

DBQ Essay Outline

Introduction

- Briefly explain the broader historical situation related to the prompt. Mention major events, developments, or conditions that help the reader understand the topic.
- Identify the specific time period and historical setting addressed in the question.
- Narrow the discussion toward the issue raised in the prompt so the reader understands the focus of the essay.
- Introduce the main historical theme or conflict that appears in the documents.
- Present a clear thesis statement that answers the prompt directly.
- Indicate how the documents will be grouped or interpreted in the body paragraphs.
- Show the overall direction of the argument so the reader knows what the essay will demonstrate.

Body Paragraphs

- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that introduces a specific analytical point supporting the thesis.
- Group several relevant documents that support the point developed in that paragraph.
- Cite the documents clearly when referring to them in the analysis.
- Explain the meaning of the document instead of repeating or quoting it without interpretation.

- Identify the author, audience, purpose, or historical situation of important documents when relevant.
- Compare documents when they reveal different viewpoints or interpretations of the issue.
- Describe the historical developments that connect the documents to the broader time period.
- Include outside historical knowledge when appropriate to strengthen the explanation.
- Connect the evidence back to the thesis so each paragraph clearly advances the argument.

Conclusion

- Restate the central argument in clear language.
- Briefly summarize the key points developed in the body paragraphs.
- Reinforce how the documents support the overall historical interpretation.
- Connect the argument to the broader historical significance of the topic or period.