

APUSH Essay Writing Quick Reference Chart

The Thesis Formula:

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

OR

Although X, Y because ABC.

Formula adapted for the BIG FOUR Historical Thinking Skills

1. Historical Causation (Cause and Effect):

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

A, B, C = most important causes / consequences, explanations why, broken up thematically

Y = your assertion statement

2. 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, your counter-argument

A, B, C = continuity or change during the specified time period, broken up thematically

Y = your assertion statement

3. 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 similar or different, your counter-argument

A, B, C = similarities or differences between two things, broken up thematically

Y = your assertion statement

4. Periodization | (or Take a Position → Turning Points):

Evaluate whether something was a turning point or a major marking period in history, noting what things were like before and after that period.

X = counter argument, why something was or was not a turning point

A, B, C = argument, why something was a turning point broken up thematically

Y = your assertion statement

Strategy for Short Answer Questions: ACE it.

Each part of an SAQ should be answered with a minimum of 3 sentences.

A – Answer—Directly answer the question by identifying your claim.

C – Cite—Briefly define/describe your claim.

E – Expand—Connect your claim through historical context.

BAGPIPE – Historical Themes to Be Analyzed

Belief Systems (Ideas/Ideologies, religious beliefs and culture)

America in the World (Global Context)

Geography and the Environment (Physical and Human)

Politics and Power

Intity (Gender, class, age, race and ethnicity)

Peopling (Movement and Migration)

Economy (Work, Exchange/Trade and Technology)



Document usage in the DBQ - HIP

H: Historical Context + **I**: Intended Audience or **P**: Purpose or **P**: Point of View

Conclusion Formula:

Therefore, **Y** + **BC**. **BC** is similar/different to **OC** (**Synthesis**), because **E**.

Y = your **thesis**

BC = **Broad Context**... what is the big picture within the era you are writing about... (identify one of the major historical themes – **BAGPIPE**)

OC = **Other Context/Synthesis** (comparative context)... what other time period experienced a similar OR different big picture/theme?

E = **explanation** (at least one strong piece of evidence to support your comparison and an explanation of *how* or *why* the broad context of each era are similar or different)

TACOS for DBQ & TEST for LEQ Essay Structure

Thesis

Analysis

Contextualization

Outside Info

Synthesis

Thesis

Evidence

Synthesis

Thinking Skills

Synthesis=Connecting the topic to other historical periods, geographical areas, contexts, or circumstances.



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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%

Period	Date Range	Approximate Percentage of ...	
		Instructional Time	AP Exam
1	1491–1607	5%	45%
2	1607–1754	10%	
3	1754–1800	12%	
4	1800–1848	10%	
5	1844–1877	13%	
6	1865–1898	13%	45%
7	1890–1945	17%	
8	1945–1980	15%	
9	1980–present	5%	5%

Hints for the Multiple Choice:

1. Read question and think of an answer BEFORE you look at the documents.
2. Use hints on the document to help you with the question (author, date, and where it was published).

Hints for the Short Answer Questions:

1. Be brief but specific and ANSWER the QUESTION.
2. 2 or 3 sentences per part, maximum.
3. Clearly label which part you are answering.