The Mongol Empire quickly covered the largest territory the world had ever seen. The Mongols’ main strategy in acquiring land was conquering by force, but they also relied on more peaceful methods and their tightly-knit political and social organization. The Mongols attacked villages until complete destruction using their land-based military techniques (docs 1,2,3,7 and 8). Sometimes, they gave civilizations a chance to submit to terms and avoid destructions (docs 6 and 9). He Mongols’ divisions of duties in their society gave them the structure they needed to conquer other peoples in distant lands (docs 4 and 5). Additional documents could come from conquered subjects who would know first-hand, how the Mongols were able to take down entire cities so quickly and their specific strategies.

The Mongols were known for forcefully invading inhabited territories. A compilation of their oral traditions talks about Genghis Khan’s conquests and how he used trickery to destroy cities and slaughter their soldiers (doc 1). This shows how brutal the Mongol warriors could be in their expansion efforts. This is further explained in a document written by Russian monks, who said when the Mongols came to Ryason, they killed almost everybody and violated the women (doc 2). This ruthlessness is explained by Marco Polo’s accounts, which talked about the barbaric nature of their living conditions, sustaining themselves on almost nothing (doc 3). An eyewitness account, reveals that Genghis Khan wiped out a whole tribe for rebelling and allowed neighboring areas to plunder what was left (doc 7). This shows how seriously the Mongols were keeping conquered areas in line, and how forceful and violent they were even after the initial invasions. Their rage is discussed by the Pope who said they laid whole countries in ruined and killed everybody without discrimination (doc 8). This final document exemplifies the forcefulness of Mongol conquest.

One of the Mongols ‘ more peaceful approaches to conquest was to allow cities to surrender to them. According to a Mongol high official, at every opportunity, Genghis Khan used peaceful methods to make his empire prosper (doc 6). This relates to Mongol conquest since whenever possible, Genghis Khan was said to build his empire with a peaceful approach. This concept is explained by the Great Khan himself, in a letter to the Pope. He wrote that he took the lands with permission from the heavens. He said that if the lands paid homage, he would recognize their submission, and if not, they were considered the enemy (doc 9). This is the change regions were given to be taken over without complete destruction.

Divisions of duties in society gave the Mongols organization in order to acquire more territory. According to a Persian historian, they organized their people into groups of 10, where one was a commander, and then for every 10 groups, there was a commander, and so on (doc 4). This shows that . . . .

Teacher comments:
Weakness: All documents were not used (5, 10 and 11). Does not contain a minimum of 6 POV’s [not expected 1st semester]. No additional document point awarded.

Strengths: Since the strongest argument was written first (see body paragraph #1), the student’s score was not terribly affected even though he ran out of time and the essay is incomplete. [Lesson learned: Use the argument that most of the documents seem to support first, so your first body paragraph contains a large portion of the documents.] If he had included another document in his last paragraph, he would have been able to receive the grouping point for having 3 complete groupings. However, because he used 1 document to support the argument of the paragraph, he did not lose points for using docs to support thesis since all 3 arguments were correctly supported by at least one document. You need a minimum of 2 documents for each argument to receive the grouping point and you need at least 3 groupings. But, you only need 1 doc to support an argument to get the support point. However, you cannot support each argument with only 1 document because it will be impossible for you to get the point for demonstrating understanding of all documents and for grouping documents in at least three ways.]

Suggestions for improving your own DBQ Essay:
Review the College Board Rubric.
Review all “how to” and “sample” items on my webpage.
Compare this sample essay with your own.

How the College Board would score this:
Thesis = 1
Additional Document = 0
Addresses all docs and shows understanding of them = 0
Supports thesis with evidence from all documents = 0
Documents are grouped in at least 3 ways = 0 (almost)
POV = 0
The Mongols built their empire very rapidly. They were able to do this because they had a strong military. The military was very well organized (doc 4 and 5). The military was led by a strong group of leaders (doc 1 and 6). The military had a merciless attitude that put fears in their enemies (2, 7, 9). An additional document that might further explain Mongol success would include how the Mongols were able to conquer territories without using violence.

The organization of the Mongol military helped them create their strong military which enabled them to conquer a large territory. All of the army was divided into groups of 10. The overall ruler kept track of 10 commanders. Each of those commanders had 100 soldiers to keep track of and so on. This made for an easy way to ration food (doc 4). The Mongol system of dividing men into groups of 10 showed their organization because this made keeping track of all their men much easier. The organization of the Mongols was also shown in the fact that each person in society had specific jobs. Women were responsible for carrying food and supplying dairy products to the army. Men who were not in the army made weapons and tended to the animals used in combat (doc 5). Giving the people who were not part of the military roles for helping the army showed how well they were organized. Only an organized military would designate specific jobs to each individual citizen. The Mongols were able to conquer lands because of the strength of their military due to how it was organized.

The Mongols’ military would not have been as successful in conquering had it not been for their strong leaders. Genghis Khan proved himself to be a great leader when he defeated the Cathayan army. Although his men were outnumbered, Genghis Khan was able to defeat the Cathayan army by tricking them. He pretended to retreat his army. While the Cathayans chased after him, the part of his army that had been hiding jumped out and attacked the Cathayans (doc #1). This proved that Genghis Khan was not only a strong leader, but an intelligent leader as well. Further showing the leadership of the Mongols was Genghis Khans’ son, Ogedei. Every moment of the day, Ogedei’s thoughts would drift off into how he could improve his empire. Whether it was an enhancement in the military or an improvement in a small village, Ogedei strived to make the Mongols the best they could be (doc 6). This excellent show of leadership helped create a strong military because Ogedei was a perfect role model. The whole society could look up to him and follow his example. Strong leaders helped create a strong Mongol military, which in turn, made them successful at conquest.

The Mongols’ merciless attitude towards their foes helped establish their strong military. The Mongols took over Novgorod in 1238 and killed many civilians and raped many women (doc 2). By doing this, the Mongols struck fear into their opponents. Future opponents would be afraid of them and not even try to fight the Mongols. This merciless attitude was also shown when the Tanggut people tried to rebel against Genghis Khan. Genghis Khan reacted by taking all the Tanggut peoples’ possessions and making turning them into servants (doc 7). This showed that the Mongols would punish anyone who tried to rebel against them. The idea of Mongols having no mercy was supported by Marco Polo. He noted that the Mongols’ military training was extremely rough in their training (doc 9).

**Teacher Comments:**

**Weaknesses:**
Simplistic thesis but completely addresses the question and uses clear writing.
Essay is incomplete – student ran out of time.
Does not show understanding of **ALL documents** because ALL were not used.
No point awarded for explaining additional document.

**Strengths:**
Uses documents well to support argument of the paragraph.
Grouping in each paragraph.
Arguments of each paragraph directly tie back to intro thesis, which thoroughly addresses the question.
Each document is summarized, cited with the # and then analyzed. Documents are connected to each other.

How the College Board would score this:
Thesis = 1
Add’l doc = 0
Addresses all docs and shows understanding of them = 0
Supports thesis with evidence from all docs = 0
Documents are grouped in at least 3 ways = 1
POV = 0