

How to Answer the Document Based Question (DBQ)

Kienast

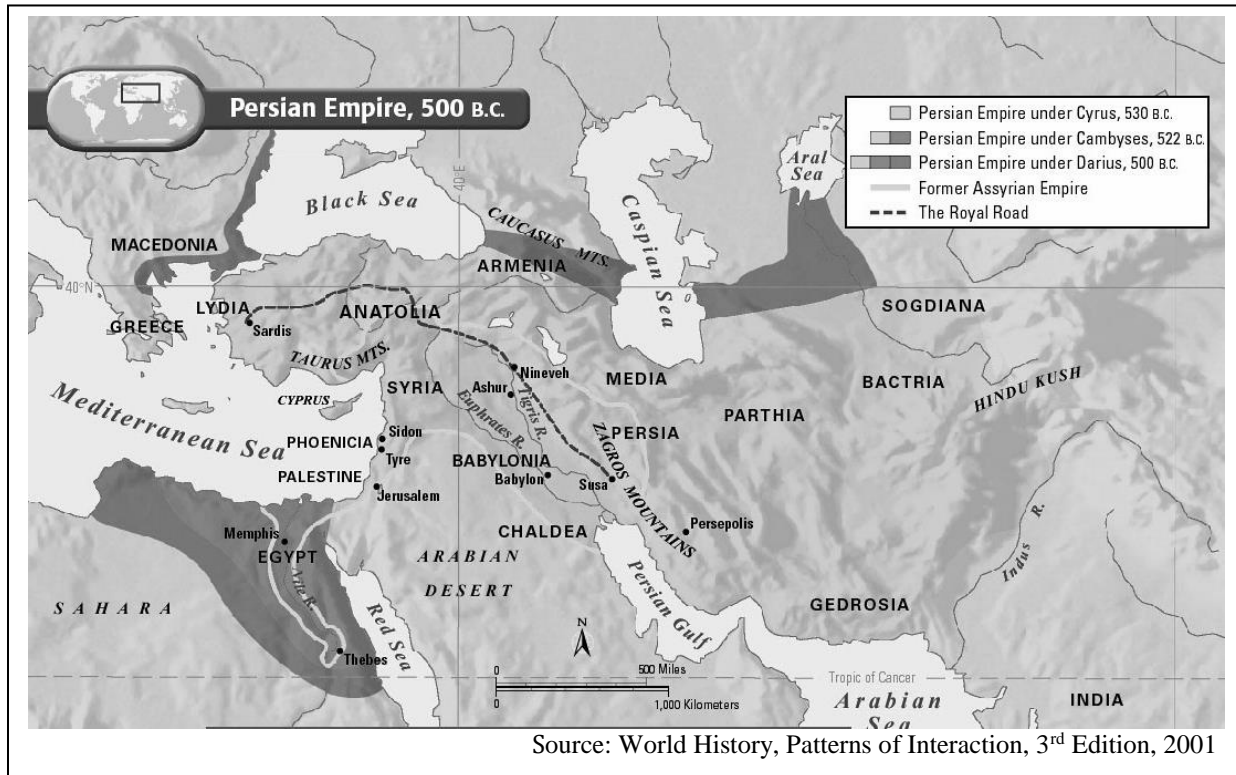
DBQ Step-by-Step

1. **Read** the question.
2. Read each document carefully and write down how each document answers the question. Later you will need to specifically discuss how the evidence contained within each document answers the question.
3. After the analysis of a document, consider the point of view of the author. You need to always be thinking about how a person's view might be impacted by their time in history, their role in society, or what they hoped to accomplish by writing the document. You will need to analyze POV for a minimum of three documents. (Try for four)
4. Develop a thesis statement. Include context in thesis statement (discuss what historical developments were going on during the time period in question)
5. Can you group some of the documents together? Try to group similar documents together.
6. Are there any societies, factors, ideas, etc. that are important to answering the question but are not included in the documents? Is there some crucial information missing that needs to be discussed? (this is called outside evidence). You should have 3-4 pieces of outside evidence.
7. Why does all this matter? (include analysis in conclusion after restating thesis)
 - Did another part of history impact this development or was the next period in history impacted by this development?
 - If this essay is about a social development, how did the social development impact culture, politics, or economics?
 - If the essay is about a specific area of the world, then how did another region impact the area in question or how did the area in question impact another world area?
8. The essay should be structured as follows:
 - Paragraph: Thesis statement and general context
 - Paragraph: Topic sentence, evidence, POV, and outside evidence from Group 1 docs
 - Paragraph: Topic sentence, evidence, POV, and outside evidence from Group 2 docs
 - Paragraph: Topic sentence, evidence, POV, and outside evidence from Group 3 docs (if needed...you may only have two groups)
 - Paragraph: Conclusion and analysis of why all of this matters

So, let's look at a sample DBQ. What follows is a simplistic DBQ and a sample annotated essay. Let's say the question is:

Question: Analyze imperial control techniques that were used in the period from 600 BCE to 600 CE.

Document 1



Document 2

Source: Ashoka, leader of the Mauryan Empire from 268-232 BCE, from the *Ashokavadana*, a 2nd-century CE text translated into Chinese by Fa Hien in 300 CE.

May the partisans of all doctrines in all countries unite and live in a common fellowship. For all alike profess mastery to be attained over oneself and purity of the heart. The common doctrine is this: love your emperor as you would your father. Respect your father as you would all in authority. In this way, all will be united and in peace.

Document 3

Source: Han official decree, 150 BCE

In order to honor and glorify the emperor, all citizens will contribute to state projects for one week per year. In this way, the labor of the people will show proper respect for authority.

Document 4

Source: Zhongshu Dong, advisor to Han emperors, *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*, 120 BCE

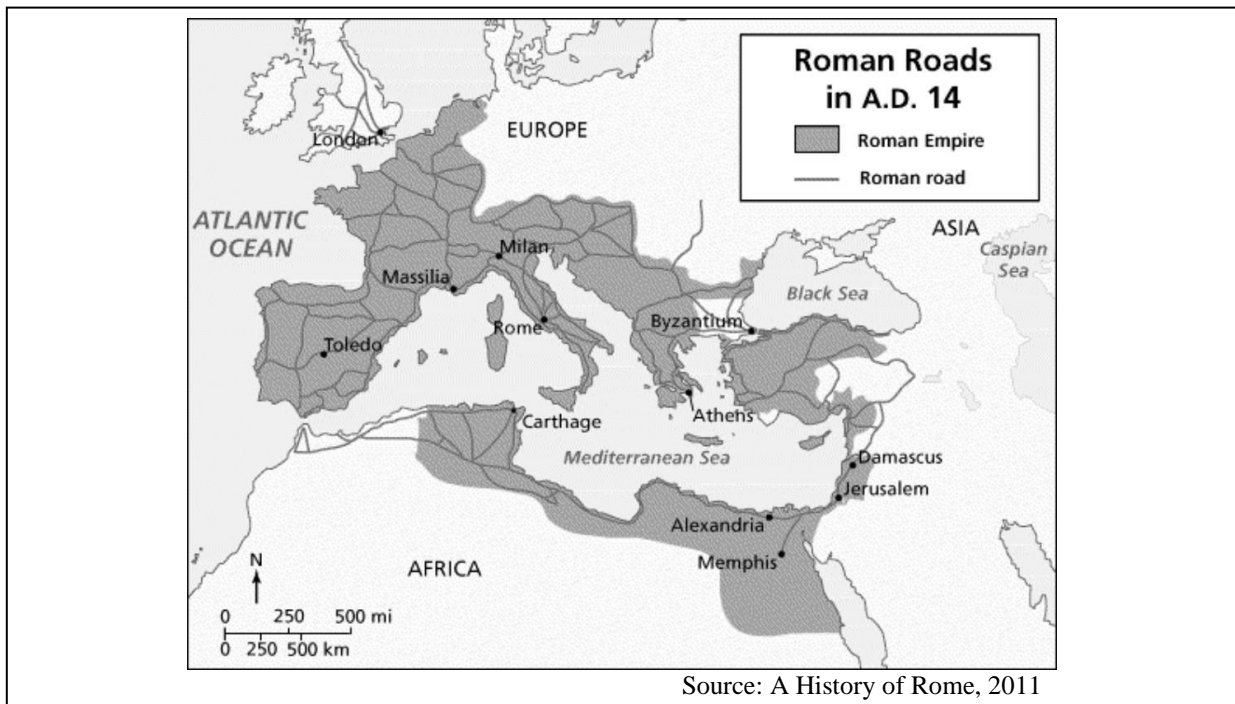
Heaven establishes kings not on behalf of rulers but on behalf of the people; if order is to be maintained, then the people must obey the decrees of their emperor as if they were listening to the wise sages of the past or their own wise fathers.

Document 5

Source: Emperor Augustus Caesar, decree in response to a rebellion in Egypt, 5 CE

The barbaric peoples of the empire must demonstrate their loyalty through tributes. Conquered peoples must understand that Rome is in charge in order for stability to be maintained. In the spirit of this effort, a percentage of conquered populations will be given as slaves and a percentage of land will be given to Romans as estates.

Document 6



Document 7

Source: Apostle Paul, Roman citizen and early Christian missionary, *New Testament of the Holy Bible*, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, circa 100 CE

Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Sample Essay (bracketed portions are notations and should *not* be included in your essay)

Empires during the period from 600 BCE to 600 CE used roads, tribute, and patriarchal governments to control their people. [Thesis] This period in history saw the rise of imperial governments out of much weaker states. As empires conquered more territory, they learned that steps needed to be taken to assure that the various people throughout their lands remained obedient. Trade became an important development during this time period and empires wanted to assure stability in order to promote trade. [general context; what is going on, rise of empires and rise of long-distance trade, that would lead to this development]

One technique used to control populations was the building of roads by empires. [topic sentence to show grouping of documents] Persia built roads across the empire to promote trade, especially between India and the Middle East, and to control their populations in the event of rebellion. Roads allowed faster travel and allowed for soldiers to quickly move into areas of unrest (DOC 1). [evidence; note that you must cite the document that you used right after you present evidence. Note that the evidence answers the question and shows how roads specifically were used to control empires] Other empires such as Rome and Han China also used roads for the same purpose. Rome controlled all trade along the Mediterranean, but also controlled most of the land in Europe, leading to a need for road building (DOC 6). [evidence and analysis] Han China built an extensive network of roads between their port cities like Hangzhou and their capital city, Chang'an. These roads helped promote trade between the Silk Roads and the Pacific. [outside evidence example; note that Han Chinese roads are not in any of the documents, but give another good example of road building]

Tribute was also used to control empires during the period. [topic sentence to show grouping of documents] China under the rule of the Han Dynasty created a system of corvée labor that required all citizens to serve the state through building projects. In this way, Chinese citizens demonstrated their loyalty to the emperor, showed that the emperor was their superior (DOC 3). [evidence and explanation showing how an imperial control technique functioned] While this document was likely produced to ensure that people remained loyal, it was also produced to

create a system of *corvée* labor that allowed for building projects. The Han needed roads built for trade and the Great Wall had to be maintained in order to stop the Xiongnu nomads from invading. **[POV; shows purpose of document]** Rome also used tribute to control their populations. Slaves and land were required as a form of tribute in Rome (DOC 5).

[evidence] Again, this tribute was used as a way for conquered populations to show allegiance to Rome and prevent future rebellions. Augustus would have produced this decree in order to keep people in the empire from rebelling, but also to reward the elites within his society by granting them slaves and land. As the emperor, Augustus had an interest in keeping the empire stable by preventing rebellions and rewarding elites who were loyal. **[POV; shows purpose of document and why Augustus specifically had this view]** Subjects of Mayan kings were also forced to pay tribute. Most often the form of tribute came in the form of human sacrifice. While one purpose of human sacrifice was to appease the gods, it was also done to show loyalty to the king. **[outside evidence]**

Most empires also managed their populations by creating patriarchal societies. **[topic sentence to show grouping of documents]** The Mauryan Empire had a patriarchal society that was designed to create obedience. Mauryan leaders wanted to be worshipped like a father and so demanded that obedience to one's father began in the home (DOC 2). **[evidence and explanation]** Ashoka's views might be inaccurately demonstrated due to the source. This document is a translation from the later Han society which favored patriarchy due to its Confucian beliefs. There is the possibility that Fa Hien deliberately made Ashoka sound patriarchal to ensure that his society accepted patriarchy. **[POV; shows possible problem with Fa Hien's nationality]** The Han emperors also believed that patriarchy would create stability. The emperors demanded that they be respected like a father would be respected (DOC 4). **[evidence and explanation]** As an advisor to the emperor, Zhongshu Dong would write anything that would keep his emperor in power in order to maintain his own position. **[POV]** Lastly, the Romans also believed in patriarchy as a way to maintain order. Christianity, the religion eventually adopted by the Roman Empire, reflects the Roman values of patriarchy through demands for women to be obedient (DOC 7). As a Roman, Paul would have grown up in a patriarchal society and would have this view as a result. Paul may have also been trying to make Christianity seem more patriarchal in order to appeal to Romans who used patriarchy as a way to unite their empire. **[POV]** The Gupta Empire used the caste system to ensure a patriarchal society. Hinduism taught that a person had to be a Brahman priest in order to become one with the universal spirit and only males could be priests within the Brahman class. Therefore women had to lead an obedient life in order to be reincarnated as a male. **[outside evidence]**

Roads, tributes and patriarchy were all used as ways to control populations in empires that enveloped large numbers of people. **[conclusion]** One reason why these empires knew to use these techniques was due to the failure of earlier attempts at empire. The Assyrians, for example, tried to unite their empire without roads and failed to control it as a result. This failure was noted by later empires, such as the Romans and the Persians. **[connection to earlier time period/another society which impacted later time period/another society]** The political purpose of uniting empires also had a cultural impact of spreading religions across trade routes. Roads were not only used to control empires, but also to spread religions such as Christianity by the Romans. **[connection: how a political development, roads for unity, led to a cultural change...spread of religion]** **[only have to include ONE connection]**

AP World History DBQ Rubric

	POINTS EARNED
Thesis answers the question.	
Explain at least one event or development during or before this time period that would explain the topic of the question. Set the stage for your thesis! (should be in opening paragraph)	
Uses three documents to support thesis argument.	
Uses six documents to support thesis argument.	
One piece of additional evidence/fact (not found in documents) that is relevant to the question.	
TOTAL POINTS EARNED (5 POSSIBLE)	
BONUS POINT (+2.5%): Analysis of author's point of view, purpose, audience, historical situation for three documents. Must explain , not just identify!	
BONUS POINT (+2.5%): Complex analysis (impact of subject upon next time period, connections between social, economic, and political issues, continuity and change within scope of docs)	