

## **Tips on writing SAQs – Short Answer Questions**

### **West Broward High – Mrs. Rivas**

#### **Basic Info:**

- Part of first ½ of the exam.
- Follows multiple choice section
- 4 Questions in 50 minutes = approximately 12 minutes per question
- 20% of final AP score (DBQ is 25% of your final score and LEQ is 15% of your final score)
- Each question has 3 parts so your maximum score for each question is 3.
- Question having only an A and B section will ask for TWO examples for either A or B, making it a 3-part question

#### **You may have to respond to:**

- a primary source
- a historian's argument
- a data, map, photograph, painting or other non-visual
- a general proposition (era, turning point, event) about history

#### **It will test one or more of your Historical Thinking Skills:**

- Comparison – To what extent are there similarities and differences between two things?
- Causation – What are multiple causes and effects of events? Long-term vs. short-term causes of events
- Continuity and change over time – What has changed and why? What has remained the same and why? How does the change relate to larger historical processes or themes? In other words, is this part of bigger changes that are part of an era?
- Periodization – Why can an event or year be considered a turning point? Why can it not? Why are these years known as the “Age of....?”

#### **As to your writing format:**

- At first glance I should see 3 complete paragraphs – a phrase or a sentence is not an answer
- Stay within the box – nothing written outside the box will be scored
- Write the number you are answering next to the word Question – INSIDE the box

#### **As to content:**

- Follow the prompt. If the question asks for ONE thing then identify and fully explain one thing. Listing a string of things without being able to explain any of them will not give you a point. Instead, list one thing and elaborate on it. Elaborate means to explain.
- Follow the prompt. If the question asks for TWO things you must ADDRESS ONE THING AT A TIME so you still end up with THREE paragraphs. For example, Paragraph #1 “One reason that....” Paragraph #2 “Another reason for...”
- Use specific vocabulary and proper nouns, i.e. shamanism, Visigoths, lateen sail ships, as your evidence.

#### **From easy to hard:**

- Easy – identify – most students get this point – they can recall something
- Moderate – explain - most students can also explain the fact they were able to recall
- Difficult – Connect your explanation to the stimulus or topic of the prompt – this last step is what students tend to not do – BE VIGILENT and CONNECT!

## Examples:

### Unit 1: Stimulus: Map of Roman Empire with arrows showing Germanic and Hun invasions.

Where to go for review of topic: PPT, your textbook, Harkness Seminar questions, additional source used in class - Amsco book, Crash Course video by John Greene found in Livebinders for Unit 2, getafive.com lessons, Freemanpedia website (also in Livebinders for Unit 2 under Great Websites), Key Concepts and more.

- A. Identify and explain the event depicted in the above map (make sure to include the name of the empire).

Answer A - 1:

This map depicts the invasion of the Roman Empire by Germanic people. The fall of Rome was caused by the Germanic barbarians who raided and conquered the weakened Roman lands.

This answer will receive .5 for some attempt at evidence = Roman Empire, barbarians

Answer A – 2:

This map depicts the fall of the Roman Empire which led to the end of the Classical Era. Germanic tribes such as the Visigoths, Vandals and Ostrogoth invaded Roman lands as they were running away from Central Asian nomadic Huns, led by Attila the Hun. This led to the fall of the Western half of the Roman Empire as the Eastern half continued under the new name of the Byzantine Empire.

This answer will receive a full point for identifying and explaining the event with plenty of specific evidence.

- B. Identify and explain ANOTHER external cause for the event depicted in the map.

Answer B – 1:

The spread of diseases

This answer will receive a .5 for some attempt at evidence = spread of diseases. It is only a phrase and so does not qualify for a complete point. Answers must be phrased in full sentences that add up to a short paragraph.

Answer B – 2:

Another external reason for the fall of the Roman Empire was the spread of diseases. Diseases came in through merchants that traded along the Silk Road. These disease pathogens originated with the nomads of Central Asia and spread to both Rome and China. Smallpox and measles led to a loss in the population of Rome which was a factor in the collapse of the empire.

This answer will receive full credit. It is a paragraph with several sentences. It contains specific evidence such as the terms: diseases, merchants, Silk Road, pathogens, nomads, Central Asia, smallpox, measles. It also contains an analysis that connects all this evidence to the original question: "...led to a loss in the population of Rome which was a factor in the collapse of the empire."

- C. Identify and explain ONE internal cause for the event depicted in the map.

Answer C – 1:

One internal cause for the fall of Rome was the recent revolts and civil wars between the Roman people. These civil wars were about the uncertainty about the Roman emperors.

This answer will receive half credit for its attempt to answer the questions with words and phrases like "revolts", "civil wars" and "uncertainty about the Roman emperors." However, this is not enough to count as specific evidence. The student needed to have given specific examples such as,

One internal reason for the collapse of the Roman Empire was the rule of weak emperors. The rule of these bad emperors led to civil wars in the 200s, known as the Third Century Crises. Later, stronger emperors like Diocletian and Constantine tried to save the empire by dividing it in half and moving the capital to the east but it was too late."