

How To Answer A Document Based Question



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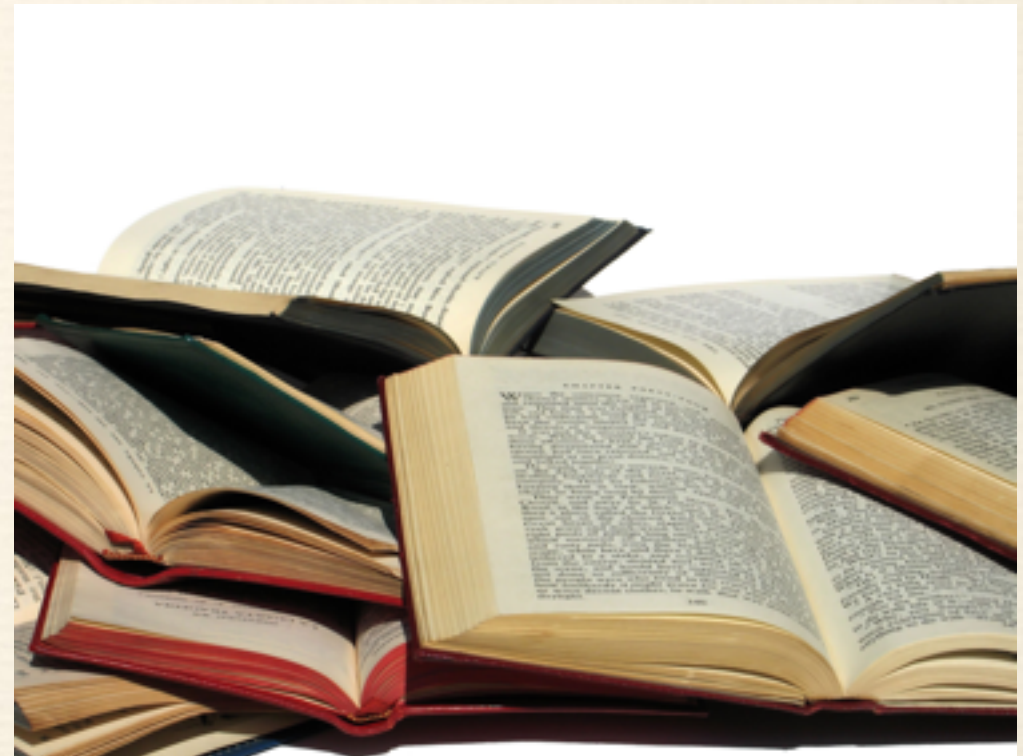
What is a DBQ?

DBQ Stands for Document Based Question

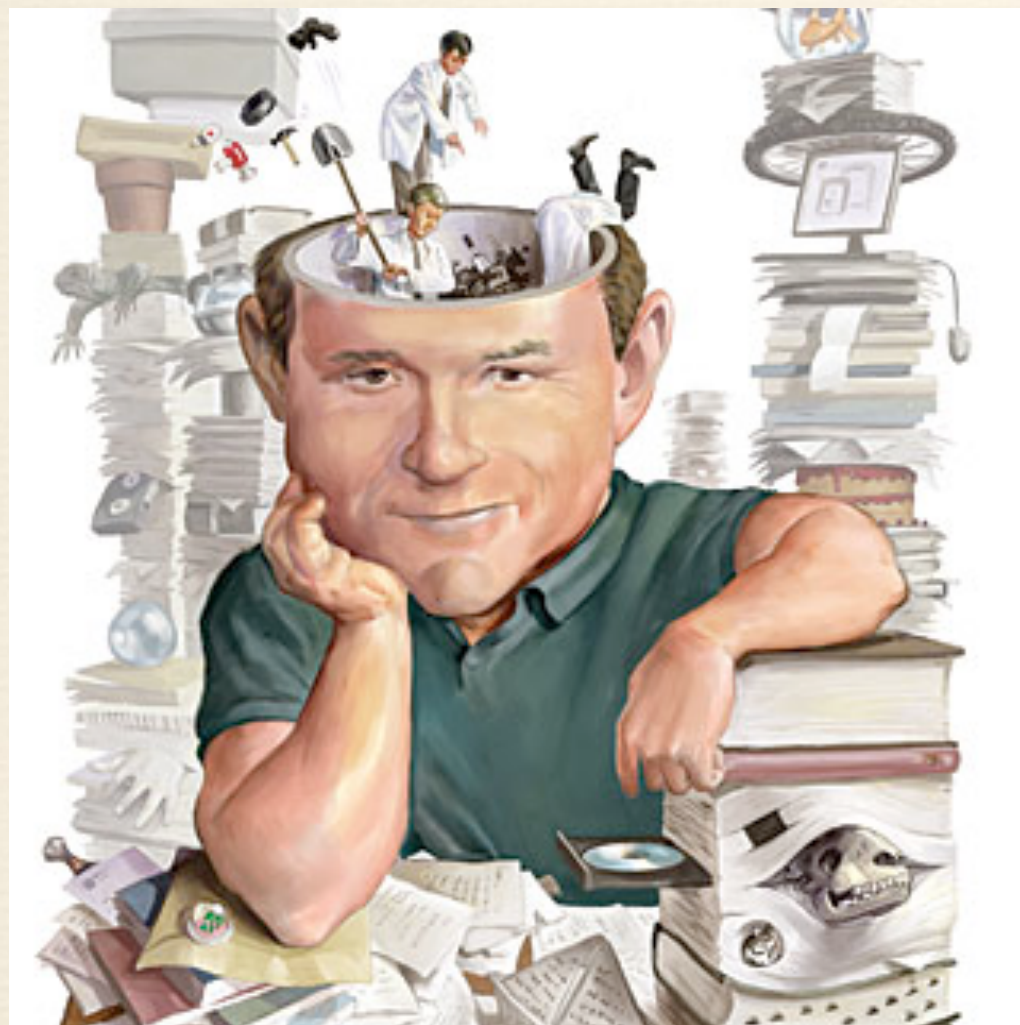
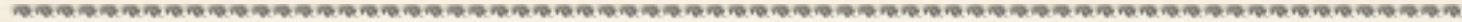
Type of essay that provides you with documents to serve as sources of information for your writing.

What is a DBQ?

DBQ's do not test
your content
knowledge...



What is a DBQ?



...but they do test for reading comprehension and analysis skills

What is a DBQ?

Each DBQ that you do should look very similar.
You will usually be given three things:



1. Historical Context

A paragraph that tells you some background information about the topic of the essay.

You will use this information to help you write your introduction.

Historical Context

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), founded in 1957, was the leader and the spokesman for the African American nonviolent protest movement of the 1950's and 1960's. King was arrested and jailed in the spring of 1963 during a civil rights demonstration and boycott in Birmingham, Alabama, and while in prison wrote the now famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in reply to criticism he had received from eight Birmingham clergymen. In this letter, which was published in the June 12, 1963, issue of Christian Century, Rev. King explained the aims and methods of his movement and philosophy. King's life was ended violently by an assassin's bullet on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

2. Task

This is the actual question that you are attempting to answer in the essay.

This will help you to write your *Thesis*.

The *Thesis* can be the first or last sentence of your introduction.

What is a Thesis?

Thesis:
A statement that someone
wants to discuss or prove.

Example of a Weak Thesis Statement

The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some of which were the same and some different.

Example of a Good Thesis Statement

While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions.

Example of a Great Thesis Statement

While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.

3. Documents and Scaffolding Questions

There will typically be 5-7 documents that will be used to help you write your essay. Each document may have anywhere from 1-3 questions that you must answer before writing the essay and will help you to shape your essay.

What are Scaffolding Questions?

The questions that make the learner think critically about the means to solve a problem.

Scaffolding questions will help build the knowledge you will need to write a great essay



9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 1: Analyze the Task

Without a clear understanding of the task is asking you to do, you cannot write a strong answer in a full sentence.

The task may ask you to do any of the following:

Analyze: Examine in detail.

Assess/Evaluate: Judge the value or character of something; appraise; evaluate the positive points and the negative ones; give an opinion regarding the value of; discuss the advantages and disadvantages of.

Compare: Note similarities and differences between the documents.

Contrast: Examine in order to show points of difference.

Describe: Give an account of ; tell about; give a word picture of.

Discuss: Talk over; write about; consider or examine by argument or from various points of view; debate; present the different sides of the topic.

Explain: Make clear or plain; make known in detail.

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 2: Understand Key Terms within the Question

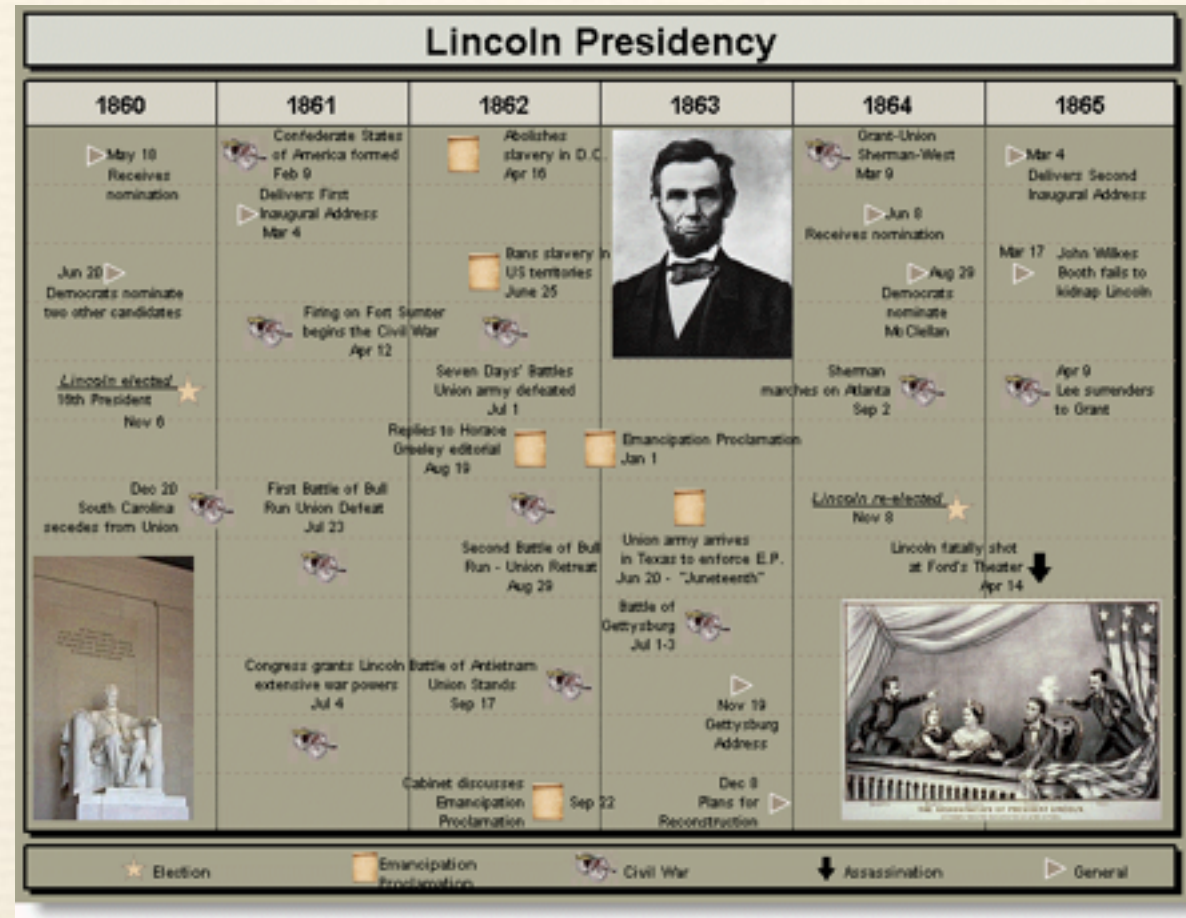
All DBQ's should address either attitudes and reactions or political, economic, social, cultural, and technological aspects within the question.

You will know what to address because these words will be in the question

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 3: Pay Attention to the Time period of the Documents

During the 1860s...



9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 4: Read the Documents and Answer the Scaffolding Questions

- *Read the documents carefully and answer the questions (These additional questions will help you think critically about the topics).
- *Each document may have 1-3 questions that follow that you must answer before writing the essay.
- *These questions will help get you thinking about how to shape your essay and will help in writing the thesis statement.

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 5: Develop a Thesis

(This is your opinion on the topic)

Your thesis must be stated in your opening paragraph. It is normally the last sentence in your opening paragraph. The reader must immediately know your position on the question before reading the rest of your essay.

You must clearly state your position to receive full credit on any DBQ response

How To Write A Thesis Statement

- ❖ State your opinion on the topic. Your thesis must argue a position and state your opinion.
- ❖ A DBQ thesis should be one sentence.
- ❖ Use the documents in the DBQ to come up with 3 supporting reasons that help explain your position. Your DBQ can use outside information, but you must use all of the documents in the DBQ to help explain your answer.

Tips For Writing A Successful DBQ Thesis

If you are stuck turning your thesis into one sentence, use “because” as a link between your opinion statement and the three reasons why your opinion is correct.

Example

You are asked to respond to the following:

“The United States of America is the greatest country in the world **AGREE or **DISAGREE?**”**

Your thesis statement could be:

“The United States is the greatest country in the world because...”

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 6: Outline Your Essay

Name _____ Document-Based Essay Outline Block _____

Introduction
General Statement (Introducing topic) _____
Explanation of Topic: _____
Narrower Statement (More specific, related to topic) "Several factors contributed to the start of the French Revolution..." _____
Background Information about topic _____
Thesis (What you will prove) _____

Cause # 1

Outside Information	Documents (List # and Brief Summary)

Before beginning the essay, you should ALWAYS create an outline to properly arrange your thoughts.

Outline Examples

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 7: Write the Introductory Paragraph

-Start with a sentence that grabs the reader's attention

-State your thesis

**-Explain what you are going to talk about
(Lead the reader through your essay)**

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 8: Write the Body Paragraphs

Analyze. Do not just list facts. Tie them to the thesis and explain how they prove your thesis.

-It is important that you support your thesis while referencing the documents.

-When referencing the documents, make sure to analyze what the document or person is saying and, if possible, why they are saying what they are saying (explain their background).

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 8: Write the Body Paragraphs

-If you quote a document, cite it properly:

“In line 8 of document C, President Lincoln states....

-Name the person and explain what they are in your sentence:

“Thomas Sowell, an economist, believes that....

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 8: Write the Body Paragraphs

- Do not just list documents as they are presented in the DBQ. You must have some kind of analysis involved**
- Facts should be organized in a logical sequence**
- Each set of facts should be in a separate paragraph.**
- Refute arguments that are the opposite of your thesis if you can.**

9 Steps to Answer a DBQ

Step 9: Write the Conclusion

The conclusion should bring the reader back to your thesis and the question.

No new information should be added.