

DBQ Guidelines

Break Down Prompt

- Pay attention to the verbs and themes of the prompt. Summarize the focus of the DBQ that claims will need to specifically address.

Planning Your Thesis + Argument Development

- Read documents and plan argument of your essay within 15 minutes.
- Group your documents into 2-3 different claims that answer the prompt.

Claim #1

Claim #2

Claim #3

Paragraph #1: Introduction – Contextualization + Thesis

Contextualization:

Big “C” contextualization explains a broader historical context and background of events, developments or processes that occur before, during or continue after the time frame of the question and are relevant to the prompt. This can be anywhere in the introduction paragraph, but I suggest your first few sentences. Essentially, big “C” contextualization situates your argument within history.

- This requires **outside** information and at least a **three sentences explanation**.

Example: The broader context of this time period included the emergence and development of early river valley civilizations. The Babylonian civilization was within the area of the Fertile Crescent which was one of many civilizations like those near the Nile, Indus or Yellow River Valleys. All of these civilizations moved towards new government structures, complex social structures, monumental architecture and codifying law codes. Similarly to Hammurabi’s Code, the later development of the Hebrew Ten Commandments also appeared during this time.

Thesis:

1-2 sentence statement that contains your 2-3 claims that you plan to defend and prove.

- _____ (verb from prompt - spread/changed/impacted/affected/led to/reacted because of/by _____ (claim #1), _____ (claim #2) and _____ (claim #3).
- _____ (claim #1) was the most remarkable accomplishment/reason/impact/effect while _____ (claim #2) and _____ (claim #3) were other reasons for _____ (question of prompt).

Example: “Hammurabi’s Code was not just because it treated different social classes unfairly, had harsh punishments for crimes, and discriminated against women.”

Paragraph #2-4: Claim Paragraphs

Topic Sentence with Claim

- Start paragraph with topic sentence which is a “mini-thesis” that summarizes the claim you are going to argue and support in that paragraph.

“Hammurabi’s Code was unjust because it treated social groups differently.”

Support with Evidence from Documents + Outside Evidence

- Use specific instances from documents to directly support and prove your claim in the paragraph.

“When reading Hammurabi’s Code it states that if a man knocks out the eye of another man, then his eye should also be knocked out. However if the same thing happened to a slave, there is a different punishment. In this case, you pay only half the value of the slave (Doc 1). This demonstrates how people were treated differently based on their role and position within the social hierarchy

- Include evidence that goes beyond the documents that you know from this course. As with the LEQ, include your own personal knowledge about the topic that wasn’t included in any of the documents. Use specific examples of people or events and link it to the DBQ topic.
- Weave and link together ideas from the documents and outside information to prove your claim in the topic sentence.

Argument Cue Words:

Supports Corroborates Links Similarly On the other hand Contradicts Differs Conflicts Demonstrates

Cite the Documents

- After utilizing a document, be sure to cite the document at the end of the sentence --> (Doc 1).

Analyze the Significance of the Documents Used using HIPPO.

- Analyze the significance of the documents in one of the following ways for each document used:
 - Historical Context of Document - Where is this document coming from? Often referred to as little “c” context, writers should point out how the local realities affected the content or reliability of the document. Connect why this historical context is important to understanding the document.

“Hammurabi’s Code was created around 1754 BCE and was used as a way to ensure rule and order within the context of the Babylonian empire. It was posted at the entrance of the city so those who entered understood the local culture, customs and rules. This demonstrates how important these laws were to the people in Babylon.”

- Intended Audience - Who is the audience of the document? Who is it written for? Connect why the audience of the source is important to understanding the document.

“This document’s intended audience were those living within Babylonian society. As it was posted for all to see, it was reasonable to expect all citizens to abide by its decrees”

- Point of View - How does the author’s perspective affect what was said? Understand how the person’s background, occupation, gender, social status, etc may impact what the author wrote.

“As a _____, the author _____.”

"Because the author is _____, he/she believes _____."

"As a king who desired to keep order and provide justice, Hammurabi created this law code and published it to provide a clear set of rules for the local community."

- o **Purpose** - What is the purpose of this document? What is the point? Be sure to dig into the unstated purpose, not the obvious purpose of what it says.

"The purpose of this document is to publish the 282 law codes so all people within the society would understand them as well as the specific consequences for violating them."

Complexity:

- How does the topic of this essay fit into history in other ways? Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question. A response may demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as doing in-depth analysis, giving multiple valid claims such as multiple similarities and differences, continuities and changes, or causes and effects. You can also explain relevant and insightful connections within and across periods or by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes.

"While the Code of Hammurabi was considered one of the first law codes published for the general public, this concept of memorializing legal codes continues throughout history. Within the United States, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights is displayed and widely published for all citizens to understand. The question of whether the Constitution is fair and just continues to be debated and critiqued as evidenced by the amendments that altered the Constitution to extend voting rights to African Americans and women."

Paragraph #5 – Conclusion/Synthesis

- Conclusion paragraph should contain a restatement of your thesis and argument. Be clear and specific. Also, make a brief comparison about the topic of your essay to a similar event in another region or time period..

Other Tips for DBQ Writing:

- **Introducing What an Author Says:**

X states that _____.

X acknowledges that _____, X

argues that _____.

X believes that _____, X

denies that _____, X

claims that _____.

X demonstrates that _____, X

insists that _____.

X questions whether that _____, X

reminds us that _____.

- **Using Quotations:**

Quotations should be less than 5 words to highlight a key phrase, word or small statement. Use ONLY if the words carry more power than summarizing the statement.

"Hammurabi states that he is trying to protect the people as "king of righteousness" (Doc 2)"