

# APUSH Writing Guidelines & Historical Thinking Skills

The AP history courses seek to apprentice students to the practice of history by explicitly stressing the development of historical thinking skills while learning historical content. Students must develop historical thinking skills by investigating the past in ways that reflect the discipline of history, most particularly through the **exploration and interpretation** of a rich array of primary sources and secondary texts and through the regular development of **historical argumentation in writing**.

## A. THE EXAM!

The AP U.S. History Exam is 3 hours and 15 minutes long and includes both a multiple-choice / short-answer section (Part I) and a free-response section (Part II). Each section is divided into two parts, as shown in the table below. A majority of your points will come from writing... and understanding these skills is extremely important in ensuring you are prepared for the prompts! Skills are also necessary in interpreting multiple choice questions.

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Timing	Percentage of Total Exam Score
I	Part A: Multiple-choice questions	55 questions	55 minutes	40%
	Part B: Short-answer questions	3 questions	40 minutes	20%
	BREAK			
II	Part A: Document-based question	1 question	60 minutes	25%
	Part B: Long essay question	1 question (chosen from a pair)	40 minutes	15%

**B. THE SKILLS!** This section presents the historical thinking skills that students should develop in all AP history courses.

The **seven** historical thinking skills are grouped into four categories:

1. Analyzing Sources and Evidence,
2. Making Historical Connections,
3. Chronological Reasoning, and
4. Creating and Supporting a Historical Argument.

Although there are seven skills, there are only three “big skills” students will directly address in their essays. Other skills are important for *how you write* your essays or *how you analyze* multiple choice prompts and short answer questions.

### ***The BIG Three!***

- 1. Historical Causation** (Explaining causes and/or evaluating impact of events)
- 2. Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time** (Explaining how & why things change or remain the same)
- 3. Comparison** (Explaining how and why events are similar and/or different)

The next two pages explain the historical thinking skills. Mastering these skills will enable students to write high quality historical essays, as well as interpret and address multiple choice and short answer questions.

**The APUSH exam requires skill...** regurgitating facts is not enough. Remember **NOT** to simply memorize facts... **you must understand the how and why...** and you must be able to **interpret and explain history on your own.**

Every AP Exam question will assess one or more of the skill-based proficiency expectations as well as one or more of the thematic learning objectives.

# Historical Thinking Skills – The Three Categories for APUSH Disciplinary Practices and Reasoning Skills (2017 Revisions are highlighted)

## Skill Category #1 – ANALYZING HISTORICAL SOURCES AND EVIDENCE

### PRIMARY SOURCES -Analyzing Evidence: Content and Sourcing

*Students will be able to...*

- Describe historically relevant information and/or arguments within a source.
- Explain how a source provides information about the broader historical setting within which it was created.
- Explain how a source's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience might affect a source's meaning.
- Explain the relative historical significance of a source's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience.
- Evaluate a source's credibility and/or limitations.

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, select, and evaluate relevant evidence about the past from diverse sources (including written documents, works of art, archaeological artifacts, oral traditions, and other primary sources) and draw conclusions about their relevance to different historical issues. A historical analysis of sources focuses on the interplay between the content of a source and the authorship, point of view, purpose, audience, and format or medium of that source, assessing the usefulness, reliability, and limitations of the source as historical evidence.

### SECONDARY SOURCES Interpretation

*Students will be able to...*

- Describe the claim or argument of a secondary source, as well as the evidence used.
- Describe a pattern or trend in quantitative data in non-text-based sources.
- Explain how a historian's claim or argument is supported with evidence.
- Explain how a historian's context influences the claim or argument.
- Analyze patterns and trends in quantitative data in non-text-based sources.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a historical claim or argument.

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, analyze, and evaluate the different ways historians interpret the past. This includes understanding the various types of questions historians ask, as well as considering how the particular circumstances and contexts in which individual historians work and write shape their interpretations of past events and historical evidence.

## Skill Category #2 – ARGUMENT DEVELOPMENT

*Students will be able to...*

- Make a historically defensible claim in the form of an evaluative thesis.
- Support an argument using specific and relevant evidence.
- Use historical reasoning to explain relationships among pieces of historical evidence.
- Consider ways that diverse or alternative evidence could be used to qualify or modify an argument.

### Argumentation

Historical thinking involves the ability to create an argument and support it using relevant historical evidence. Creating a historical argument includes defining and framing a question about the past and then formulating a claim or argument about that question, often in the form of a thesis. A persuasive historical argument requires a precise and defensible thesis or claim, supported by rigorous analysis of relevant and diverse historical evidence. The argument and evidence used should be framed around the application of a specific historical thinking skill (e.g., comparison, causation, patterns of continuity and change over time, or periodization). Furthermore, historical thinking involves the ability to examine multiple pieces of evidence in concert with each other, noting contradictions, corroborations, and other relationships among sources to develop and support an argument.

### Argumentation: Using Evidence to Support an Argument

Historical thinking involves the ability to examine multiple pieces of evidence in concert with each other, noting contradictions, corroborations, and other relationships among sources to develop and support an argument.

*(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)*

## **Skill Category #3 AP HISTORY REASONING SKILLS**

### **Contextualization**

***Students will be able to...***

- Describe an accurate historical context for a specific historical development or process.
- Explain how a relevant context influenced a specific historical development or process.
- Use context to explain the relative historical significance of a specific historical development or process.

Historical thinking involves the ability to connect historical events and processes to specific circumstances of time and place as well as broader regional, national, or global processes.

### **Comparison**

***Students will be able to...***

- Describe similarities and/or differences between different historical developments or processes.
- Explain relevant similarities and/or differences between specific historical developments and processes.
- Explain the relative historical significance of similarities and/or differences between different historical developments or processes.

Historical thinking involves the ability to identify, compare, and evaluate multiple perspectives on a given historical event in order to draw conclusions about that event. It also involves the ability to describe, compare, and evaluate multiple historical developments within one society, one or more developments across or between different societies, and in various chronological and geographical contexts.

### **Causation**

***Students will be able to...***

- Describe causes or effects of a specific historical development or process.
- Explain the relationship between causes and effects of a specific historical development or process.
- Explain the difference between primary and secondary causes and between short- and long-term effects.
- Explain the relative historical significance of different causes and/or effects.

Historical thinking involves the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate the relationships among historical causes and effects, distinguishing between those that are long term and proximate. Historical thinking also involves the ability to distinguish between causation and correlation, and an awareness of contingency, the way that historical events result from a complex variety of factors that come together in unpredictable ways and often have unanticipated consequences.

### **Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time**

***Students will be able to...***

- Describe patterns of continuity and/or change over time.
- Explain patterns of continuity and/or change over time.
- Explain the relative historical significance of specific historical developments in relation to a larger pattern of continuity and/or change.

Historical thinking involves the ability to recognize, analyze, and evaluate the dynamics of historical continuity and change over periods of time of varying length, as well as the ability to relate these patterns to larger historical processes or themes.

# WRITING GUIDELINES AND TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ESSAYS!

## 1. THESIS/CONTEXT... THE INTRODUCTION

### **Creating Your Argument... The Thesis Statement – What are you defending?**

Your thesis is not only your answer or stand on a question; it is your entire introductory paragraph which includes your answer/stand, analysis of an opposing or alternate viewpoint, context, and organizational categories/themes. Your introduction will typically be between 2 and 5 sentences, and it should clearly communicate your answer/stand and what you will be expounding upon in your body paragraphs.

### **The Thesis Formula:**

**LC & BC. Although X, Y because AB.**

‘LC’ and ‘BC’ represents the local and broad context of your topic, process, or event. This is “setting the scene” for you essay, and there is a separate point on the rubric for contextualization. Your contextualization needs at least one specific piece of evidence that is not found in the body paragraphs.

‘X’ represents the strongest point against your argument. We call this the counter-argument. It can also be a alternate viewpoint. This X needs to be explained (with evidence) in your introduction.

‘A, B’ represents the two strongest points for your argument. We call these your organization categories.

‘Y’ represents the position you will be taking – in other words, your stand on the prompt. Your Y must be clear and AFTP... *address the full prompt!*

For example, if you were addressing the prompt, “Evaluate the extent to which westward migration in the later nineteenth century contributed to maintaining continuity as well as fostering change in the United States,” your thesis might include the following:

LC: Indian Wars, enclosure of the west, expansion of agriculture and ranching, internal migration

BC: competition over land and resources, continuation of Manifest Destiny

Y: fostered more change than maintained continuity

AB: fostered change geographically and economically to a great extent

X: maintained continuity in the relationship between the government and American Indians

**Weak Thesis:** **There was a lot of westward migration in the later nineteenth century. Although westward migration maintained continuity, it fostered change too.**

*Don't simply restate the prompt... and be sure you have categories and some explanation; i.e. "because..."  
Make sure to give value... was there MORE continuity or MORE change? Take a side!*

**Strong Thesis:** **Westward migration in the 1800s was motivated by agriculture, mining, and ranching. This desire for land and resources continued the conflict created by competition over resources that was a hallmark of American history from the 1600s onward. This relates to the topic of continuities and changes, because in addition to continued Manifest Destiny much of the competition for resources in the later nineteenth century led to many battles which ultimately ended nomadic Indian culture. Although westward migration in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century maintained continuity as the spirit of manifest destiny and white dominance led to completion of the reservation system which began earlier in the century, migration westward in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fostered geographic and economic change to a greater extent.**

*“Set the scene” by describing the context of your topic and/or era. What is going on at this time? What is a key theme? Connect to something you know about the era and explain the local and broad context. This needs to be several sentences, and you must have at least one piece of specific evidence in this portion. AND... your contextualization should NOT defend your thesis. You are simply setting the scene showing the reader that you understand why the topic is historically significant. Before moving on to your thesis, relate your context to the essay. When you explain your X and Y, be sure to have categories and address the prompt directly. If the prompt has a qualifier such as “to what extent,” be sure you directly address it in your thesis.*

## Tweaking the Formula for the BIG THREE Skills

The formula is essentially the same for any type of question, and you can move the variables around. Below you will find some different ways to use it depending on what type of question you are answering. When you analyze a prompt, be sure to identify the skill being tested if it is not indicated in the directions.

### Historical Causation:

What are the major causes or consequences of “event” and what were the most important causes or consequences of “event”?

X = least important cause or consequence, with an explanation why; explained thoroughly with a piece of specific evidence or example

A, B = most important causes / consequences, explanations why, broken up into organizational categories

Y = your assertion statement regarding the most significant causes or consequences

### Continuity and Change over Time:

What are the major patterns of continuity or change over the time period and was there more continuity or change over that time period?

X = continuity or change, what there was less of, your counter-argument explained thoroughly with a piece of specific evidence or example

A, B = continuity or change during the specified time period, what there was more of, broken up into organizational categories

Y = your assertion statement regarding more change or more continuity

### Compare and Contrast:

What similarities and differences are there between the two things, are there more similarities or differences, and why, account for those similarities or differences?

X = more or less similar or different, your counter-argument explained thoroughly with a piece of specific evidence or example

A, B = similarities or differences between the two things, broken up into organizational categories

Y = your assertion statement including more of similarities or differences

## 2. Writing the BODY PARAGRAPHS

***In the Long Essay...*** Each body paragraph will focus on a category or theme and contain your exposition (defending your thesis) with specific, historical evidence and reasons relevant to your topic. Your goal is to have at least two pieces in your body paragraphs that are NOT found in your introduction (contextualization or thesis). I advise you shoot for three to five just in case you do not get credit for some of your evidence. Remember your evidence needs to remain within the parameters of your prompt.

***In the DBQ...*** If you are including document analysis, remember you still need outside evidence independent from the documents. You must have at least one piece of outside evidence in the DBQ body paragraphs... thoroughly explained in several sentences. I recommend you make your outside evidence its own paragraph. For the DBQ, you will also need to extend your argument and analysis by illustrating contradictions, corroborations, and/or qualifications.

***For both... One last thing about your body paragraphs... end each one with “Close the Loop!”***  
Closing the loop means to explain *how or why* your evidence supports your thesis... always connect back to your thesis!  
Closing the loop is a simple thing that makes a huge difference!

### On Accuracy and Clarity:

Remember your essay is graded as a rough draft. There are no penalties for grammatical or spelling errors unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge and skills. If your essay contains factual errors that do not detract from the overall quality, there is no penalty for those errors. Keep in mind, however, that you must have accurate information advancing your argument in order to succeed.

## How to Reference the Documents in the DBQ Body Paragraphs

Most students fail to earn the document analysis points on the DBQ because they simply string together facts they pull from documents which results in story-telling. Never lose sight of your purpose: defending an argument/thesis!

Using documents as evidence requires showing understanding of the content and then applying that understanding to the defense of your argument. Ask yourself questions such as, “How does this document address my prompt?” and “What is this document saying?”

### **DO NOT quote the documents. Go Beyond the Obvious! GBO!**

**It is okay to have separate paragraph for each document, or you may group them.**

**You *cannot* group them in order to *generalize* any one step, however.**

**If you do group them, add a couple of sentences explaining how they corroborate or contradict each other. *This will help you get the complex analysis point.***

**Step 1: Describe the document...** GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS AND DON'T QUOTE. You can say “Document 1...” or use the name of the document. Then... explain how it relates to the main topic of your essay. *Do this for every document, unless you are not targeting the use of six documents point.*

**“Document #\_\_ shows/explains.... This document relates to \_\_\_\_\_ because...”**  
(Identify the number of the document you are describing and describe it GBO.) (Identify the main topic of your essay.) (Explain how or why it relates.)

**Step 2: Use the HIPP strategy to analyze the documents.** Choose 4 to thoroughly source, even though you only need three according to the rubric. Remember you only need *one* of the HIPP.\* Make sure you also explain how you came to your conclusion, showing the reader how or why you came to your conclusion or how you analyzed the document. Then... explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis. (CLOSE THE LOOP) GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS and explain how or why it is relevant to the argument. *Tip: USE THE LINGO!*

**“The \_\_\_\_\_ of document #\_\_ was.... because....”**  
(purpose/POV/audience/context) (Identify doc.) (Describe HIPP.) (Explain how/why the HIPP is evident.)

**This is relevant to the argument that ... because....”**  
(Identify X or Y from your thesis or other relevant argument connected to it.) (Explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis)

**Step 3: Apply your analysis to your essay.** *How does each document support your thesis or support an opposing view?* To get this point you must use *at least six* of the seven documents AS EVIDENCE to support your X or Y. I recommend you use all seven in case you don't get credit for one.

**Start with step 1** (description and explanation of how it relates to the topic), and then **CLOSE THE LOOP.**

***If the document is one of the four you HIPPEd, then start with steps one and two, and then close the loop.***

**“Therefore, document #\_\_ supports the argument that ... because....”**  
(Identify doc.) (State your X or Y from your thesis.) (Explain how or why it supports the argument.)

**\*H: Historical Context , I: Intended Audience, P: Purpose, P: Point of View**

*(an example of how to use these steps is on the next page)*



**EXAMPLE of how to use the three steps to clearly and effectively target all three document points.**

Document from the 2002 Released College Board Exam

Source: Fourth Annual Report, Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents in the City of New York, 1829.

We might feel a pride in the reflection, that our young country . . . was the first to adopt the penitentiary system of prison discipline, and the first to attempt to prevent the commission of crimes, by seeking out the youthful and unprotected, who were in the way of temptation, and by religious and moral instruction, by imparting to them useful knowledge, and by giving them industrious and orderly habits, rescuing them from vice and rendering them valuable members of society.

To confine these youthful criminals . . . where no, or scarcely any, distinction can be made between the young and old, or between the more and less vicious, where little can be learned but the ways of the wicked, and from whence they must be sent to encounter new wants, new temptations, and to commit new crimes, is to pursue a course, as little reconcilable with justice as humanity; yet, till the House of Refuge was established there was no alternative.

**Revised Prompt/Causation:**

Evaluate the extent to which Antebellum Era reforms expanded democratic ideals in the United States.

Step 1, Document Description:

Document #1 explains how prison reform for young people had a positive impact on society, because young criminals were nurtured as children rather than punished as adults. This relates to the topic of Antebellum reform movements, because it illustrates changes made in order to improve society.

Step 2, One HIPP:

The author's point of view in doc. #1 is that Christianity had effective solutions to societal problems. This is evident because the use of moral instruction is proposed as a tool to reform. This is relevant to the argument that reforms expanded democratic ideals, because the liberties of young people were being defended and valued more than they had been before.

Step 3, Supporting the Argument:

Therefore, doc. #1 supports the argument that reforms expanded democratic ideals to a large extent, because young people were provided instruction rather than simply punished for crimes which helped them become good citizens and future voters.

**When using all three steps, it may seem redundant...**

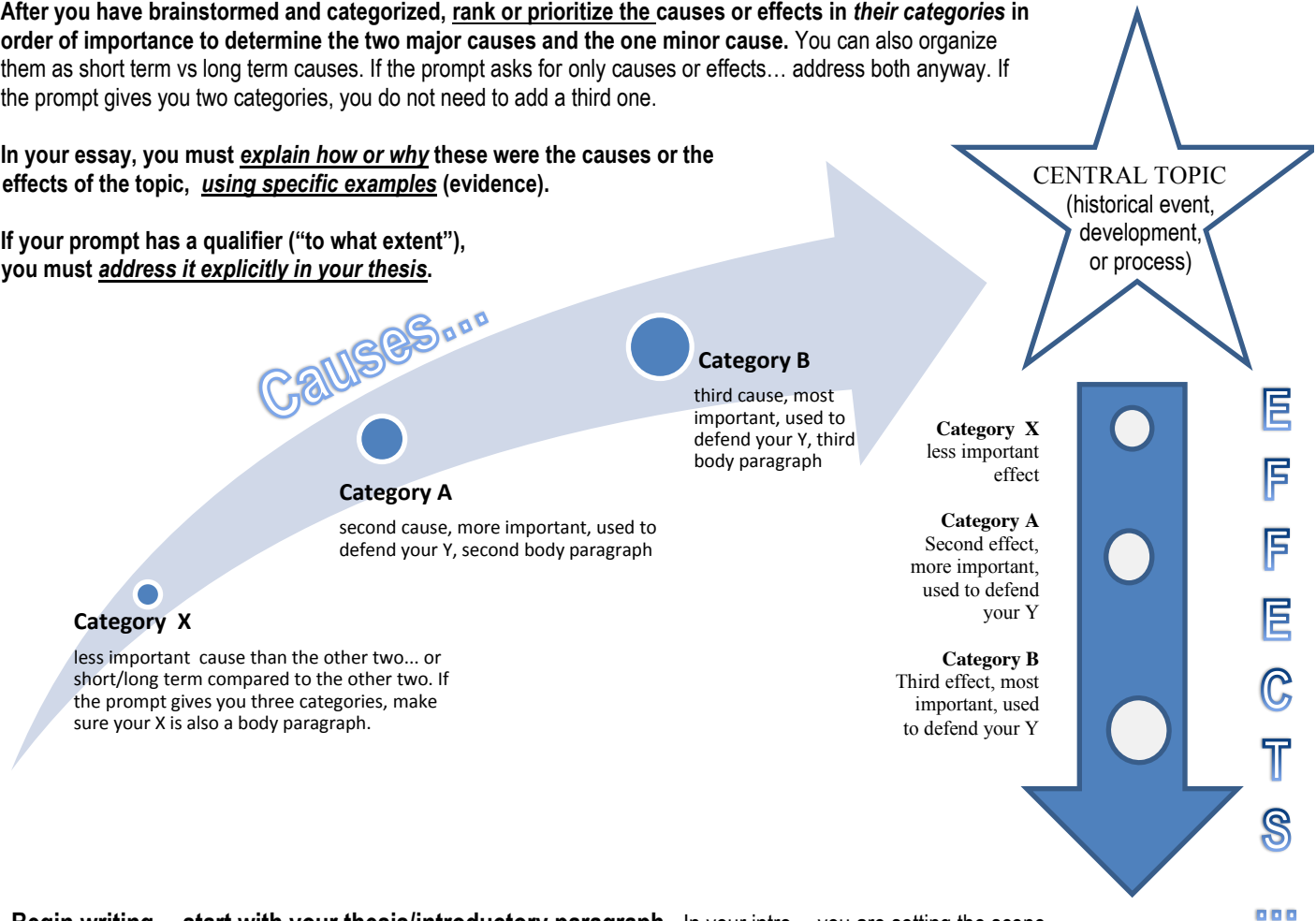
**but keep in mind you will not be HIPPING all of the documents,  
and it is better to clearly target each skill point rather than oversimplifying. ☺**

**Also remember that step 3, the second evidence point which requires successful usage of six documents, is a difficult and time-consuming point to get. Only target it if you are sure you can do it effectively (along with at least three other points) within one hour.**

The 3-Step Strategy is based on the 2017 College Board revised rubric. The strategy aims to help students build basic skills and create a bridge to more sophisticated writing. The example was developed from the 2002 released DBQ. Although we cannot be sure – until the reading – exactly how these skills will be assessed, we can use the rubrics as “directions.” College Board does a good job of telling students what is expected of them in their historical writing, and one of the skills that should be heavily emphasized is following directions! ☺

## Expanded Planning for your Long Essay - CAUSATION

1. Read the prompt **three times**. Make sure you understand your purpose, topic, and skill! Identify your parameters!
2. **Brainstorm...** write down everything you know about the topic/era. Categorize evidence into causes and effects (if the prompt only asks for one... address both sides of the skill anyway). If the prompt gives you categories, make sure they are included in your X and Y. You need specific evidence to back up your argument as well as strong generalizations (reasons) to defend your thesis. Remember you need evidence for your contextualization, your X (opposing view), and at least two within the body paragraphs. (at least four total)
3. After you have brainstormed and categorized, **rank or prioritize the causes or effects in their categories in order of importance to determine the two major causes and the one minor cause**. You can also organize them as short term vs long term causes. If the prompt asks for only causes or effects... address both anyway. If the prompt gives you two categories, you do not need to add a third one.
4. In your essay, you must **explain how or why** these were the causes or the effects of the topic, **using specific examples** (evidence).
5. If your prompt has a qualifier ("to what extent"), you must **address it explicitly in your thesis**.



6. **Begin writing... start with your thesis/introductory paragraph.** In your intro... you are setting the scene (contextualization) and stating your thesis.

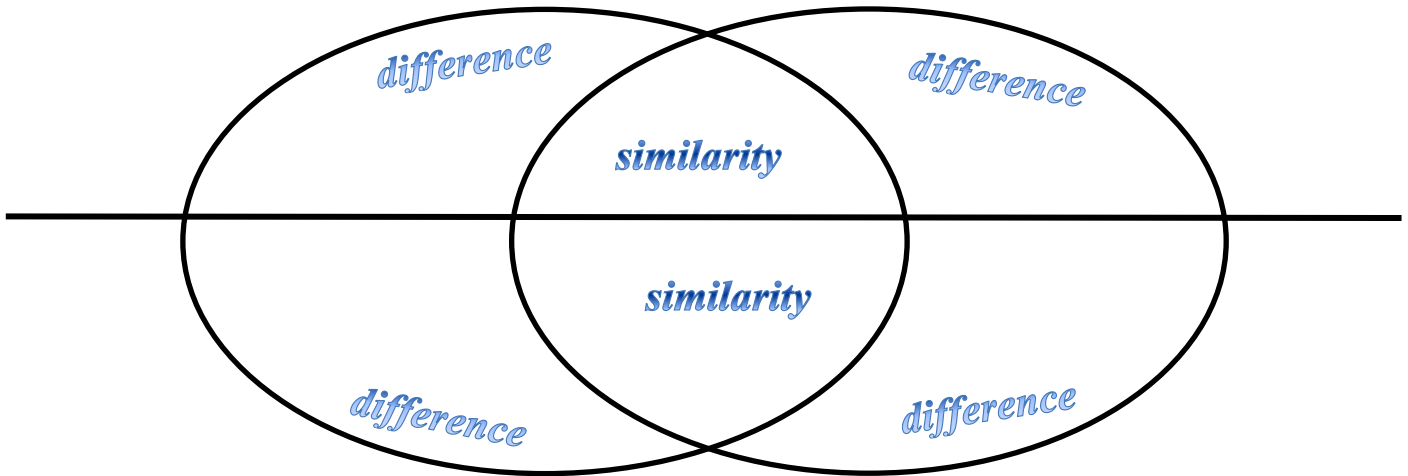
**Thesis Formula:** LC & BC. Although X, Y because AB. ...make sure you AFTP! (Address the Full Prompt-Use the Lingo)  
LC & BC = local and broad context – what your central topic is about  
X = least important cause or consequence, with brief explanation why  
A, B = most important causes / consequences, with brief explanation why (if you only have two categories, then you only have A)  
Y = your assertion statement, including a qualifier if applicable

7. When writing your **body paragraphs**, be sure you have at least 2 **pieces of specific, relevant evident from the era**... AND **clearly connect to your thesis**. You also need **reasons/generalizations for all categories**. Remember to **close the loop!** Your purpose is to **defend your thesis... not to story-tell!** You only need two pieces of evidence in your body paragraphs, but make sure they are NOT mentioned in your introduction/contextualization.



## Expanded Planning for your Long Essay - COMPARISON

1. **Read the prompt three times. Make sure you understand your purpose, topic, and skill! Identify your parameters!**
2. **Brainstorm...** write down everything you know about the topic/era. Categorize evidence into similarities and differences (your X and Y). If the prompt gives you categories, make sure they are included in your X and Y. You need specific evidence to back up your argument as well as strong generalizations (reasons) to defend your thesis. Remember you need evidence for your contextualization, your X (opposing view), and at least two within the body paragraphs. (at least four total) If the prompt only asks about similarities or differences, address both anyway.



3. **After you brainstorm, consider what YOU know... are there *more similarities* or *more differences* for each category? Why?** (consider the reasons and be ready to explain how or why there were more similarities or more differences in your body paragraphs)
4. **In your essay, you must explain how or why there were more/less similarities and differences using specific examples (evidence).**
5. **If your prompt has a qualifier (“to what extent”), you must address it explicitly in your thesis.**
6. **Begin writing... start with your thesis/introductory paragraph.** In your intro... you are setting the scene (contextualization) and introducing your thesis.

**Thesis Formula:** LC & BC. Although X, Y because AB. ...*make sure you ATFP!* (*Address the Full Prompt*) – *Use the Lingo!*

LC & BC = local and broad context – what your central topic is about

X = more similar or different, your counter-argument -- or your alternative viewpoint for argumentation

Y = more similar or different, your assertion statement

A, B = similarities or differences between the two things, broken up into organizational categories (if you only have two categories, then you will only have A)

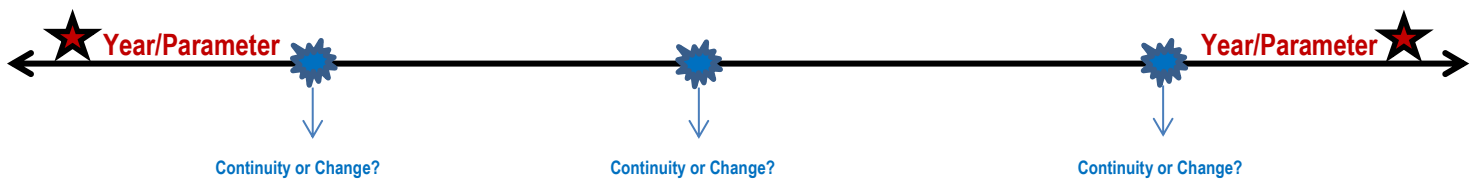
7. When writing your **body paragraphs**, be sure you have at least 2 **pieces of specific, relevant evident from the era... AND clearly connect to your thesis**. You also need **reasons/generalizations for all categories**. Remember to **close the loop!** Your purpose is to **defend your thesis... not to story tell!** You only need two pieces of evidence in your body paragraphs, but make sure they are NOT mentioned in your introduction/contextualization.

## Expanded Planning for your Long Essay – CONTINUITY AND CHANGE OVER TIME (CCOT)

1. **Read the prompt three times. Make sure you understand your purpose, topic, and skill! Identify your parameters!**
2. **Brainstorm...** write down everything you know about the topic/era. Categorize evidence into continuity or change (your X and Y). If the prompt gives you categories, make sure they are included in your X and Y. You need specific evidence to back up your argument as well as strong generalizations (reasons) to defend your thesis. Remember you need evidence for your contextualization, your X (opposing view), *and* at least two within the body paragraphs. (at least four total) If the prompt only asks you about continuities or changes, address both anyway.

Create a timeline including the years defining the parameters of your question. Then, identify **two or three key events** within these parameters that relate to the event/process/development. Place them on your timeline and identify them as illustrations of continuity or change.

MAIN TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_



3. **After you brainstorm, consider what YOU know... Does your evidence reveal *more* continuities or changes? You must discuss **BOTH!** To what extent? Why? (consider the reasons and be ready to explain how or why there were more continuities or changes in your body paragraphs)**
4. **In your essay, you must explain how or why these three events maintained more/less continuities or fostered more/less change in regards to the main topic of the essay... using specific examples (evidence) within the parameters of the prompt.**
5. **If your prompt has a qualifier ("to what extent"), you must address it explicitly in your thesis.**
6. **Begin writing... start with your thesis/introductory paragraph.** In your intro... you are setting the scene (contextualization) and introducing your thesis.

**Thesis Formula:** LC & BC. Although X, Y because AB. ...*make sure you ATFP!* (*Address the Full Prompt*) – Use the Lingo!

LC & BC = local and broad context – what your central topic is about

X = continuity or change, what there was less of, your counter-argument explained thoroughly with reference to one of your events/reasons

A, B = continuity or change during the specified time period, what there was more of, linked to two of your events/reasons (if you only have two categories, then you will only have A)

Y = your assertion statement regarding more change or more continuity (and extent)

7. When writing your **body paragraphs**, be sure you have at least 2 **pieces of specific, relevant evident from the era...** AND **clearly connect to your thesis**. You also need **reasons/generalizations for all categories**. Remember to **close the loop!** Your purpose is to **defend your thesis... not to story tell!** You only need two pieces of evidence in your body paragraphs, but make sure they are NOT mentioned in your introduction/contextualization.

## College Board Directions for the Long Essay Question (LEQ)







(what you will likely see on the AP exam, but may not be identical to what I have here)

In your response you should do the following.

- **Thesis:** Present a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question and presents a line of reasoning.
- **Contextualization:** Situate the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes relevant to the prompt that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question.
- **Application of Historical Thinking Skills:** Develop and support an argument that applies historical thinking skills as directed by the question. (they may identify and describe the skill be tested) Demonstrate historical reasoning and complex understanding of the historical development.
- **Supporting the Argument with Evidence:** Utilize specific examples of evidence to fully and effectively substantiate the stated thesis or a relevant argument.

*On the AP exam, you will NOT be provided with a rubric. Use the directions above to help you link to the essential components on the rubric. Strategically target each point, and use the directions as a checklist.*

### Long Essay (LE) Rubric, 6 possible points

<p><b>THESIS/CLAIM (1 point)</b></p> <p><b>Responds to the prompt with a <u>historically defensible thesis/claim</u> that establishes a line of reasoning. <b>ATFP!</b></b></p> <p><i>To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt, rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.</i></p>	
<p><b>CONTEXTUALIZATION (1 point)</b></p> <p><b>Describes a <u>broader historical context</u> relevant to the prompt.</b></p> <p><i>To earn this point, the response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or a reference. <b>(Three sentences, at least!)</b></i></p>	
<p><b>EVIDENCE -- Support for Argument (2 points)</b></p> <p><b>Provides <u>specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.</b></p> <p><i>To earn one point, the response must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</i></p> <p><b>Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence <b>(close the loop!)</b></b></p> <p><i>To earn two points the response must use specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.</i></p>	 
<p><b>ANALYSIS AND REASONING --Targeted Skill – Argumentation, Causation/CCOT/Comparison (2 points)</b></p> <p><b>Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.</b></p> <p><i>To earn the first point, the response must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to <b>frame or structure an argument</b>, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced.</i></p> <p><b>Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.</b></p> <p><i>To earn the second point, the response must demonstrate a complex understanding. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables</i></li> <li>• <i>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects</i></li> <li>• <i>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods</i></li> <li>• <i>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes</i></li> <li>• <i>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</i></li> </ul>	  

## Planning Steps for your response to the Document Based Question

**Spend at least 15 minutes planning!**

1. **Read the prompt three times or more. Make sure you understand your purpose, topic, and skill! Identify your parameters!**
2. **Read and analyze the documents. As you do this, group them by category (your X and Y). If the prompt provides categories, make sure they are included in your X and Y.** Use the three steps on page 6 of this document if you are targeting all three document points. If you are only targeting the two that only require usage of three documents, skip step 3.
  - Step 1: **Describe the document...** GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS AND DON'T QUOTE. You can say "Document 1..." or use the name of the document. **Then... explain how it relates to the main topic of your essay.** *Do this for every document, unless you are not targeting the use of six documents point.*
  - Step 2: **Use the HIPP strategy to analyze the documents.** Choose 4 to thoroughly source, even though you only need three according to the rubric. Remember you only need *one* of the HIPP.\*  
**Then... explain how or why the HIPP relates to your argument/thesis. (CLOSE THE LOOP)**  
GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS and explain how or why it is relevant to the argument. **Tip: USE THE LINGO!**
  - Step 3: **Apply your analysis to your essay.** *How does each document support your thesis or support an opposing view?* To get this point you must use *at least six* of the seven documents AS EVIDENCE to support your X or Y. I recommend you use all seven in case you don't get credit for one. **Start with step 1** (description and explanation of how it relates to the topic), and then **CLOSE THE LOOP**. *If the document is one of the four you HIPPEd, then start with steps one and two, and then close the loop.*
3. **When you finish analyzing the documents, identify three pieces of evidence NOT given to you in the documents.** Remember you need evidence for your contextualization, your X (opposing view), and *at least* one body paragraph with independent evidence. Evidence cannot simply be an inference from a document.
4. **Write your contextualization and thesis. If your prompt has a qualifier ("to what extent?"), you must address it explicitly in your thesis.** Remember your thesis must be in the first or last paragraph, and remember your contextualization cannot address or defend the thesis!
5. **In your essay, you must explain how or why there were causes or effects / similarities or differences / continuities or changes of the topic using specific examples (from the documents and your own evidence).** If the prompt only asks about causes or effects; similarities or differences; continuities or changes, address both anyway. It is okay to have a paragraph for each document, or you may group them into those that address your X and those that address your Y.
6. **For your piece of independent evidence** (something NOT found in the documents and not mentioned anywhere else in your essay), **create another body paragraph and defend your thesis with several sentences that thoroughly explain how or why your piece of evidence supports your thesis.**

### College Board Directions for the DBQ (*what you will likely see on the AP exam but may not be identical to what I have here*)

*You are advised to spend 15 minutes reading the documents and 40 minutes writing. Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over. Question 1 is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.*

**In your response you should do the following.**

- **Thesis:**  
Present a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or in the conclusion.
- **Contextualization:**  
Situate the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the questions.
- **Use of Evidence:**  
Describe at least three of the documents to address the topic of your essay.  
Utilize the content of at least six of the documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.  
Provide an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument.
- **Analysis and Reasoning:**  
Explain the significance of the author's point of view, author's purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least three of the documents.  
Develop and support a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.

***On the AP exam, you will NOT be provided with a rubric. Use the directions as a checklist to help you link to the essential components on the rubric. Strategically target each point.***

## DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION (DBQ) Rubric, 7 possible points

<p><b>THESIS/CLAIM (1 point)</b></p> <p><b>Responds to the prompt with a historically <u>defensible</u> thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</b></p> <p><i>To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion. <b>ATFP!</b></i></p>	◇
<p><b>CONTEXTUALIZATION (1 point)</b></p> <p><b>Describes a broader historical context <u>relevant to the prompt</u>.</b></p> <p><i>To earn this point, the response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or reference. <b>Clearly link your contextualization to the topic of the essay!</b></i></p>	◇
<p><b>EVIDENCE (3 points)</b></p> <p><b><u>Using Evidence FROM the Documents:</u></b></p> <p><b>Uses the content of at least <u>three</u> documents to address the topic of the prompt.</b></p> <p><i>To earn one point, the response must <u>accurately describe</u> — rather than simply quote — <u>the content</u> from at least three of the documents. <b>Make sure you explain its relevance to the topic of your essay!</b></i></p> <p><b>Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least <u>six</u> documents.</b></p> <p><i>To earn two points, the response must <u>accurately describe</u> — rather than simply quote — <u>the content</u> from at least six documents. In addition, the response must <u>use the content of the documents to support an argument</u> in response to the prompt. <b>Close the loop!</b></i></p> <p><b><u>Evidence Beyond the Documents:</u></b></p> <p><b>Uses at least <u>one</u> additional piece of the specific historical evidence (<u>beyond</u> that found in the documents) <u>relevant to an argument</u> about the prompt.</b></p> <p><i>To earn this point, the response must describe the evidence and must use more than a phrase or reference. This additional piece of evidence must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization.</i></p>	◇  ◇  ◇
<p><b>ANALYSIS AND REASONING (2 points)</b></p> <p><b>For at least <u>three</u> documents, explains how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is <u>relevant to an argument</u>. <b>HIPP at least three!</b></b></p> <p><i>To earn this point, the response must <u>explain how or why</u> (rather than simply identifying) <u>the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument</u> about the prompt for each of the three documents sourced.</i></p> <p><b>Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.</b></p> <p><i>A response may demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables</i></li> <li>• <i>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both cause and effect</i></li> <li>• <i>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods</i></li> <li>• <i>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes</i></li> <li>• <i>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence</i></li> </ul> <p><b><i>This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>start with your complex thesis using the formula and back it up in the body paragraphs using evidence from the documents!</i></b></p>	◇  ◇