

Causation Essay

IMPERIAL EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION



Long Essay Prompt:

Using specific examples, analyze causes of imperial expansion and consolidation in the period circa 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E. (Historical thinking skill: Causation)

Commentary from Casey

In this essay, you will be exploring and analyzing the methods and tactics by which empires of the Classical Era expanded and consolidated their imperial control. You may use any empire or empires from your study of the Classical Era (600 BCE-600 CE), which overlaps with Units 7-12 in your AP World textbook. Please note that the prompt asks you to analyze **CAUSES**, as in plural, so you cannot discuss only one method. On the organizer, I have given you space to focus on **THREE CAUSES**. While two is technically enough, we teach **THE RULE OF THREE**, which means that you should always include one extra, so, in case there is a problem with one, you will have the other two and still earn full points. (I did not require this for the first essay so as to not overwhelm you. While you could theoretically write about four or even more, you do not want your essay to get too long, and you should be practicing how much you would realistically be able to write on an AP exam, so more than three would be excessive. Also, note that it mentions **EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION**. It does not say **OR**. While the two are related, they are not the same. **Expansion** is how the empire successfully acquires new territory, while **consolidation** is how that territory is brought together under the control of the empire. You will need at least one example of both. Also, please note that you are not required to draw examples from only one empire. You may look at specific evidence of the same type of method or tactic from three different empires. A few empires you could discuss and analyze are **Rome, Macedonian Empire, Qin and Han China, Achaemenid Persia, and Mauryan India**.

Commentary on the Rubric & Organizer

Along with this sheet, you have received the Causation Essay Rubric. You will find that it is exactly the same as the one you received for your Comparative Essay. The only difference is the historical thinking skill being applied. Please read over the rubric and organizer, and then read the commentary below for clarification.

A. THESIS

Your thesis is the foundation of your essay. All of your arguments and evidence will be built upon it. Therefore, it's important to have a strong, clear thesis, and to stay aligned to that thesis throughout the paper, always connecting back to it as you write. The thesis is the point you are trying to make, so the first thing you should do is consider the information you have about your topic and decide on a relevant **OVERALL POINT** about imperial expansion and consolidation that can be drawn from that information. An acceptable thesis might present a comparative/general statement that identifies significant factors found to be common to the expansion or consolidation of more than one empire. Additionally good thesis must be specific, and identify exactly what you will be addressing in the essay. It is not enough to say that "there are many causes" or "there are economic and political causes." You must specify what they are in the thesis. Whatever three causes you are choosing to write about in your body paragraphs, **you must directly identify them in the thesis in order to get credit!**

B. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Contextualization means explaining the larger events and processes taking place around the issues you are discussing, in order to give **context**. While contextualization should be found throughout your essay, the main place for it is in the introduction before you get into your thesis. As the rubric states, it is not enough to just write a sentence or two. You really need to give a good explanation of the context of the topic. It also must be relevant, so think about what the reader would need to know or would find helpful to know about the theme and the events and developments of the period before getting into the essay itself. Set the scene. Try to include the what, when, and where of the topic.

C. USING EVIDENCE

To get the first point on the rubric, you need to provide **THREE (because Rule of Three) SPECIFIC EXAMPLES** for **EACH** of the causes you are discussing and analyzing in D. This is what they mean by evidence. Evidence has nothing to do with quoting. You should give detail for each piece of evidence. In order to get the second point on the rubric, you have to go beyond just explaining the examples. You must connect the evidence to the overall argument in the thesis. **SHOW AND EXPLAIN HOW** that evidence ties back to the broader concept and **WHY** it helps to support your thesis. You have to “link” it all back to the main point. This is similar to what ELA teachers call “justification.” The bottom line here is **DO NOT ASSUME** the reader “gets it.” It’s your job to make the reader “get it.”

D. ANALYSIS AND REASONING

For the first point on the rubric, you need to discuss three “causes,” which, in this case, are the methods or approaches of expansion and consolidation taken by the empires. These are the broader concepts for which you are giving three evidentiary examples in C. You should divide your paragraphs by each method, or “cause,” you are discussing. That would give you three body paragraphs for your main argument. For the second point on the rubric, it is not enough to just identify and describe the causes. You have to go further. For the “cause” itself, explain in depth **WHY** these methods are being used and **HOW** they accomplish their goal. For the specific examples of evidence, explain with detail how and why they functioned and how they relate to the overall concept. To get this point, you must show that you are analyzing and drawing connections. Again, the bottom line here is **DO NOT ASSUME** the reader “gets it.” It’s your job to make the reader “get it.”

BEFORE MONDAY: Using Chapters 7-12 in the textbook, as well as your textbook homeworks and other class materials, revisit the Classical Empires, identify their methods of Imperial Expansion and Consolidation, and decide on which methods and which examples of those methods you want use for your essay. You will have the rest of the period to work, alone or with others, to develop your thesis and to work on the **Essay Organizer**. Your **HOMEWORK** before Monday is to fully complete the organizer and be ready to write the essay in class Monday. Your organizer is the **ONLY THING YOU CAN BRING** to help you write.