

HOW TO D.B.Q.
(WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND)

WRITING AN ESSAY

Step 1 – Cover the documents with a clean sheet of paper.

1. Read the question – circle the dates, underline key terms.
2. BRAINSTORM – Write down all historical knowledge pertaining to the question.
3. Free list all events, people, laws, wars, etc.
4. Go back and read the question, circle the three to four key terms that hold the question together. These will become your paragraphs as you develop your thesis.

Step 2 – Write your topic/introductory paragraph which includes your thesis and some historical background (the setting).

The thesis is the road map for your reader – it tells what you intend to accomplish and how you are going to achieve that purpose.

Step 3 – Organize your supporting arguments (paragraphs) around the key terms you circled or underlined in the question.

Step 4 – Now take off the cover from the documents.

Step 5 – Skim read the documents

1. Select at least 5 or 6 that support your thesis and your arguments.
2. Write your supporting arguments using historical facts and supporting evidence from the documents. Use your strongest arguments first, save the weakest for last.
3. Last, but not least, write a good conclusion which wraps up your essay without sounding repetitious. And don't introduce new information in the conclusion!

Some DOs and DON'Ts:

1. Don't analyze the documents – instead, use them to help support pre-existing arguments.
2. Don't laundry-list the documents – meaning you should not discuss all 8 to 10 documents in order whether relevant or not. If they are not relevant, don't use them!
3. Don't forget to use outside historical information to prove the validity of your arguments.
4. Do use at least 5 to 6 documents minimum. If you use more effectively, you'll have an even better essay.
5. Do write a 5 to 6 paragraph essay (2 to 2 ½ pages) with a clear thesis.

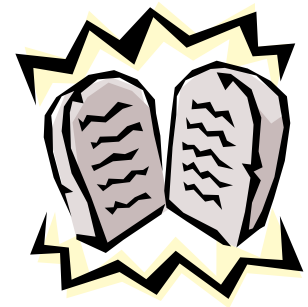
SOAPS – UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSING DOCUMENTS

To get the most out of each document, be sure to look at each of these aspects:

- S – What is the Subject?
- O – What is the Occasion?
- A – Who is the Audience?
- P – What is the Purpose?
- S – Who is the Speaker? (What's the voice?)

Also keep in mind: there may be contradictions between documents (brownie points for pointing these out); find relationships between documents (similarities, differences, cause & effect); consider bias in the document (look at source – there's more than meets the eye at times!)

Remember: practice makes perfect - the more you write (and read) the better your essays will be!!



RULES FOR TAKING A MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAM:

1. KNOW THE MATERIAL.
2. LONG COMPLICATED ANSWERS ARE USUALLY WRONG
3. SHORT CONCISE ANSWERS ARE USUALLY OBVIOUSLY WRONG OR RIGHT.
4. ONE OF YOUR CHOICES IS USUALLY OBVIOUSLY WRONG - IT'S CALLED A THROWAWAY.
5. KNOW THE MATERIAL.
6. ANSWERS THAT CONTAIN THE WORDS: NEVER, ALWAYS, EVER, OR ANY PHRASE THAT ELIMINATES THE POSSIBILITY OF EXCEPTION IS OFTEN WRONG.
7. ANSWERS THAT CONTAIN THE WORDS: POSSIBLY, SOMETIMES, OFTEN, OCCASIONALLY, OR ANY PHRASES THAT SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY OF EXCEPTION IS OFTEN WRONG.
8. OFTEN, YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION IS A RECOLLECTION BY THE SUBCONSCIOUS AND OFTEN THE CORRECT ANSWER.
9. ANSWERS THAT SAY "ALL OF THE ABOVE" OR "NONE OF THE ABOVE" THAT IS NOT CONTAINED IN THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS IS OFTEN THE CORRECT ANSWER.
10. KNOW THE MATERIAL.
11. DON'T SELECT THE FIRST CORRECT ANSWER YOU COME TO. READ ALL THE CHOICES - CHOOSE THE MOST CORRECT.
12. READ QUESTIONS VERY CAREFULLY FOR IMPACT WORDS LIKE "NOT AND "EXCEPT."
13. READ THE QUESTIONS CLOSELY FOR INSTRUCTIONS THAT INCLUDE OR EXCLUDE TWO OR MORE OF THE CHOICES.
14. DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO RULE 1, 5, AND 10.
15. VISUALIZE THE CORRECT ANSWER FOR THE QUESTION BEFORE YOU READ THE CHOICES.
16. IF YOU CANNOT ELIMINATE ALL BUT TWO ANSWERS, FLAG IT - COME BACK AFTER YOU COMPLETE THE REST OF THE EXAM.
17. IF YOU CAN ELIMINATE 3 WRONG CHOICES, TAKE A CHANCE....EVEN ON TESTS THAT PENALIZE YOU FOR GUESSING.
18. FINALLY, THIS ABOVE ALL THINGS - KNUCKLE DOWN, BUCKLE DOWN, HUNKER DOWN, PUT YOUR SHOULDER TO THE WHEEL AND YOUR NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE AND LEARN THE MATERIAL.