

# DBQ Essay Structure

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## Simple DBQ Structure:

- I. Introduction: Looking Backward & Thesis
- II. Contextualization Paragraph
- III. Evidence Beyond the Documents
- IV. Body Paragraphs with Document Use to Answer the Prompt and HAP-P
- V. Conclusion: Thesis & Look Forward

## Elaborated DBQ Structure:

### I. Introduction Paragraph

A. Start by Looking Backward. (1<sup>st</sup> attempt at synthesis)

1. Connect the topic of the question or some part of it to a *distant* relevant past event that shows similarity to the events or topic of the prompt.
2. Develop the connection between the past event and an issue or issues you will address in your answer. Point out *similarities*, or ways in which the earlier event shed light on the topic of the prompt.

B. Present your thesis. The thesis **must** answer the entire prompt. Your thesis should introduce multiple ideas and arguments that answer the prompt, and differentiate their relative merits. Your thesis should be three to four sentences at the end of your Introduction Paragraph.

### II. Contextualization Paragraph

A. Write a paragraph in which you offer a 'BIG' **context** for the topic of the prompt. Employ the word **Contextualization** or the phrase "the big **context** shaping \_\_\_\_\_ (insert topic of prompt in the blank) was \_\_\_\_\_ (insert **context**)" in the topic sentence of this paragraph. Or: "\_\_\_\_\_ (insert context in blank) was a big context that shaped the events related to \_\_\_\_\_ (topic of the prompt)"

B. The context should operate on the events of the time period, and be relevant to the question because of their shaping influence. Develop your **contextualization** of the prompt topic in 3-4 sentences. State the **context** clearly and explain how it shapes events, conflicts, people, or developments of the period.

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## III. Evidence Beyond the Documents Paragraph

- A. Introduce evidence not found in or even related to the topics and content of documents. The evidence should demonstrate your knowledge of European History.
- B. In this 3-4 sentence paragraph you need to use the evidence in making an argument that answers the prompt.

## IV. Body Paragraphs

- A. Plan and compose body paragraphs that present your multiple arguments that answer the prompt.
- B. Use all documents and extend the analysis with HAP\_P for as many as possible; at least four.
- C. Frame each body paragraph with topic sentences explaining how what follows helps answer the prompt
- D. Given the documents and your knowledge you should be able to introduce complexity and sophistication such as: multiple supports for a single argument; multiple causation; differentiation among the ideas; by taking note of contradictory evidence; and, by introducing a strong argument which is in some way or ways qualified.

## V. Concluding Paragraph

- A. Start by re-writing the best possible thesis that answers the entire prompt using multiple arguments to do so, and differentiating amongst the relative merits of the ideas of the arguments.
- B. End by Looking Forward
  - 1. Connect the topic of the question or some part of it to a *distant* relevant future event that shows similarity to the events or topic of the prompt. Make your connection using the term '*synthesis*'
  - 2. Develop the connection between the future event and an issue or issues you addressed in your answer. Point out similarities, or ways in which the later event shed light on the topic of the prompt.