does this lead to? Identify and make the connection.
  - Connect the topic of your question with a similar topic and show similarities and differences between the two.