

AP US

History

DBQ BOOTCAMP

Day	Activity
Monday	Section I: General Advice for all Essays Section II: The DBQ Section III: The Question
Tuesday	Read and analyze the question, historical background paragraph, and each of the 7 sources. Outcome: You should understand “what” the <u>individual</u> sources say and how they (individually) relate to the question.
Wednesday	Section IV: Reading and Analyzing the Evidence Sources Outcome: You should understand how the Evidence Sources collectively/cumulatively contribute to the question.
Thursday	Section V: Pulling It All Together Section VI: Thesis Section VII: Additional Evidence
Friday	Write Test DBQ Individually

Section I: General Advice for All Essays

Here is the allocated time and exam score percentage:

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	4 questions	50 minutes	20%
II	Part A: Document-based question	1 question	55 minutes	25%
	Part B: Long essay question	1 question (chosen from a pair)	35 minutes	15%

Recommended Reading Period

Before you actually begin writing, read the question critically and carefully. Following this, brainstorm for 1-2 minutes. In your test booklet, write down every piece of information you can think of that relates to the subject. There is room to perform this task on the booklet in the margins and at the top and bottom of the pages.

Look at your notes and consider the results as you think about how you will construct your thesis. Utilize your notes to prove your thesis, but do not choose an argument that you feel is wrong or with which you disagree. You have only one option with the DBQ, but you have two options with the Long Essay. The DBQ asks you to interpret a variety of documents and integrate your interpretation of these documents with your knowledge of the topic or time period. Some of your brainstorming will be historical facts, some will be 'big picture' arguments, and some will be garbage.

Big Mistake #1: Wasting Recommended 15 Minute Reading/Planning Period

One of the biggest mistakes students make during the AP Exam is not using the 15 minute recommended reading/planning period to plan and outline their essays. Too often students simply stare into space, think about what they're going to do after school, etc. This is a great opportunity to:

- 1.) brainstorm evidence
- 2.) write an outline of your essays' paragraph structure
- 3.) write a 1st draft of your essays' theses

Asset Model

One other thing to note is that the scoring of the essays is done on an "asset model." That is, the scorers want to give you every point that you deserve and are looking for every opportunity to do so. What this means, practically speaking, is that they will read over your errors rather than remove points. So, be daring and do everything that is required and more. Do not let fear of errors hold you back to a timid standard on the AP United States History essays. Study the rubric in this section so that you know what is scored on each essay.

Section II: The Document Based Question (DBQ)

Purpose of the DBQ

The purpose of the DBQ is to test students' ability to *do* what professional historians actually do: use and interpret historical sources to make conclusions based on those sources. It is NOT a test of students' prior knowledge. **You are not expected to know everything about the topic before the exam, this is a test of students' skills to perform a variety of analytical tasks.** Why is this important to realize? When you first read a DBQ question, you will likely have little knowledge about the topic. Relax! That's *normal*. *No one* is expected to know *everything* about the topic. That's what makes a DBQ a "level playing field." No one has any advantage over anyone else.

	Official Description	Points	Shorthand Description
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historically defensible thesis Cohesive argument recognizing complexity and interrelationship 	2	Thesis & Argumentation
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes content of at least 6 of the documents Explains <u>C</u>ontext, <u>A</u>udience, <u>P</u>oint-of-View and/or <u>P</u>urpose for at least 4 of the documents 	2	Document Analysis
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>C</u>ontextualization: situates the argument in a broader historical context relevant to the question <u>E</u>vidence <u>B</u>eyond: Identifies and explains the need for one type of appropriate additional evidence. 	2	Evidence Beyond the Documents
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the argument to one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Different period, situation, or geographical area Course theme that is not focus of essay 	1	Synthesis

Big Mistake #2: The Purpose of the Rubric = Scoring Guide for the Reader NOT Writing Guide for the Author

The rubric is meant as a guide for essay readers to score the essay, not as an outline for students in how to *write* the essay. The rubric lists characteristics, but that does NOT mean that students should write the essay in the order of these characteristics (e.g., Do NOT write a separate paragraph for "point of view," then a "purpose" paragraph, etc.)

Section III: The Question

The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents 1-7 and your knowledge of the period referred to in the question.

Question: When World War I broke out, the United States declared its policy of neutrality. Was the United States ever neutral in the conflict, and if so, when did it change to a policy favoring the allies?

Use the documents and your knowledge of history in the 1910's to construct your response.

1.) Now, analyze the question. Break it down so that you know *exactly* what it's asking and create a basic chart.

Task/Type?	What?	When?	Who?
What's the question asking you to <i>do</i> and what type of question is it? (<i>CCOT, Comparison, Periodization, Causation</i>)	What is the topic?	When did it occur?	Who is being considered and analyzed?
Task?	What?	When?	Who?
Analyze neutrality, CCOT	US Neutrality	WWI	The nation as a whole

Big Mistake #3: Not Answering the Question

The BIGGEST and MOST COMMON mistake is that students do not...

ANSWER THE QUESTION.

Seems pretty simple, doesn't it? "Don't most students answer the question," you may wonder. Surprisingly, the answer is "No." Instead of answering the question, students answer a question *related or similar* to the question, or what they *wish* the question asked, but not the question that is actually written on the paper. This is a huge "no-no."

- "Analyze" is DIFFERENT than "summarize." Most students merely summarize rather than analyze.

"Summarize" = "what happened" "Analyze" = "why it happened"

- Another tactic to help yourself answer the question is to break the question into its specific parts. Each question has a *what*, a *where*, and a *when*. Every sentence in your essay must relate to the question. You must not get off track and talk about a slightly different *where*, or a *when* that you heard a great story about, or a *what* that you know a ton of information about. Anything you write that does not "answer the question" is irrelevant, and will not help your score, no matter how well written or informative. In general, at least 30% of all the words students write are irrelevant to the question. Don't waste your time writing irrelevant information!

Plan MORE, write BETTER.

Big Mistake #4: Summarizing Sources

The purpose of any essay is to answer the question. Too often students' DBQs sink to a mere summarization of the sources. The DBQ is not "about the sources," it's just a "normal" essay question. The sources are not "the point" of the DBQ. The sources are merely raw materials to help students answer the question.

Imagine for a second that your teacher did NOT give you any historical sources. If you had ONLY the question ("Was the United States ever neutral in [in WWI], and if so, when did it change to a policy favoring the allies?") and a month of time in which to find historical sources that address this question. You should be able to answer the question, right?

When you were finally done researching and start writing your research paper, would you write sentences like this?:

One book I read said *blah blah blah*.

The author of book *Yada Yada* said *blah blah blah*.

In another book I read about WWI it was said *blah blah blah*.

Of course not! You'd write an essay where the subject of each sentence would be answering if the US was ever neutral in World War I and at the end of each sentence you would have a footnote documenting where you found that response just in case your reader wanted to check it. Each body paragraph would be organized around a specific response to the spread of Buddhism in China that you found in multiple books.

So do the same thing for a DBQ, except easier. You won't need to write footnotes. At the end of any sentence that references information you found in one of the sources, just write "(Source #)." This is a kind of "quick and easy informal footnote."



Section IV: Reading and Analyzing the Sources

Source Characteristics

What notes should one take as one reads the sources? Much of that depends on the question being asked, but there are several common characteristics in each source that one should look for because any of these characteristics can influence how a source should be interpreted/analyzed. The acronym "SOAPStone" is often useful as a guide for these characteristics (consider CAPP-FRL as well).

Subject	What is the main topic of this source?
Occasion	When was this source produced? Was it created for a particular event or occasion, or even during an era when another, similar sources were produced?
Audience	Who was this source's intended audience? Was the source written to be read privately or to a specific person (who?), a public announcement, or an official proclamation?
Purpose	Why was this source produced? What was the purpose or motivation of the writer/author of the source (based on what limited information you have about them)? What effect did the author hope this source would have? What did the author want the reader(s) of this source to <i>do</i> ?
Speaker	Who was the Speaker of this source? Was it an official person representing government, or an informal, anonymous individual? Usually a source's author and speaker are the same individual, but occasionally they may actually be different (e.g., a speech may be written by a speech writer, but spoken by a government official).
Tone	Is there any apparent tone or "voice" in this source that would influence one's interpretation? Is it filled with any apparent emotion (e.g., sarcasm, exuberance, anger, disdain, admiration, etc.). Underline any unusually vocabulary in the source that serves as a clue to this interpretation.

Additional Evidence Source

After you read a source, you'll be able to use information to help answer the question, but no single source contains everything needed to answer the question fully. NO matter how much information a source contains, it will never provide the answer to all parts of the question, and in fact, it will often raise *new* questions.

So, what kinds of information would you like to have to help answer the question better? You don't have to name a specific actual source, but you must do two things with this Additional Evidence Source:

- 1.) Describe the *kind of information* you'd like to see in an additional source.
- 2.) Explain *how* that information *would help a historian answer the question* more completely ("...because it would help" is not an acceptable answer.) What would you *do* with such information? What conclusion could you make with "Information x" that you can't make now?

Characteristics Shared with Other Sources (aka "Grouping")

After you've finished reading all the sources, look back over your SOAPStone notes. Do you notice any characteristics that *more than one source share*? These characteristics are vitally important to note because they will become the topic sentences of your essay's body paragraphs.

Note: You won't be able to complete this part of analyzing the sources until you finish reading all the sources. So, after you read each individual source and note that source's characteristics, go back for a "2nd pass" at all of the sources and look for characteristics that appear in more than one source.

Context (aka "Point of View" or POV)

The purpose of the DBQ is to test students' ability to *do* what professional historians actually do. Well, what do professional historians do? One essential task is to interpret historical sources. History is not *just* facts, a large part is also *interpretation* of facts. This is one area that makes history both fun and controversial, because different historians interpret identical sources differently.

- This brings up a related point. As long as your interpretation of the sources is *plausible*, your reader will *never* grade your interpretation of the sources. It is of course possible to misinterpret sources, which does carry a penalty for Rubric category #2, but as long as you include all the sources somewhere in your essay and misinterpret no more than one source, you'll earn full credit for your interpretation(s).

So as you read and interpret each source, what clues are there that any particular source means anything *other* than the literal words of the paper? Are there any reasons why although a source says "x" it should be interpreted as meaning something more, less, or different? All the intangible circumstances surrounding a source that influence how one should interpret that source comprise what is called the "Context."

Source 1:

"If you park your car there, you'll get in trouble," says your six-year-old sister."

Source 2:

"If you park your car there, you'll get in trouble," says the police officer.

You'd interpret these two statements very differently, wouldn't you? Obviously the identity of the source makes a huge difference in how seriously one interprets the Source. Note, however, that one should not automatically come to the conclusion that Source 1 is "wrong" while Source 2 is "right." (Can you think of any circumstances that your sister might be correct? Just because she's six years old doesn't mean she's *automatically* wrong, it just means that you'd probably want some more information regarding the context of your sister's comments before you render judgment on her words. After all, she might have just heard your parents say, "If that car isn't moved out of the middle of the street [your name] will be punished!"

Context is far more subtle than simply labeling Sources as "right" or "wrong." You have to be *very specific* in deciding to *what degree* a source should be interpreted *about a certain topic*. Ultimately you should be able to place each source on a spectrum of the Source's "trustworthiness."

Value	Limitations
What characteristics strengthen/enhance the value of this Source?	What characteristics limit/reduce the value of this source?

So, how does one interpret the context surrounding a source? Some common ways are listed below (Many are SOAPStone characteristics with which you are already familiar.)

- 1.) *Who* produced this Source? Does this author have any special knowledge about the topic? How credible is this author? Discuss the author's gender, age, ethnicity, social status, religion, level of education, political philosophy, etc.
- 2.) *When* was the source produced? *What else* was happening at that time? Can it be connected with a significant historical event or era? (Think back to the Historical Background information. Note the date of each source. Was this source created before/after/at the same time as any *other* source?)
- 3.) *Who* was the intended *audience*? Was the source written to be read by a specific person? Is it a public announcement, a private letter to a friend, or an official proclamation?
- 4.) *Why* was this source produced? What was the author's *purpose* or *motivation* (based on what limited information you have about them)? What *effect* did the author hope this source would have? What did the author want the reader to *do* after reading the source?
- 5.) Is there any apparent *tone* or "voice" in this source that would influence one's interpretation? Is it filled with any apparent emotion? (e.g., sarcasm, exuberance, anger, disdain, admiration, etc.) Underline any unusual vocabulary in the source that serves as a clue to this interpretation.

If these questions seem too overwhelming to remember, here's a simplified way of earning Context/POV:

Maximizing Your Score

Answer this question regarding each source:

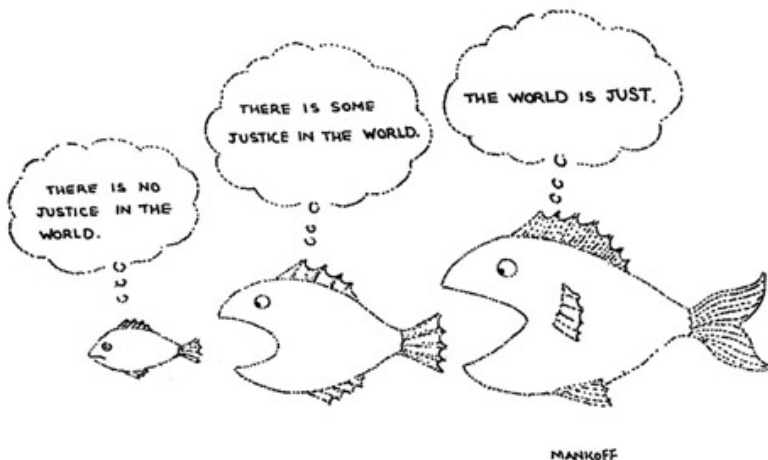
Why did *this* person create *this* source at *this* time?

Big Mistake #5: Point of View \neq "View" or "Opinion"

Too many students misunderstand what a "Point of View" is, thinking that "Point of View" is the same as "View" (or "Opinion")

If you are not sure if you've correctly interpreted a source's point of view, after you've written a point of view statement, try substituting the word "opinion" instead of "point of view." Does this sentence still make sense? If yes, then you have NOT done it correctly.

Fish Justice



Even if you write, "The Point of View of the biggest fish is 'the world is just,'" you will NOT earn the POV credit.

Simply calling something "Point of View" does not make it a Point of View.

	Small Fish	Medium Fish	Big Fish
View	The small fish thinks the world is <u>unjust</u>	The medium fish thinks the world has <u>some justice</u>	The big fish thinks the world is <u>just</u>
Point of View:			
Background Characteristic	...because <u>being the smallest fish</u>	...because <u>being the medium size</u>	...because <u>being the largest fish</u>
Result/Effect	... <u>caused</u> him to be in great danger of being eaten.	... <u>caused</u> him to be in less danger of being eaten, and <u>also allowed</u> him to be able to eat a smaller fish.	... <u>caused</u> him to be in no danger of being eaten.

Big Mistake #6: Misuse of “Bias”

Too many students attempt to interpret the value or limitation of historical sources by using the term “bias.” While it is entirely legitimate to analyze bias in historical sources, most students do it so poorly that it actually hurts their score. (Students *think* they’ve interpreted more than they really have and smugly stop trying to think any deeper.

The term “bias” can be used effectively, but only IF you answer these 4 questions:

- 1.) The specific *topic/issue* about which the source/author is biased. (Is the author biased toward *everything*?)
- 2.) *In what direction* is the source biased? Remember that bias can be positive and/or negative. Is the source/author *in favor* of a particular issue, or *against* it? If you just say, “the author is biased,” your reader won’t know whether the author is biased *for* or *against* something.
- 3.) *How much* bias does the source (or source’s author) contain? Someone can be *strongly* biased in favor of their favorite sports team or *slightly* biased against a political philosophy, etc.
- 4.) *Why* is the source (or source’s author) biased? (Cannot simply repeat a word in the source’s background information. Bias must “connect” a specific characteristic of the context behind the source to a specific characteristic in the text of the source).

Source 1

Source: President Woodrow Wilson, message to Congress (August 19, 1914)

Document A

Source: President Woodrow Wilson, message to Congress (August 19, 1914):

The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say and do. Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned.

The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war. It is natural and inevitable that there should be the utmost variety of sympathy and desire among them with regard to the issues and circumstances of the conflict.

Such divisions amongst us would be fatal to our peace of mind and might seriously stand in the way of the proper performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation and speak the counsels of peace and accommodation, not as a partisan, but as a friend.

- 1.) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

- 2.) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #2-6). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

- 3.) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time*? (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?)

- 4.) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a reason *WHY this author created this document at this time* (Step #3).

Source 2

Source: Hugo Munsterberg, Harvard University professor, letter to Woodrow Wilson (November 19, 1914)

Document B

Source: Hugo Munsterberg, Harvard University professor, letter to Woodrow Wilson (November 19, 1914)

Dear Mr. President:

[I] ask your permission to enter into some detail with regard to the neutrality question. But let me assure you beforehand that I interpret your inquiry as referring exclusively to the views which are expressed to me by American citizens who sympathize with the German cause or who are disturbed by the vehement hostility to Germany on the part of the American press. My remarks refer in no way to the views of official Germany....

First, all cables sent by and received by wire pass uncensored, while all wireless news is censored. This reacts against Germany, because England sends all her news by cable, whereas Germany alone uses the wireless...

Second, the policy of the administration with regard to the holding up, detaining and searching of Germans and Austrians from neutral and American vessels is a reversal of the American policy established in 1812. It has excited no end of bitterness.

Third, the United States permitted the violation by England of the Hague Convention and international law in connection with conditional and unconditional contraband. ...[O]n former occasions the United States has taken a spirited stand against one-sided interpretations of international agreements. The United States, moreover, [previously] insisted that conditional contraband can be sent in neutral or in American [ships] even to belligerent nations, provided it was not consigned to the government, the military or naval authorities... By permitting this new interpretation the United States practically supports the starving out policy of the Allies [and seriously handicapping] Germany and Austria in their fight for existence....

Many of the complaints refer more to the unfriendly spirit than to the actual violation of the law. Here above all belongs the unlimited sale of ammunition to the belligerents...

- 1.) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

- 2.) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #1, or 3-6). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

- 3.) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time?* (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?)

- 4.) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a reason *WHY* this author created this document at this time (Step #3).

Source 3

Source: Robert Lansing, War Memoirs (1935)

Document C

Source: Robert Lansing, War Memoirs (1935)

The author was Acting Secretary of State during the period described below.

The British authorities...proceeded with their policy [of blockading American ships headed for mainland Europe] regardless of protests and complaints. Neutral ships were intercepted and, without being boarded or examined at sea, sent to a British port, where their cargoes were examined after delays, which not infrequently lasted for weeks. Even a vessel which was finally permitted to proceed on her voyage was often detained so long a time that the profits to the owners or charterers were eaten up by the additional expenses of lying in port and by the loss of the use of the vessels during the period of detention.

- 1.) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

- 2.) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #1-2 or 4-6). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

- 3.) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time?* (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?)

- 4.) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a *reason WHY this author created this document at this time* (Step #3).

Source 4

Source: Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: (January 20, 1915)

Document D

Source: Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: (January 20, 1915)

Dear Mr. Stone:

I have received your letter...referring to frequent complaints or charges made...that this Government has shown partiality to Great Britain, France, and Russia against Germany and Austria during the present war... I will take them up...

- (1) Freedom of communication by submarine cables versus censored communication by wireless.

The reason that wireless messages and cable messages require different treatment by a neutral government is as follows: Communications by wireless can not be interrupted by a belligerent. With a submarine cable it is otherwise. The possibility of cutting the cable exists... Since a cable is subject to hostile attack, the responsibility falls upon the belligerent and not upon the neutral to prevent cable communication.

A more important reason, however, at least from the point of view of a neutral government is that messages sent out from a wireless station in neutral territory may be received by belligerent warships on the high seas. If these messages...direct the movements of warships...the neutral territory becomes a base of naval operations, to permit which would be essentially unneutral.

- (4) Submission without protest to British violations of the rules regarding absolute and conditional contraband as laid down in the Hague conventions, the Declaration of London, and international law.

There is no Hague convention which deals with absolute or conditional contraband, and, as the Declaration of London is not in force, the rules of international law only apply. As to the articles to be regarded as contraband, there is no general agreement between nations...

The United States has made earnest representations to Great Britain in regard to the seizure and detention by the British authorities of all American ships... It will be recalled, however, that American courts have established various rules bearing on these matters.

- (9) The United States has not interfered with the sale to Great Britain and her allies of arms, ammunition, horses, uniforms, and other munitions of war, although such sales prolong the conflict.

There is no power in the Executive to prevent the sale of ammunition to the belligerents.

The duty of a neutral to restrict trade in munitions of war has never been imposed by international law...

- (20) General unfriendly attitude of Government toward Germany and Austria. If any American citizens, partisans of Germany and Austria-Hungary, feel that this administration is acting in a way injurious to the cause of those countries, this feeling results from the fact that on the high seas the German and Austro-Hungarian naval power is thus far inferior to the British. It is the business of a belligerent operating on the high seas, not the duty of a neutral, to prevent contraband from reaching an enemy...

I am [etc.]

W.J. Bryan

- 1.) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

2.) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #1-3 or 5-6). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

3.) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time*? (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?

4.) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a *reason WHY this author created this document at this time* (Step #3).

Source 5

Source: New York Times, notice (May 1, 1915)

Document E

Source: New York Times, notice (May 1, 1915)

NOTICE!

TRAVELLERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies; that the zone of her waters includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY

- 1.) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

- 2.) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #1-4 or 6). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.
 - I. _____
 - II. _____
 - III. _____
- 3.) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time?* (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?

- 4.) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a *reason WHY this author created this document at this time* (Step #3).

Source 6

Source: Report from the American Customs Inspector in New York (1915)

Document F

Source: Report from the American Customs Inspector in New York (1915)

Q: Did the Lusitania have on board on said trip 5400 cases of ammunition? If so, to whom were they consigned?

A: The Lusitania had on board, on said trip, 5468 cases of ammunition. The Remington Arms-Union Metallic Cartridge Co. shipped 4200 cases of metallic cartridges, consigned to the Remington Arms Co., London, of which the ultimate consignee was the British Government. G. W. Sheldon & Co. shipped three lots of fuses of 6 cases each, and 1250 cases of shrapnel, consigned to the Deputy Director of Ammunition Stores, Woolwich, England.

- 1.) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

- 2.) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #1-5). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

- 3.) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time*? (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?)

- 4.) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a *reason WHY this author created this document at this time* (Step #3).

Source 7

Source: Arthur Zimmerman, confidential telegram to German Ambassador Johann von Bernstoff (January 1917)

Document H

Source: Arthur Zimmerman, confidential telegram to German Ambassador Johann von Bernstoff (January 1917)

On the first of February we intend to begin unrestricted submarine warfare. In spite of this, it is our intention to endeavor to keep the United States of America neutral.

If this attempt is not successful, we propose an alliance with Mexico, on the following terms: that we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The details are left to you regarding settlement.

You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in the greatest confidence as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States is certain. You will also suggest that Japan be requested to take part at once and that he also mediate between ourselves and Japan.

Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months.

Foreign Minister Zimmerman

- 1) Summarize the overall meaning of this source. (In one sentence, think of it as a "1-sentence book report." You may paraphrase the source, but don't quote from it.

- 2) List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases unique to this source? (Not found in sources #1-5). You'll need to read every *other* source first before you can come back and answer this question. These examples don't have to be super-complex. They can be just a short phrase, or even a single word.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

- 3) Look at the shaded section of the box above this document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain *WHY this author created this document at this time?* (Why didn't some *other* author create some *other* document at a different time?)

- 4) Now Combine #1-3 above into ONE sentence that summarizes the document's overall meaning (Step #1) using a specific piece of evidence (Step #2) to explain a *reason WHY this author created this document at this time* (Step #3).

Section V: Pulling It All Together

Now that you've analyzed all the sources individually, it's time to start the fun part of analyzing the characteristics of each source and comparing those characteristics across sources.

Organizing the Evidence		
This Characteristic	Appears in these Sources	As Shown by this Specific Word/Phrase

Now, look at your characteristics list on the previous page. **You may not realize it, but you've just outlined/organized the body paragraphs for your essay!** Simply change the titles on the table's columns:

- The characteristics in the left column = Paragraph's topic sentence.
- The middle column list of which sources/authors share the characteristics = The sources/authors to discuss in that paragraph.
- The right column citing the specific words = The specific evidence that supports that paragraph's topic.

So take another look at the table on the previous page, this time with different titles for each column.

Outline of My Essay		
Topic Sentence Must be "a response..."	Sources to include in this paragraph:	Examples to use as evidence that support your interpretation of the source:

Section VI: The Thesis

Okay, so now you've spent considerable time reading, sifting, and analyzing these sources, can you still remember WHY you did all this work? Oh yeah, it was in order to ANSWER THE QUESTION!

Based on the following sources, analyze the responses to the spread of Buddhism in China.

Your task is to write an essay that answers this question, drawing on all the sources you've read and analysis you've already done. The hardest part is actually coming up with a good thesis statement. Look back on your notes in the "Organizing the Evidence" table.

- How do you interpret the evidence reflected in the sources?
- What do the characteristics that you've detected in the sources add up to?

Maximizing Your Score

Write your thesis after you've analyzed all the evidence in the Sources.

Your thesis should be the first thing the Reader reads,
but it should be one of the last things the writer thinks.

If you choose a thesis in a knee-jerk manner when you first read the question, your thesis will almost certainly fail, as you will tend to selectively favor *only* the evidence that supports your thesis and ignore any contradictory evidence. The DBQ is designed to test your ability to interpret *all* relevant evidence and develop a thesis that reflects that evidence. There is no single "right" thesis to any essay question. There is more than enough information in the sources that could be interpreted multiple "correct" ways.

To write your thesis before examining *all* of the evidence is to fail the DBQ before you even start. This is a fundamental error. Even professional historians struggle to maintain the objectivity when examining the complexities of all relevant evidence.

The whole purpose of the DBQ is to test your ability to do what historians actually do: Develop arguments that are supported by evidence.

Okay, now pull together everything you've done: you reading and understanding of the sources, their content; author's characteristics, etc. Write your thesis statement (1-2 sentences).

My Thesis (Argument)

The rest of the Thesis Paragraph (How will you prove your argument?)

Now summarize the main points that you'll use to support your thesis. (This part of the thesis paragraph should preview the topic sentences of your later body paragraphs.) This takes some time and a lot of practice to do well, but if you can learn to plan your thesis and outline your essay, it will make the actual writing TONS easier. By the time your reader finishes the thesis paragraph, s/he should know WHAT your thesis is, and have an idea of HOW you will use the evidence to prove it.

Main Point/Body Paragraph #1 _____

Main Point/Body Paragraph #2 _____

Main Point/Body Paragraph #3 _____

Main Point/Body Paragraph #4, etc. _____

Section VII: The Additional Evidence Source

You've answer the question using the sources as evidence to support your thesis. The problem is that there are only a handful of sources. They can't possibly represent EVERY conceivable piece of relevant evidence. Are there any pieces of evidence relevant to the question that AREN'T already represented in the sources?

You can add the "Additional Evidence" suggested at virtually any point in your essay. It's most common to add it at the end of the essay, or at the end of the thesis paragraph, but the best essays call for Additional Evidence in every body paragraph to supplement the evidence supporting that paragraph's topic sentence.

"In order to [describe what interpretation/conclusion you'd like to be able to draw] historians would need [describe what kind of evidence/information desired.]"	
Missing Information/ Additional Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOW would this Evidence help answer the question more completely? • HOW would an historian use this Evidence? • What CONCLUSION could historians make using the Evidence that isn't possible to make now.

Big Mistake #7: Additional Evidence

The most common mistake is that students simply forget to even ask for additional evidence. Even when they do, students don't explain how/why such evidence is necessary. The most common unsuccessful types are:

"It would help to have evidence from a peasant." HOW would it help? Same for evidence written by a woman, someone from Greenland, etc.

"It would because there isn't any evidence written by a peasant." Maybe, but... so what? How/why do you think a peasant's perspective would help historians answer the question? This isn't a "poll" surveying public opinion regarding Buddhism. (To use a ridiculous example: There isn't any evidence written by illiterate left-handed giraffes either, but I doubt anyone is seriously tempted to request evidence contributed by an illiterate left-handed giraffe.)

Don't describe the person the evidence should come from, describe the evidence itself, and what historians might do with such evidence

