

How to write a DBQ

1. Read the instructions and keep re-reading them until you understand them
2. Read the Historical Context
 - Underline key words or phrases to understand the overall meaning
3. Read the task
 - Star, underline, or circle the question that is asked
4. Brainstorm outside information to answer the question (do this **BEFORE** you even look at the documents!)
5. Read documents and underline key terms and information from them.
 - Be aware of the author and the date of the document to gain a better understanding of the perspective of the writer.
6. Answer the document questions- answers should be in full sentences!
7. Make an outline grid for the essay

Example:

What caused the fall of the Roman Empire?

	Social	Political	Military
Information from Documents	Doc. 3- Christianity Doc. 5- lack of initiative	Doc.1- Lack of political involvement	Doc. 2- Hired mercenaries Doc. 6- Invasions
Outside Information	-Reliance on social welfare	-Corruption -Lack of trust	-Invasions by barbarians from Germania -Civilian deaths led to need for hired military

8. Write the essay using the grid as a guide
9. Before handing the essay in--**PROOFREAD** and **CHECK FACTS**. Make sure that you have addressed all aspects of the task.

How to write a Thematic Essay

1. Read the instructions and keep re-reading them until you understand them
2. Read the Theme statement and brainstorm events from history that could fit into that theme
 - a. Underline key words or phrases to understand the overall meaning
3. Read the task
 - a. Star, underline, or circle the question that is asked
4. Read the suggestions at the bottom of the page. Circle those that you are most familiar with.
5. Make an outline grid for the essay using either the suggestions you circled or the items that you brainstormed from above.

Example:

Task:

- Identify two belief systems along with their founder(s).
- Describe the important beliefs for each system chosen.
- Compare and contrast the two systems selected.

Belief System	Founder(s)	Beliefs	Similarities/Differences
Judaism	Abraham	-Chosen people -Covenant with God -10 Commandments -Waiting for Messiah	Similarities: -Monotheistic -Similar Code of Conduct -Holy lands
Islam	Mohammad	-Reform of Judaism and Christianity -5 Pillars -Division of Sunni and Shiites	Differences: -Torah vs. Koran -When founded -Many conflicts today

6. Write the essay using the grid as a guide
7. Before handing the essay in--**PROOFREAD** and **CHECK FACTS**. Make sure that you have addressed all aspects of the task.

HOW TO TAKE A MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST

1. Read the entire question carefully.
2. Underline key terms, statistics, or people of significance.
3. Look for clues within the question; examples:
 - Using the information from the chart (make sure that the answer you chose is found in the chart or can be inferred from the information in the chart)
 - Look for terms or phrases such as: all of the following EXCEPT or which choice is an OPINION
 - Political Cartoons- read all of the text within the cartoon and interpret the meaning of any symbols that are present
4. BEFORE looking at the choices, think about the answer of the question.
5. Eliminate choices that are incorrect or are questionable.
6. When you have gotten your answer between two-three choices, look at the question again to see if you can further eliminate wrong answers.
7. If you are stumped on a question, skip it and return to it later.
8. Remember to pace yourself--- use the time available to answer each question as thoughtfully as possibly while still giving yourself time to finish.

If you find that you are having trouble with multiple choice tests on a regular basis you can:

- Stay after school for extra help- there may be an easy way to improve your skills.
- Practice multiple choice questions using www.regentsprep.org interactive multiple choice questions.
- Look over your old tests to see which types of questions you got wrong (i.e. charts, readings, cartoons, maps, specific knowledge, etc.) and drill yourself on that type of question or stay after for help with that type of question.
- Examine your studying techniques---are you putting enough time in, studying the right way, studying the right information? You may need to either study more or differently.

******Most Important******

Have a positive attitude; you can do it if you put your mind to it!
and for the other extreme...

Don't get cocky, kid! You will do your best if you take your time.

How to Study for a Test

There are many different ways to study and each person has their own individual “best” way to study; the problem is that many students either don’t put in the appropriate amount of time needed to be successful or they put in the time unsuccessfully. Here are some ideas:

1. Read over your notes and homework assignments for the unit. Underline or use a highlighter to focus on key themes and concepts.
2. Complete your study guide and review the information there.
3. Use your study guide to create your own organizational charts for the information. When you are able to summarize the information in your own words you are able to retain that information better.
4. Create your own study guide. Think about which information is key to understanding the topics discussed. Think of questions that would be asked about that information.
5. Make mnemonic devices to remember lists of items or the correct order of items. Example: Causes of World War I- M.A.I.N. = Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, Nationalism
6. Make flash cards for information that must be memorized.
7. Study with a parent, friend, or sibling. Have them ask you questions from your notes or study guide.

Studying tips:

"M.U.R.D.E.R." A Study System

- **Mood:**
Set a *positive mood* for yourself to study in.
Select the appropriate time, environment, and attitude
- **Understand:**
Mark any information **you don't understand** in a particular unit;
Keep a focus on one unit or a manageable group of exercises
- **Recall:**
After studying the unit,
stop and put what you have learned **into your own words**
- **Digest:**
Go back to what you did not understand and **reconsider the information**;
Contact external expert sources (e.g., other books or an instructor) if you still cannot understand it
- **Expand:**
In this step, ask **three kinds of questions** concerning the studied material:
 - If I could speak to the author, what questions would I ask or what criticism would I offer?
 - How could I apply this material to what I am interested in?
 - How could I make this information interesting and understandable to other students?

- **Review:**
Go over the material you've covered,
 Review what strategies helped you understand and/or retain information in the past and apply these to your current studies

Adapted from Hayes, John R., *The Complete Problem Solver*, Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, Hillsdale, NJ: 1989. ISBN: 0805803092

Do you have **concentration** issues? Here are some suggestions:

- **"Here I study"**
 Get a dedicated space, chair, table, lighting and environment
 Avoid your cellphone or telephone
 Put up a sign to avoid being disturbed or interrupted
 If you like music in the background, OK, but don't let it be a distraction. (Research on productivity with music versus without music is inconclusive)
- **Stick to a routine, efficient study schedule**
 Accommodate your day/nighttime energy levels
 See our Guide on [Setting goals and making a scheduling](#)
- **Focus**
 Before you begin studying, take a few minutes to summarize a few objectives, gather what you will need, and think of a general strategy of accomplishment
- **Incentives**
 Create an incentive if necessary for successfully completing a task, such as calling a friend, a food treat, a walk, etc.
 For special projects such as term papers, design projects, long book reviews, set up a special incentive
- **Change topics**
 Changing the subject you study every one to two hours for variety
- **Vary your study activities**
 Alternate reading with more active learning exercises
 If you have a lot of reading, try the [SQ3R method](#)
 Ask yourself how you could increase your activity level while studying? Perhaps a group will be best? Creating study questions?
 Ask your teacher for alternative strategies for learning. The more active your learning, the better.
- **Take regular, scheduled breaks that fit you**
 Do something different from what you've been doing (e.g., walk around if you've been sitting), and in a different area
- **Rewards**
 Give yourself a reward when you've completed a task

From: <http://www.studygs.net/concen.htm>

*For links to more study help sites, see *Mrs. Clemens'* website (www.mrsclomens.com)