DBQ Commandments

These are successful and proven hints to writing a great (8-9) DBQ (or any other essay).

1. **READ THE PROMPT.**

Make certain that you understand the prompt. Understand what the prompt directs you to do (compare/contrast, analyze, evaluate, etc.), understand the subject of the prompt, and make certain to stay within the time framework of the prompt.

\*\*Brainstorm your outside information before reading the documents so you are not a victim of **THE POWER OF SUGGESTION**

2. Spend the first fifteen minutes reading, analyzing and note taking over the documents. If you finish start your opening paragraph and then you can transfer it over to your DBQ booklet.

**3. WRITE AN INTRODUCTION**

Your introduction sets the tone for your paper. It should introduce the topic by setting it up historically, i.e., what preceded your topic, etc.

1. **WRITE A CLEAR AND COMPLEX THESIS**

Your thesis must be specific and presage your main points. Never write a thesis that is vague or general. Never simply re-write the thesis statement.

1. **WRITE CLEAR MAIN POINTS**

Introduce your main points in descending order of importance, preferably in the order that they appear in the thesis. Each topic sentence should in some way refer back to the thesis. Always try to make connections with other main points.

1. **WRITE A CONCLUSION**

The conclusion should summarize your main points, refer back to the thesis, and/or look ahead to the impact of topic or thesis on future events. If pressed for time, at least write a concluding sentence or two.

1. **USE PLENTY OF OUTSIDE INFORMATION**

Outside information must be included. Be specific: include dates, names, events, facts, etc. IN THE U.S. HISTORY DBQ, THIS IS REQUIRED!!!

**8. USE THE DOCUMENTS**

You must use at least 3/4 of your documents. Documents may be attributed directly or indirectly. Always pay attention to the date, author (if any), point of view, etc of the document. In APUSH however, attribution is not as important as it is in AP World History. **IN U. S. HISTORY DO NOT LET THE DOCUMENTS DRIVE THE RESPONSE; THEY ARE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE!!!**

Hint: Analyze 2-3 documents from Point of View and context!!!

Hint: Think about why they have included this document. This will help you figure out how to fit it in your essay. Each document should have 1-2 purposes.

**9. USE PAST TENSE**

Always write in the past tense!!! Do not change verb tense in mid-sentence or mid-paragraph.

**10. TRANSITION ( Linkage) IS IMPORTANT**

Always connect sentences with transitional words and/or phases. Paragraphs always to be connected in some fashion. Concluding sentences in paragraphs are important. See key words list.

**11. ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES (Power Words)**

To enrich your essay and make your argument more convincing and persuasive, appropriate adverbs and adjectives should be used. Good use of adverbs and adjectives create a greater analytical sense.

# OTHER HINTS

12. Please write legibly

13. Cite documents using the following technique. Citations (Doc. A) should be placed at the end of sentence or quote.

14. Use quotes sparingly and never, never use long quotes!!!!

15. The order the documents appear is almost always helpful.

\*Chronological- trace the historical development

\*Compare and Contrast different viewpoints

16. Watch for inconsistencies within and among the documents- will present different viewpoints on issues. Your job is to explain why. Remember POV (point of view) is important and readers want to see you recongize the contridictions within your essay and explain it. Look for difference in:

-political ideology

-class

-race

-religion

-gender