

## APUSH Long Essay Information

You will be given a choice between two long-essay prompts that focus on the same historical thinking skill but may apply to different time periods. The easiest way to think about this task is to think of the Long Essay as a DBQ without the documents.

You will have 35 minutes to answer the question you select.

Your essay will be evaluated on the following:

**Argumentation** - Develop a thesis or relevant argument that addresses all parts of the question.

**Use of Evidence** - Support the thesis using specific evidence, clearly linked to the thesis

**Targeted Historical Thinking Skill** - You will be assessed over one of the following historical thinking skills; causation, comparison, continuity and change over time, or periodization.

**Synthesis** - Your answer should synthesize the argument, evidence, and context in a coherent and persuasive essay.

Approach the essay using the following steps:

1. Analyze the question; figure out exactly what they want
2. Organize the evidence
3. Develop the thesis
4. Write the introductory paragraph
5. Write the supporting paragraphs and conclusion
6. Evaluate your essay

Here are some DOs and DON'Ts

- *Write essays in the third person:* avoid first person (I, we, etc), use active voice, not passive ("Edison created..." rather "...was created by Edison"), it sounds stronger
- *Use specific words:* Clearly identify persons, factors, and judgements; avoid vague verbs ("felt", "says") and vague references ("they", "others"). Rarely in history is evidence absolutely conclusive; avoid "all" and "none"
- *Define or explain key terms:* Terms such as, "liberal," "conservative," "sectionalism," or "manifest destiny" are considered part of your analysis and should be explained.
- *Communicate awareness of the complexity of history:* Distinguish between primary and secondary causes and effects, between significant and less important.
- *Anticipate counterarguments:* The strongest essay confront conflicting evidence, not to prove, but to show that you are aware of them.
- *Remain objective:* Don't argue politics, don't argue how some were "good guys" and others were "bad guys." DON'T USE SLANG!

- *Communicate the organization and logical development of your argument:* Each paragraph should develop a main point, which is clearly stated in your topic sentence. Use transition words between paragraphs.
- *Focus on the thesis in your conclusion, or leave it out:* Restate your thesis in a new and interesting manner, or explain its significance. Don't try to summarize your entire paper or introduce new evidence. No conclusion at all is better than a half-hearted one that was thrown together. If you are short on time and have a strong essay, you should receive no point penalty.

#### Evaluating the Long Essay

1. **Intro Paragraph** - How effectively does it prepare the reader for what they will be evaluating?
2. **Thesis** - How well does the thesis deal with all parts of the question? Does the thesis acknowledge the complexity of the question?
3. **Analysis** - Does the body of the essay provide analysis or simply describe the events (This happened, then this happened...)
4. **Evidence** - Is the thesis supported with substantial, relevant information? Is the evidence clearly linked to the thesis?
5. **Errors** - What minor or major errors in fact or analysis does the essay include?
6. **Presentation** - How well organized and persuasive is the essay? Do the paragraphs contain composition, sentence structure, word choice, and spelling that detracts from the essay?