**Using Evidence Beyond the Documents: 0-2 points**

This skill targets your ability to contextualize and argue historically.

There are two strands here. Contextualization means that you must locate your argument within a larger historical context; i.e. you must explain how the argument connects to other historical events or processes.

So if the question is about, for example, warfare during the Civil War versus the French and Indian War, you must give enough background information about one or both of those events to convince the grader that you know what you are talking about when you make claims about one or both of those processes.

Take note:

* When contextualizing, you will be using information you *already know.* You cannot merely summarize the information that is already in the documents, but must instead give an account of the relevant historical time periods or evidence.
* To properly contextualize, you will need to write more than just one sentence. The College Board expects at least a paragraph of contextualization, if not more.

Related to contextualization is your ability to give evidence from beyond the documents themselves. In other words, though you may have used outside evidence in the previous strand (Document Analysis), you must now refer to *additional* evidence that explains the documents and their relationship to your broader historical argument. Don’t just summarize information you have already given.

Again, to do this properly, you must be able to write at least a paragraph giving additional context on the specific documents. One sentence will not cut it.

**Synthesis (0-1 point)**

The final strand is your ability to synthesize. This just means that you can show a relationship between *your* argument and a different type of argument.

Those different “types” of argument can comprise of:

* A relevant development in a different time period, situation, area, or era. (For example, if the argument is about President Lincoln’s suspension of certain liberties during the Civil War, you might want to point to President Adams’ Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, President Roosevelt’s Alien Enemies Act, which was in fact an extension of the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts, and the continuing argument over government usurpation of civil liberties in the present day. These are relevant to one another and show continuity even though they happened in vastly different time periods in response to different issues.)
* A different approach to history (i.e. if your argument focuses on *economic* history, you may want to synthesize this with a *social* approach to history)

The AP World and AP European history tests also award the synthesis point for your connection of your argument to a different field of study (anthropology, art history, government and politics, etc.)

As with contextualization, you can only earn a point for synthesis if your synthesis is well-developed and clear. In other words, you must do more than merely *refer* to a different historical time period, development, process, or approach.

You must instead write a well-thought-out paragraph (at least) that demonstrates that you are familiar both with the event/issue about which you are writing the essay as well as the event/issue/process/approach you are attempting to synthesize.