

### Guideline for Addressing DBQs

1. Read the question carefully. Remember, your task is to write an appropriate essay, not simply discuss documents. Approach the DBQ in the same manner you would a free response question.
2. After reading the question and BEFORE examining any documents, create a list of all outside information that comes to mind.
3. BEFORE looking at the documents provided, formulate a tentative thesis statement. You may have to make adjustments, but this will give you something to consider the documents in relation to.
4. Use APPARTS to extract each document's main idea/premise relative to this particular question. Do not simply restate information in the document.
5. Use the CORE STRUCTURE. Begin with a thesis statement that fully addresses the question, take a position, establish organizational categories, and follow normal essay writing procedures. Look for organizational cues in the question itself.
6. YOU must determine the logical organization of your essay; the arrangement/order of documents should not dictate your organization. Avoid referring to documents in the exact order in which they appear.
7. You do not have to incorporate all documents in your essay but you should refer to a majority of the documents provided.
8. Do not merely paraphrase documents. Demonstrate an understanding of how the essence of a selected document relates to your thesis. Never start a sentence with any form of "Document A says....." The essence of a document should be the subject, not the document itself.
9. Avoid lengthy/direct quotations from documents. You are the author, not the editor.
10. Attempt to ascertain why each document was selected. Most documents are designed to trigger a memory of outside information; many can be used to support different view/interpretations of a prompt. Carefully analyze each document to determine how it can support and clearly relate back to your thesis statement. Apply upper level critical thinking skills to draw inferences.
11. Examine each document for bias and demonstrate to the reader that you understand the impact of any bias found on the document's reliability.
12. Incorporate as much outside specific factual information as possible. Use documents provided as clues for the type of outside information readers are looking for. Nothing is as important as outside information in the DBQ.
13. The manner/order in which documents are referred to is inconsequential. The most unobtrusive way to reference documents is to put the document's letter in parenthesis following the sentence in which it is used (A). This will help both you and the reader keep track of the number of documents used.
14. Direct any discussion of both document based and outside information in support of your thesis. Use interpretive commentary to directly relate information back to the question.
15. The reader has only approximately two minutes with your essay. Make your information easy to extract.
16. CHILL!!! The DBQ is nothing more than writing an essay with a cheat sheet.