

# A Guide for Writing the CCOT Essay

The question may ask you to write about one or several SPICE topics:

(Social, Political, Interregional, Cultural or Economic topics)

Mark up the question

- Underline command words (verbs). What is the prompt asking you to do? *Analyze, describe, identify, etc.*
- Circle topic words (nouns). What is the prompt asking you to do it on? *Political transformations, the role of the state, cultural diffusion, interregional contact, religion, migration, trade, etc*

## Intro Paragraph: BAR

Background sentence (EESPICE) - OPTIONAL

Thesis = **While... Although...Despite...Even though...**

For example:

"While changes such as.... took place in (specify region – see prompt) from (years to years, use the era in the prompt), one thing that remained the same was...."

Roadmaps – these are more specific arguments that set up the categories that will defend your thesis. For example:

R - 1 "One change that occurred in (go beyond naming the region provided in the prompt and show you know the civilization that dominated the region at that time by naming it or even better, name the government that will come to rule during the time period of the question, i.e. Abbasid Caliphate, Ming Dynasty) between (year to year of prompt) was that.... because of...."

R - 2 "Another change that occurred in (region from prompt) between (year to year of prompt) was that... due to...."

R - 3 another change?

R - 4 "A continuity was that.... remained the same, or continued."

Make sure to use key words in the question (prompt) in your thesis so it directly addresses all parts of the question.

You will receive 1 point for having a thesis that contains key words that **qualify** it as a thesis. Even though your thesis point may come from a combination of your thesis and roadmaps sentences, it is possible to write a one-sentence thesis. Qualifiers may include names of specific empires, rulers, ideologies, documents, religions or events (all proper nouns, capitalized words) that are key to pointing out the changes of a particular region during the era of the prompt.

## Body Paragraph #1: You must include the following in every body paragraph:

**(1) Argument - begin and end by restating the roadmap argument in the intro paragraph you intend to prove in this body para.**

**(2) Evidence - List, define, describe and analyze each piece of evidence - try for a minimum of 6 per paragraph**

**(3) Analyze - Be sure to explain why or how the change is happening**

**(4) Contextualize - Compare the change you're proving in this paragraph with what's going on in another region or globally.**

Restate your Roadmap #1 argument. For example: "One change that occurred in (topic of the question) in (region) from (years of the question) was ...." Before, it was.... but due to .... it now became..." Identify specific **evidence** that relates to the topic of this argument.

Evidence includes terms and vocabulary specific to the topic, region and/or era. For example, evidence may include the caste system, quipu, ziggurats, mercantilism, etc. Evidence may also include names of rulers, empires, wars, documents, cities, religious writings or leaders. You must do three things with the evidence – list, define and analyze each by showing how it ties in with the argument you are making in that paragraph. **Define** and **explain** each piece of evidence to show you know it. It is not enough to list evidence such as "Egyptians believed in such things as polytheism, built pyramids and left important writings such as The Book of the Dead." You must show you know what each of these three things were by defining or describing each.

You will receive 2 points for listing and defining at least 6 pieces of relevant and accurate evidence that relates to the topic, region and era of the prompt. This is only a minimum so shoot for more than just 6.

You will receive 1 point for listing and defining at least 3 pieces of relevant and accurate evidence that relates to the prompt and the region or society you chose to write about.

Stay away from pronouns – "they" "he" "she" "it"

Instead use proper nouns – capitalized words

Finish your first body paragraph with the argument you just proved. For example: *Therefore, one change that occurred in (topic of question) in (region) during (years) was that it went from .... to ... because...."*

## Body Paragraph #2 and others:

Repeat the same steps by using your Roadmap #2 argument and so on.

## Last Body Paragraph:

Begin by writing the Roadmap argument that contains your continuity argument. For example: "One thing that remained the same was that...." This may have been due to.... Follow the same format as the other body paragraphs by providing evidence (name, explain and analyze each piece of evidence by tying it back to the argument of this paragraph). Finish the body paragraph by restating the argument you just proved.

**Conclusion:** Now that you've written out the entire essay the topic is well-thought out in your mind so trust that you will write a more comprehensive and analytical thesis than what you may have originally written in your intro paragraph. Re-read the prompt one more time and rewrite your main argument (While, Although, Despite, Even though) and the roadmaps that follow.