

DBQ Essays: The Basics

- The DBQ essay is all about showing that you can analyze sources, and then use the information from those sources, along with your own outside information, to respond to the task.
- The examples you use from the documents must be cited, and cited correctly (as explained below).
- It is not enough just to repeat what the documents say. You must add your own further analysis, clearly explaining how the information from the document relates back to the task bullet point.
- Aside from the inclusion of documents, the DBQ Essay is structurally the same as the Thematic:
 - You must have an introduction and a conclusion that go beyond a restatement of the theme
 - You must address the task for one topic first, then do the same for the other, rather than jumping back and forth between topics.
 - You must be analytical and not just descriptive, meaning you must go beyond listing facts to explain the connections between events and establish cause and effect relationships.
 - You must include rich social studies vocabulary, and explain the terms you use.
 - You must avoid inappropriate tone, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and organization.
- Your DBQ essay should include citations from ALL of the documents as well as at least TWO examples of outside information for EACH topic (that means FOUR total) but you are free to include more.

How to Cite Documents

There are three parts to a perfect DBQ citation. Study the sample below (DO NOT STEAL THIS, I WILL KNOW):

Another reason why the Mongols were such successful conquerors was that they were incredibly organized. According to "From Genghis to Kublai" by Duane Damon, "Organization was the key to success of the great Mongol armies." Soldiers were given daily drills and every member of the army knew his role. (Document 2) Due to this training, the Mongols had an advantage over their enemies, who were unprepared for such a force. This allowed the Mongols to conquer even the most powerful Asian empires.

STEP ONE: Present the main point or idea you want to prove with your example from the document. That lets the reader know what you want them to understand from the document.

STEP TWO: Present information from the document with proper citation. This part also has three steps:

1. Introduce the actual source of the document in sentence form. Sources can usually be found written below the documents. Mention the title and author if both are listed. If there is no author, mention the publisher if possible. If the document is a graphic with no title, describe it.
2. Provide information from the source. If the source is text based, you can either quote directly (in quotes) or paraphrase (summarize the ideas in your own words). Short points are better for quoting, while large chunks are better for paraphrasing (The example above shows both quoting and paraphrasing). If the source is a graphic, such as a chart, a diagram, or a drawing, describe the information from the document.
3. After providing the information from the document, write the word **document** followed by the document number in parentheses.

STEP THREE: Provide your own further clarification and analysis. Explain the meaning of the example from the document if necessary, and most importantly, explain how it connects back to and proves your point (Step One) and relates to the Task (the bullet point).

Outside Information

While the documents provide many great examples that relate to the task, they never tell the whole story. You, as the student of history, must bring your own knowledge and understanding into the essay as well. Just like with the Thematic essay, you will have to go back to your textbook and class materials to gather information for writing your essay. You should look for two types of information outside the documents:

1. General information, like important dates, locations, and people, will not all be found within the document, so you should make sure you have that information to provide structure and accurate order and organization for your essay. You do not have to cite general information at all.
2. Specific outside examples, in addition to the ones mentioned in the documents, allow you to provide more support for your task, and show that you know about the topic even without documents to help you. You should cite specific examples by simply adding (OI) to the end of the sentence, which stands for outside information.

Social Studies Document Based Question Rubric

	Overall Development	Organization	Support	Word Choice	Mechanics and Sentence Structure
When scoring, consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall effect of the paper Degree to which the paper is fluent and addresses the task, audience and purpose 	The degree to which the response is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly and logically ordered (sequenced) Paragraphed 	The degree to which the response includes details that develop the main points	Vocabulary Word Choice (language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The degree to which the response includes sentences that is complete and correct. Spelling, Punctuation, Capitalization Citation of documents
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoroughly develops all aspects of the task evenly and in depth. Is more analytical and descriptive (analyzes, evaluates, and/or synthesizes information) 	Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richly supports the theme with many relevant facts, examples, and details Incorporates substantial relevant outside information 	Rich, effect social studies vocabulary throughout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few or no mechanical errors relative to length or complexity Virtually no errors in structure or usage Perfect citation of all documents
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops all aspects of the task but may do so somewhat unevenly Is both descriptive and analytical 	Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports the theme with many relevant facts, examples, and details Incorporates relevant outside information 	Effective social studies related vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few mechanical errors relative to length or complexity Few errors in structure or usage Citation very good with minimal errors
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops all aspects of the task with little depth or develops most aspects of the task in some depth Is more descriptive than analytical 	Demonstrates a satisfactory plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that may be a restatement of the theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes some relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies Incorporates limited relevant outside information 	Acceptable social studies related vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some mechanical errors that do not interfere with communication Generally correct structure or usage Citation has limited mistakes or omissions
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimally develops all aspects of the task or develops some aspects of the task in some depth Is primarily descriptive; may include faulty, weak or isolated application or analysis 	Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may contain digressions; may not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes few relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some inaccuracies Presents little of no relevant outside information 	Simplistic social studies related vocabulary with acceptable but limited word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some mechanical errors that do interfere with communication Errors in structure or usage interfere with meanings Some errors in citation or missing a small amount of proper citation
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimally develops some aspects of the task Is descriptive; lacks understanding, application, or analysis 	May demonstrate a weakness in organization; May lack focus; may contain digressions; many not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and /or a conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes few relevant facts, examples, or details; may include inaccuracies Presents no relevant outside information 	Simplistic social studies related vocabulary with inappropriate and/or incorrect word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noticeable mechanical errors that interfere with communication Serious errors in structure or usage Noticeable errors in citation or citation sometimes missing
Level 0	Fails to develop the task or may only refer to the theme in a general way.	There is no plan in organization; No focus and identifies no aspect of the task; Does not have an introduction and/or a conclusion	Fails to include any relevant facts, examples, or details.	Extremely limited social studies vocabulary; riddled with errors in word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanical errors that seriously interfere with communication Serious errors in structure or usage No citation at all