**New Guidelines for DBQs**

1. Read the question carefully. Understand that you are to answer a question, not simply to discuss documents. Approach it as an essay question for which you **DON’T** have documents.

2. Be alert to the time parameters of the question.

3. Make certain you understand what the question asks you to look for in the documents.

4. Establish potential categories **BEFORE** you examine the documents. You may need to adjust these after examining the documents. If the question gives you categories, use those categories.

5. After you read the question and **BEFORE** you examine the documents, jot down all of the outside information that comes to mind from that time period.

6. Formulate a tentative thesis statement **BEFORE** you read the documents. You may have to adjust this, but in will give you something to consider the documents in relation to.

7. Examine the document for the **MAIN IDEA** relative to this particular question. Do not simply state what is in the document or tell what the document says.

8. Use the **CORE STRUCTURE.** Begin with a thesis statement that fully addresses the question, takes a position, establishes organizational categories, and follow normal essay writing procedure. Look for organizational cues in the question itself.

9. YOU must determine the logical organization of your essay; the arrangement of the documents should not dictate that organization. Avoid referring to the documents in the exact order in which they appear.

10. You should refer to the majority of documents in your essay, but you do not have to use every one.

11. Do not merely paraphrase the document. Show that you understand how the essence of the document relates to your thesis. Extract the MAIN IDEA of the document relative to this question. **NEVER** start a sentence with any form of "Document A says......" The **IDEA** of the document should be the subject of the sentence not the document itself.

12. Avoid lengthy direct quotations from the documents like the plague. You are to be the author of the essay, not the editor.

13. Attempt to ascertain why each document is included. Documents are designed to trigger the memory of outside information. Many documents can be used to support both sides of a question. Carefully analyze each document to determine how it can support your thesis and clearly relate it back to your thesis with interpretive commentary. Focus on using level two questions to draw inferences from the documents.

14. Bring in as much outside specific factual information as you can. Use the documents as clues for the outside information readers are looking for. **No single thing is as important as outside information in the DBQ.**

1. The manner in which you refer to the documents is inconsequential. The most unobtrusive way to refer to the documents is simple to put the letter of the document in parenthesis following the sentence in which it is used (A). This will help both you and the reader keep up with the number of documents that are being used.
2. Remember, direct your discussion of both document based and outside information toward supporting your thesis. Use **interpretive commentary to d**irectly relate the information back to the question
3. The reader has only approximately two minutes with your essay. Make your information easy to extract.
4. **CHILL!!!** The DBQ is nothing more than writing an essay with a cheat sheet.