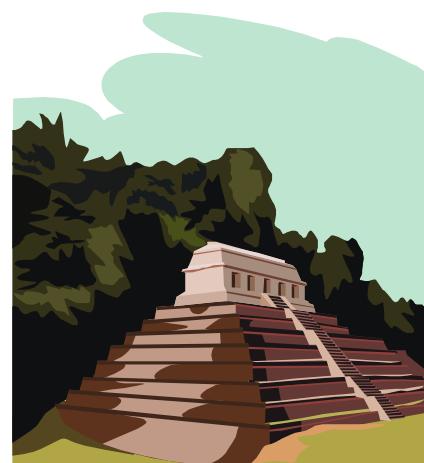


DBQ WORKSHOP

CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS

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AP US History



Writing a History Essay

1. Have a thesis statement
2. Get to the point
3. Use factual evidence
4. Take contrary evidence into account
5. End the essay simply & cleanly
6. Always write in third person.
7. Do NOT use **personal pronouns**
8. Do NOT misspell or use poor grammar
9. Do NOT **ask rhetorical questions**

Question Modes in a History Essay...

- Analyze
- Assess/evaluate
- Compare/Contrast
- Criticize
- Describe
- Discuss
- Explain
- Identify
- Define
- Enumerate
- Illustrate
- Interpret
- Justify
- Prove
- Rank
- Trace

The Thesis Statement

MAGIC FORMULA:

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

X= the strongest point **against** your argument

A,B, & C= the 3 strongest points **for** your argument

Y= the position you will be taking (your stand on the prompt)

Assess the validity of the following statement:

Example 1

“Teaching is the most important profession in the world and everyone should consider it as a possible career choice.”

Pros

- Emotionally satisfying
- Make a difference in the world
- Summers off
- Work during the summer for more pay
- Not much competition in job market
- Most of the times only need a bachelors degree

Cons

- Physically demanding
- Very low pay
- Long work hours
- Not much respect in our society
- Requires certification
- Have to do lots of additional work– coach, tutor etc.
- Work usually comes home with you

Sample Thesis 1

- X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

Teaching is an emotionally satisfying profession. However, teachers rank consistently at the bottom of the pay scale, often work at home without just compensation, and receive a lack of respect in our society. Therefore, teaching is clearly not the most important profession and would be an unwise career choice.

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

- *Teaching is an emotionally satisfying profession. However, teachers rank consistently at the bottom of the pay scale, often work at home without just compensation, and receive a lack of respect in our society. Therefore, teaching is clearly not the most important profession and would be an unwise career choice.*

MAGIC FORMULA:

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

X= the strongest point **against** your argument

A,B, & C= the 3 strongest points **for** your argument

Y= the position you will be taking (your stand on the prompt)

Assess the validity of the following statement:

Example 2

“Christopher Columbus was a great man and explorer and we all should be grateful because we owe him the discovery and conquest of the Americas.”

Pros

- Brought new technologies to the Americas.
- Introduced new crops.
- Introduced domestic animals, especially the horse.
- Obtained much needed resources for Europe.
- Established the route between the Old World and the New world.

Cons

- Brought diseases the natives could not tolerate.
- Used natives as slaves for their own benefit.
- Banned indigenous religious and cultural ceremonies.
- Established new governments eliminating existing political structures.
- Caused the extinction of most ancient American Civilizations.

Sample Thesis 2

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

Christopher Columbus was a great man and explorer. However, the people of the civilizations that existed in the Americas were enslaved , their religion and culture prohibited and chastised and eventually the majority were decimated by the diseases brought by the Spaniards to the new continent. Therefore, Columbus should not be considered great because his actions ultimately led to the disappearance of many great civilizations.

X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.

Christopher Columbus was a great man and explorer. However, the people of the civilizations that existed in the Americas were enslaved , their religion and culture prohibited and chastised and eventually the majority were decimated by the diseases brought by the Spaniards to the new continent. Therefore, Columbus should not be considered great because his actions ultimately led to the disappearance of many great civilizations.

Grouping/Categorizing Documents & Outside Information

Categorizing information involves creating simple or sophisticated groupings of information. Often, the question posed will determine the types of categories used:

- **Cultural:** the technology, arts and institutions of a given group of people at a given time.
- **Economic:** the ways that people meet their basic needs; the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; includes such issues as domestic and international trade, monetary policies and taxes.

Geographic: the environment in which people live and interact.

Ideological: relating to the ideas, the manner or the content of the thinking characteristics of an individual, group or culture.

Intellectual: the people's philosophy, values, beliefs and attitudes.

Legal: pertaining to the law; conforming to or permitted by established laws or rules.

Political: gaining, seeking and organizing power; events related to the functions of government: making laws, enforcing laws and interpreting laws.

Religious: religion or beliefs, whether organized or traditional and the religious institutions of the culture.

(It is sometimes viewed as a subcategory of culture, but can be separated to add emphasis)

Social: people in groups, their living together and relations with one another; includes such issues as gender, economic status and ethnicity.

Constitutional: in accordance with or authorized by the Constitution of the United States or the constitution of individual states or countries.

HOW ADVANCED WERE THE MAYAN, AZTEC, AND INCAN CIVILIZATIONS? WHAT WERE THEIR MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

Categories	Cultural ?	Political ?	Economic ?
Level 3			
Level 2			
Level 1			

Level 3 thesis= not enough info.

Level 1 thesis= too much info.

Level 2 thesis= just right

Prewriting Organization

HOW ADVANCED WERE THE MAYAN, AZTEC, AND INCAN CIVILIZATIONS? WHAT WERE THEIR MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

- The prewriting organization chart helps you organize content knowledge, argument and evidence to better understand the task (topic) you are to work on and write a good thesis statement.

It asks the following five components:

Subject: What, specifically, is the question about?

Mode: What is this question asking me to do?

Time frame: What is the time period that is being addressed in the question? Does it include change over time?

Parts/categories: What categories you need to answer the prompt or question.

Vocabulary: Are there any words of which you don't know the meaning?

Prewriting Organization

Prompt: *HOW ADVANCED WERE THE MAYAN, AZTEC, AND INCAN CIVILIZATIONS? WHAT WERE THEIR MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS?*

Subject:

Mode:

Time frame:

Parts/ categories:

Vocabulary:

- What do you know that will help you answer this question?
(Documents, outside info.)

- Take a position

Why did you take this position?

Now put your information or facts into categories:

1.	2.	3.

Which facts best support your position? Rank the order of your facts above.

Introduction Paragraph

- Write an introduction sentence on the topic, set the time period or date
- Write your thesis statement. (**X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y.**)

Does your thesis statement:

Yes No

Fully address the question?

_____ _____

Take a position about the question?

_____ _____

Explain why you took that position?

_____ _____

Provide organizational categories?

_____ _____

Body Paragraphs

- Each supporting paragraph should contain the following:
 - a. Document analysis to category (1-2 sentences per doc.)
 - Introduce doc. #1, analyze
 - Introduce doc. #2, analyze
 - b. So what? (historical significance)
Min. 4 pieces of outside information somewhere within the paragraph (doesn't have to be at end).
 - c. A conclusion sentence that summarizes the information create a transition to the next paragraph.

Paragraphs:

Each paragraph should contain one major point that was discussed in your thesis, which advances your argument.

Style:

Write in clear, concise English. Use the least number of words possible to make your point. **Always write your history paper in the past tense.** Short in sentences, this helps you to make your points clearly and forcefully.

Quotations:

Keep all quotes short: The reader is looking for what **YOU** have to say not someone else's words.

Write a Conclusion

A conclusion should reinforce the significance of the evidence presented in the essay as a response to the question asked.

It should not contain new information.

It should reinforce the thesis and synthesize the main points from the supporting paragraphs.

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER ESSAYS

Civilizations of the Americas

Following each introduction and thesis below is the conclusion in the essay. Find the thesis statement. Determine if the conclusion reinforces the thesis.

Introduction

The first civilizations of the Americas have left us with many important architectural, farming and building techniques. These people were the first to create irrigation systems, calendars and many other things that we still use today. The three main civilizations of the Americas are the Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs. There are more civilizations but these three are the most important. Most of their lives are a mystery and we are still discovering their way of life; but one thing is for sure, they were very sophisticated for their time and we are still learning from them.

Conclusion

These ancient civilizations were very important in our lives because they taught us some important things that are still used today. The Incas taught us mostly about building and farming techniques. The Mayas, or the “Greeks of the Americas”, left us with their calendar which is very similar to the one we use today. Then there are the Aztecs, these people taught us that the civilization that is strong, is most likely to prevail in life. All of these ancient civilizations are the ones that molded us into the people that we are today and because of their ingenious ideas we can live the way we do today.

Does this conclusion reinforces the thesis?

Introduction

The Mayans, the Aztecs and the Incas were the three main civilizations in Central and South America that had established great advancement in various areas. From 300 A.D to the 1500 these native Indians had astonishing developments, that afterwards became accomplishments. They strived in the grounds of architecture, agriculture, science, math and language.

Can you identify the thesis?

Conclusion

Every civilization, whether it was the Mayans, the Aztecs or the Incas dominated and acquired a certain wisdom in a different field. Each and every one of these accomplished tasks symbolized the advancement within them. No matter what they were mostly acclaimed for, architecture, agriculture, science, math, or language they were all important, and all of them intercept in a way. The type of land defines the architecture and agriculture because for them to thrive they had to know where to construct and how to construct, and create a well system for the benefit of the crops as well as the structure. In this case enter the fields of science and math. To construct one has to know about engineering like the Incas. As said before every science incorporates math, therefore, all natives in one way or another, used a mathematical method. Lastly the language, although communicated differently by glyphs like the Mayans, pictographs by the Aztecs, and tying strings like the Incas they sent a message, and realizing all of these civilizations gave their intellectual thoughts and made a difference that changed the lives of so many people it became an advancement, it became a progress, a new vision not only to the natives, but for the Europeans, as well as the people today. For the resources they had in the land the Mayans, the Aztecs, and the Incas were very advanced indeed.

Does this conclusion reinforces the thesis? Does it include new information? Can it be simplified?

Introduction

Some of the most advanced civilizations in the Americas, before contact with the Europeans, were the Mayans, the Aztecs, and the Incas. First, how do we know when a civilization is advanced or not? A society can be considered advanced when their discoveries are still relevant after a long time. These three civilizations were able to shape great empires and possess vast knowledge on many subjects; some so advanced that we still use their technology today. They gained new lands and technologies using different methods and did so because of different reasons. Although these civilizations were different to each other in many ways, they were all conquering and expanding prospering empires in America before the Spanish did in 1519 when Hernán Cortés arrived in Mexico.

Can you identify the thesis?

Is it a well constructed history paper thesis?

Conclusion

As I stated at the beginning of this paper: a society can be deemed advanced if their technology is still relevant after a long time. The Mayans devised a calendar that is so precise that it resembles the one used today and they discovered how to make rubber products 2,000 years before Goodyear patented rubber in 1843. The Aztecs were one of the first civilizations in the world to have mandatory education. Incan people performed brain surgery that is still done by doctors today and they conducted a census, an essential part of keeping track of an empire. In conclusion, all three civilizations were advanced because they all made discoveries that have shaped mankind over time and are still in use today.

Does this conclusion reinforces the thesis?

Introduction

When it comes down to the most advanced ancient civilizations of the world, people limit themselves to mention some of the more advanced Eastern Ancient Civilizations, such as the Egyptians, Chinese, or Mesopotamians. However, the Incan, Mayan, and Aztec civilizations were capable of great achievements spread over the fields of astronomy, architecture, irrigation, math, and sociological structure and design. I strongly believe that the often overlooked achievements of these Early American Civilizations can compete head-to-head with those of the Eastern Ancient Civilizations. All of these civilizations surged during the end stages of the Neolithic time stage (circa 3300 BCE) regarding technological, social, and cultural progress, which is why I believe they're all fairly comparable with no type of individual advantage.

Can you identify the thesis? Is it using the formula X. However, A, B, and C. Therefore, Y. ?

Conclusion

All the achievements the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas left behind for us to discover are often wrongly overlooked, seeing that their contributions have been previously unmentioned but still there.

Nowadays, modern metropolis like London use the division system of Tenochtitlan, the Incan irrigation system of terraces is applied to modern day crop cultivation, and the only reason we didn't adopt the Mayan Calendar was because European colonizers didn't understand it and forced their Gregorian calendar on the natives. Apart from what they left to the world, they also left behind a descent of rich culture within their regional borders. Millions of people in Central America speak Quiché (Mayan) as a native tongue, as well as Nahuatl (Aztec) in Central Mexico, and Quechuan (Incan) in parts of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The genius of these three cultures is ought to be recognized more often, even though their legendary legacy will be forever remembered in history.

Does this conclusion reinforce the thesis?

Next step....

Do your own!