Sample DBQ paragraphs:

Directions:
Read the THREE sample introductory paragraphs and choose the one that makes the most sense to you. You may use one of them in your essay if you have not been able to come up with one of your own. Also below is a sample of a body paragraph. You may use it if it fits your essay. You still need to write TWO body paragraphs to turn in a completed essay.
Good Luck!

DBQ: Spread of Buddhism in China:

Sample Thesis #1:
The people of China responded in different ways to the spread of Buddhism. While some defended the belief because it offered them comfort and justified sorrow (Docs. 1 and 2), others criticized it as a barbarian cult that would hurt Chinese society (Docs. 4 and 6). Still, others tried to place Buddha on the same level as Chinese philosophers in the hopes that all three could coexist in China (Docs. 3 and 5). [Thesis and three categorical arguments are meshed into one.]

Sample Thesis #2:
Responses to the spread of Buddhism in China varied according to one's place in society [Thesis]. Some Confucian scholars easily sided with the emperor in rejecting the belief as an outside, barbarian cult (Docs. 4 and 6), [Arg #1] while other Chinese scholars praised the belief, agreeing with Buddha, that it had much to offer (Docs. 1 and 2) [Arg. #2]. A third and favorable response came from both Chinese and Buddhist scholars, who attempted to make the Buddhist belief fit in with the already existing Chinese ideologies (Docs. 3 and 5) [Arg. #3].

Sample Thesis #3:
The responses to the spread of Buddhism in China changed according to the political situation of the times [Thesis]. For several centuries after the collapse of the Han dynasty in 220 C.E., people turned to Buddhism because it most likely brought them comfort at a time of great political instability (Docs 1,2 and 3) [Arg #1]. Scholars even attempted to show how Buddhist beliefs were not a threat to Confucianism and Daoism, in the hopes of convincing people that all three could coexist (Docs. 3 an 5). [Arg. #2]. When the imperial structure was restored, people began to see Buddhism as a barbaric culture and a threat to Chinese culture (Docs. 4 and 6) [Arg. #3].
Both Buddhist and Chinese scholars defended Buddhism by trying to show that it was as good as the indigenous beliefs of China: Confucianism and Daoism. [Arg.] “The Disposition of Error” written by an anonymous Chinese scholar [attribution only – not a POV] uses a question and answer format to dispel the popular attacks on Buddhism at the time. The scholar stated that perhaps there could have been more than one sage, and that even though Confucius never mentioned the teachings of Buddha, it was no reason to suspect it was a bad belief. He even excused the monks for remaining celibate by explaining that they had given up wives and children in order to work towards goodness and wisdom (Doc. 3). [Summary of document] His defense of Buddhism was probably not popular by this time and he most likely was able to speak the truth by remaining anonymous, probably to escape punishment. [POV] Four hundred years later, another scholar was still trying to defend Buddha as a sage equal to the Chinese sages: Confucius and Laozi. [Sentence is used to tie one document to the next.] He stated that all three contributed to an orderly society and like the first scholar, [this phrase again attempts to tie to documents together to clearly show grouping] he tried to explain why all three were capable of coexisting in Chinese society (Doc 5) [Summary]. As a Buddhist scholar who is favored by the Tang imperial household, he most likely was looking for a way to defend his Buddhist belief without insulting the beliefs of Chinese emperor and may explain why he placed all three as equals. [POV]. Thus, both Chinese and Buddhist scholars were trying to make Buddhism fit into the already existing Chinese ideologies. [End paragraph with argument you were trying to make with the documents used.]