Guidelines: Writing the APWH Long Essay Question (LEQ)

Remember that the LEQ is an analysis essay, not a report. Do not just “tell” about a topic—examine it, relate the information to your thesis statement, and use your knowledge to support your thesis statement.

**Point value:** 0-9 points possible (see rubric)

**Prompt types:** On the APWH exam you will have to write ONE of the following types of LEQs. You will get to choose between two. We will practice all types throughout the year.

- **Comparison:** What are the similarities and differences between two things; are they more similar or different; explain why these similarities or differences occurred.
- **Historical Causation:** What were the major causes and effects of an event; what were the most important causes or effects of an event. These prompts may ask you to analyze how something developed or was created.
- **Continuity and Change over Time:** What things changed and what things stayed the same over a time period; was there more change or more continuity over that time period; why did things change or stay the same?
- **Periodization:** Evaluate whether something was a major turning point in history, noting what things were like before and after the time period in question.

**Addressing and Understanding the Prompt:** Answer the question! The most common mistake students make is not answering the question asked in the prompt. For example, if you ask me what time it is, and I say, “My watch is black.” I have not answered your question! So, analyze the key words in the prompt. Look for:

- **Task words:** These tell you what you have to do
- **Content words:** These tell you what the topic area is; what you should write about
- **Limiting words:** These focus the essay

Example prompt: Computer have had significant impact on education in the 20th century. Discuss the changes they have made.

- **Task word:** Discuss
- **Content words:** Education, computers
- **Limiting words:** Changes, impact, 20th century

**Rubric:** Every LEQ you write will be scored by the rubric. Get to know it well. You will notice that the rubric for each type of prompt is basically the same, just the historical thinking skill being evaluated is different.
Essay Outline: Here is a generic outline to follow for the four types of LEQs.

Paragraph 1 (Intro)
A couple of sentences that set up time, place, and context. Must include dates, region(s). Context means analysis of broader historical events and/or processes relevant to the question. Demonstrates understanding of the broader context of the question.

Thesis statement that answers the question and includes clear organizing categories relevant to the prompt:
- Similarities/Differences for a Comparison LEQ
- Causes/Effects for a Historical Causation LEQ
- Continuities/Changes for a Continuity and Change over Time LEQ
- Taking a stand that a date/date range was or was not a turning point in history for a Periodization LEQ

Paragraph 2 (first body paragraph)
Topic sentence introducing the first organizing category
- Similarities for a Comparison LEQ
- Causes for a Historical Causation LEQ
- Continuities for a Continuity and Change over Time LEQ
- What the time period was like before the date/date range for a Periodization LEQ

At least FOUR pieces of specific, relevant, historical evidence supporting your thesis statement

Analysis—explain why/how the evidence supports the thesis. You must explain WHY something was a similarity, or WHY something was a cause, or WHY something was a continuity, depending on the prompt. Cannot simply list pieces of evidence. COMMENT ON/DISCUSS your evidence.

Paragraph 3 (second body paragraph)
Topic sentence introducing the second organizing category
- Differences for a Comparison LEQ
- Effects for a Historical Causation LEQ
- Changes for a Continuity and Change over Time LEQ
- What the time period was like after the date/date range for a Periodization LEQ

At least FOUR pieces of specific, relevant, historical evidence supporting your thesis statement

Analysis—explain why/how the evidence supports the thesis. You must explain WHY something was a difference, or WHY something was an effect, or WHY something was a change, depending on the prompt. Cannot simply list pieces of evidence. COMMENT ON/DISCUSS your evidence.

Paragraph 4 (Conclusion)
Synthesis: Extends the argument in thesis by doing ONE of the following in a few sentences:
- Discussing the same topic in a different time period or region in world history
- Relating the topic to a similar event in world history
- Discussing information, relevant to the topic, from disciplines outside history, such as science, math, art, etc.