1. What is the document?

2. Who wrote the document?

3. When and where was it written?

4. Why was it written?**CAN YOU DO THE DBQ?**

HOW TO INTERROGATE A DOCUMENT

5. Who was the intended audience for the document?

6. What does the document say?

7. FINALLY: What does the document mean?

SPECIFICS FOR WRITING THE DBQ

1. Formulate a thesis about history, not merely about the documents. MAKE SURE YOUR THESIS ANSWERS THE FREAKIN’ QUESTION! With any kind of writing, remember to ATFQ!

2. Focus your discussion on the documents and the inferences you can draw from them.

3. Use all the documents.

4. Do not quote extensively. LONG QUOTATIONS ARE BAD!

5. A good DBQ ANALYZES and DRAWS CONCLUSIONS from the documents. You should avoid the "laundry list" approach; that is, do not merely summarize each document.

6. Look for trends of change over time in the documents. (Sometimes "change over time" is not a relevant factor in the question, so LOOK for it, but it is not required)

7. Refer to the content, or the author, of the document so specifically in your text that the reader cannot help but notice the document you are referring to without your having to cite it in parentheses.

8. According to the AP guys these are "indicators of analysis":

- analytical essay structure (thesis, discussion with evidence, conclusion.)

- organization of evidence in categories, especially ones not specified in the question itself.

- frequent reference to the terms of the question.

- combination/juxtaposition of documents.

- recognition of contradictions, ambiguities in documents.

- reference to the POINT OF VIEW ("attribution") and the PURPOSE of the document.

HOW THE “CORE SCORING” WORKS:

You may get up to 7 points:

1. having an acceptable thesis. Such a thesis ANSWERS THE QUESTION!

2. using all of the documents.

3. addressing ALL PARTS of the question.

4. showing accurate understanding of the documents by using them to support an argument, with no more than one major error in content interpretation.

5. analyzing bias or point of view. Discuss bias or point of view explicitly at **least three** times!

6. grouping the documents into **at least three groups**.

7. SYNTHESIS!!!!

**MORE ABOUT POINT OF VIEW**

Your AP Readers will require evidence of understanding Point of View in at least 3 explicit instances. Here are some ways to apply POV.

1. You can reference the ***internal bias*** you see in the document. Examples of name calling, loaded language, and other kinds of rhetoric betray the prejudices or biases of the author.

2. You can reference ***external bias***. What is the author’s self-interest that makes him or her say the things he or she does? Do people of certain groups usually construe issues in certain ways?

3. You can write “The author thinks (or says) X because he or she wants (or needs, or believes) Y. According to the AP the idea is to show “awareness that the gender occupation, class, religion, nationality, political position or ethnic identity of the author may well have influenced the views expressed in the document.”

4. Remember that it does not count as understanding “Point of View” if you merely say what the author of a document thinks. You are using POV when your discussion ***accounts*** for what the authors are saying. Explain WHY someone holds a certain view, or speaks about something in a certain tone.

5. You can demonstrate you understand the ***tone*** of a document by using vivid verbs. Instead of “The author says…” try “The author condemns, lauds, pleads, complains, exults, rants…” Any word that relates to the feelings or values of the author will convey his or her POV.

6. It is not enough to merely say that someone was “biased” or “prejudiced.” To earn credit you must give the reader your EVIDENCE for asserting that someone is biased. The evidence may come from the document itself, or from your understanding of the external bias of the author.

7. You must NOT accept every document your read as fact! Pay attention to the circumstances behind the creation of the document and the goals of the author.

8. You may discuss the reliability and accuracy of a source. According to the AP you should “critically examine the source for its reliability and accuracy by questioning whether the author of the document would be in a position to be accurate and or would likely be telling the truth. The student can also evaluate the type of source, e.g. a letter or official report, showing an understanding that different types of sources vary in their probably reliability.”

9. You can group some documents by author. When you do so you show awareness that certain types of authors, by being in that certain type, will share and express similar views.

10. You will NOT earn “Point of View” points merely for using attribution when you discuss the documents, even if you do it every time.

11. You may group and evaluate documents by type. Public documents such as government statistics may be compared to private documents such as diaries or letters.

**MORE ABOUT GROUPS**

1. You need to group the documents three different ways in your DBQ. It takes two documents to make a group.

2. Your groupings need to be RELEVANT and VALID! You may not just discuss authors whose last names begin with “Q” and get credit for a valid grouping.

3. Here are some ways to group documents:

a. TYPE, i.e., letter, book, diary, political platform, government document, statistics, newspaper account, business records, etc.

b. GENDER of the author

c. EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, SOCIAL or ECONOMIC CLASS of the author d. PERIOD in which they were written

e. POINT OF VIEW

f. IDEOLOGY

g. NATIONALITY of author h. RELIGION of author

i. LOCATION of author, i.e., rural, urban, Paris

4. You may make a group out of two or more documents whose points of view disagree with each other. The idea is to show that you can combine and juxtapose the ideas, and that you recognize that the documents are “talking” to each other.