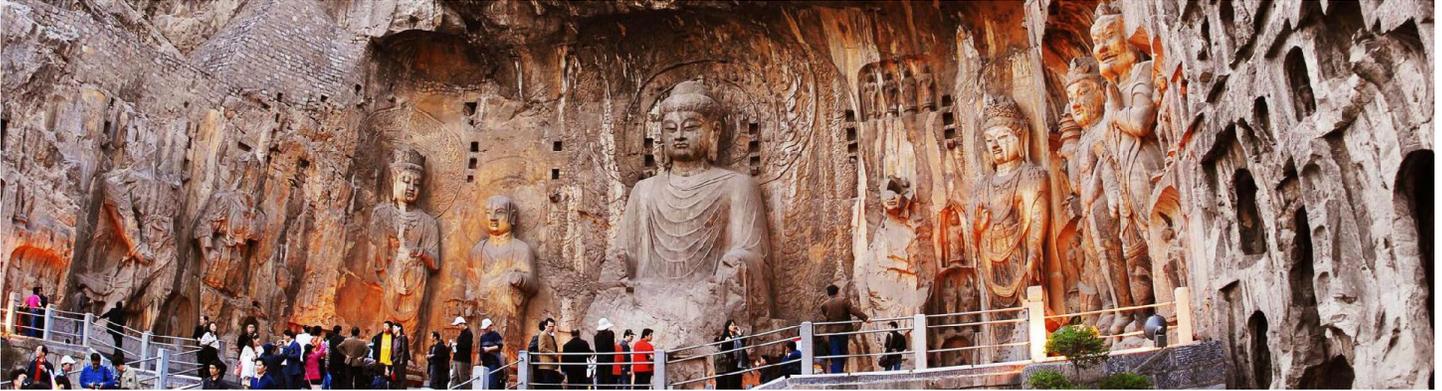


DBQ Essay: Chinese Response to Buddhism



DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION

The document-based question is an essay question that measures students' ability to develop and support an argument using historical source material as evidence. The question focuses on periods 3–6 of the course. The documents included in the document-based question may include charts, graphs, cartoons, and pictures, as well as written materials of varying length. These are chosen to illustrate interactions and complexities about the historical topic that is the subject of the question. In their responses, students should develop an argument about the question and utilize the documents to support this argument. Students should also explain elements of the authorship of the documents that affect their historical significance, such as point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience. The document-based question also requires students to relate the documents to a historical period or theme and, thus, to focus on major periods and issues. For this reason, other knowledge about the topic being assessed, beyond the specific focus of the documents, is important and must be incorporated into students' essays to earn the highest scores.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Buddhism, founded in India in the sixth century B.C.E., was brought to China by the first century C.E., gradually winning converts following the collapse of the Han dynasty in 220 C.E. Buddhist influence continued to expand for several centuries. Between 220 C.E. and 570 C.E., China experienced a period of political instability and disunity. After 570 C.E., the imperial structure was restored.

DBQ ESSAY PROMPT:

Using the documents and your knowledge of world history, analyze the responses to the spread of Buddhism in China.

Commentary from Casey about the THESIS

In this DBQ essay, you will be exploring and analyzing various responses to spread of Buddhism in China, among different populations and groups and over the course of time. For this essay, it is **ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT** that you develop a strong thesis argument, and that your essay is built upon that **ARGUMENT** as its foundation. It is not enough to just outline the points of your essay. You have to **ARGUE** something.

As I mentioned in the feedback from the last essay, many people have been doing well with one part of the thesis statement, which is identifying the specific points you are going to make in your essay. Last time that was the different methods of expansion and consolidation. This time it's responses to the spread of Buddhism in China. However, most people have not been developing strong, historically defensible claims, and instead, just making general statements. For your thesis in this essay, you will first have to be familiar with the documents and the historical context of the documents from you study in class. By understanding the different responses to Buddhism in China, you will be able to not only mention different responses in your thesis, but argue a

particular point. You will choose that point based on your knowledge. If you're not sure if it's really an argument, here's a simple test: If someone could, theoretically, disagree with you and argue against you, then it's an argument. If what you are saying is so general and obvious that no one could argue against it, then you are merely stating facts and not making an argument.

I won't tell you exactly what argument to make, but I can give you some pointers. First of all, I'll just give you a hint and say there was not one single response to Buddhism in China. Obviously, different people reacted differently at different times. So your thesis statement should account for those differences, and it's going to have to be specific. Further, in order to have a really strong argument, you should find a way of incorporating qualification, meaning whatever your main points are, you bring in some exception to that main point, a situation in which it would be different.

Remember, you still have to follow the RULE OF THREE, so you need to have three points in your thesis that correspond to three body paragraphs.

Commentary from Casey about the DOCUMENTS

Since this is a DBQ Essay, of course the documents are extremely important. But do not think this is like DBQ essays you might have done in Middle School. Oh no. Far from it. You definitely cannot get through this essay by repeating and rewording documents. If that's what you had in mind, just throw that idea away. For an AP DBQ Essay, since they provide you with the documents, essentially giving you the bulk of the factual information on which the essay is based, there is a much higher expectation of analysis, because you need to be adding a lot beyond the documents. We have done HAPPY analysis a few times, and this is a good tool to help you find things to discuss for your analysis of the documents. HAPPY stands for Historical Context, Audience, Purpose, Perspective, and whY. We will discuss this more in class as we review the Rubric, which is quite detailed and gives clear expectations

Synthesis

Another form of analysis you can do is synthesis. This is where you draw connections with similar processes and events from other time periods, locations, or historical themes. For example, if you were writing an essay about Japanese feudalism, an example of synthesis would be bringing up a connection or comparison to European feudalism. This is NOT something you should do randomly, but if and when it is appropriate and relevant. It is also not something you should lead with, but something that is good to include only after you have thoroughly covered the key info for your actual topic. You should not use synthesis out of nowhere, but should introduce it with nice transition, and it should be there to serve a purpose of shining more light on your actual topic, not just going off on an irrelevant tangent. SO, now that I have thoroughly warned you about the mistakes, I can say it is a great way to do some analysis if you do it right, and score some high points!

OUTLINE YOUR ESSAY

Use loose leaf to prepare a thesis and sketch out an outline. You will not be permitted to bring this paper on the day of the essay in class. You should study like you would for any test and come with this information in your head. The only things you will be allowed to bring will be the documents and the rubric. Figure out your thesis first, and then figure out what documents, outside information, and analysis you will use for each of the three paragraphs.

**WE ARE SCHEDULED TO BE WRITING THE ESSAY IN CLASS NEXT FRIDAY!
IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, YOU CAN COME TO OFFICE HOURS ON THURSDAY!**