

AP Euro/World: Historical Thinking Skills - Questions to Ask Yourself

You will be analyzing documents, which may be text-based or images. They may also be primary sources (written at the time the history was happening and therefore written by historical actors themselves) or secondary sources (written by a historian who has a specific interpretation of the event). See if what you are reading (primary or secondary source) helps you find out the following:

Causation:

1. What were the reasons for this event?
2. What factors contributed to a specific pattern or trend?
3. What prompted this person/group to act/react this way?
4. What resulted from this event, pattern or action?
5. What were the short-term effects?
6. What were the long-term effects?
7. What cause seemed to be the most significant?
8. What effect seemed to be the most significant and why?
9. How do the assessments of historians concerning causation differ from those who experienced the event, pattern, or action? Why do you think the difference exists?

Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time:

1. What has changed within a specific time period?
2. What has remained the same within a specific time period?
3. What can explain why some things have changed and others have not?
4. How are continuity and change represented in different types of sources such as graphs, charts, political cartoons and text?
5. What might be the reasons behind different depictions of continuity and change?

Periodization:

1. When discussing a period of history, what are the specific dates or years chosen to begin and end the period?
2. Why were these dates chosen?
3. What are the common characteristics of a time period identified by historians, such as 'the Renaissance' or 'the Industrial revolution'?
4. Why did a source define a specific date as the beginning of a period but another source starts the period with another date?
5. How would choosing a different beginning/end change the story of what happened?

Comparison:

1. How is one development like/unlike another development from the same time/a different time?
2. Why did an event or development affect different groups in different ways?
3. How does a viewpoint (from a historical person or historian) compare with another when discussing the same event or historical development?

Contextualization:

1. What was happening at the time the event occurred or the document was written/created that might have had an influence?
2. What was happening at the specific place where an event occurred? In the country as a whole? In the larger region? In the world?
3. How does a specific event relate to larger processes?
4. How do larger processes shape a specific event?
5. How does the context in which a source is read or viewed inform how it is understood?

Interpretation:

1. What is the main idea, or argument, or the excerpt written by each historian?
2. What is one piece of information from this time period that supports the argument of the historian?
3. What is a piece of evidence that undermines the argument?
4. Why might a different historian make a different argument concerning the same event or development?

See your **SOAPTone** handout for ways of analyzing primary sources.
Include **contextualization** in your analysis of these primary sources.