

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.