**Section II: Part A**

**Document Based**—1 Question | 60 Minutes (includes 15-minute reading period) | 25% of Exam Score

* Assess written, quantitative, or visual materials as historical evidence.
* Develop an argument supported by an analysis of historical evidence.
* **Update for 2017-18:** Five minutes have been added to the time allotted for the document-based question, which will now focus on topics from periods 3 to 8.

**Understanding the New AP US History DBQ Rubric**

June 14, 2016 5 min read in [Test Prep](https://www.albert.io/blog/category/test-prep/)

Just like a touchdown and extra point, the new [AP US History DBQ](https://www.albert.io/blog/how-to-write-a-new-ap-us-history-dbq/) is worth seven points. The DBQ is 25% of your final score on the exam, so it is crucial for you to understand the changes to the rubric, as well as how to write the best DBQ possible.

**Total Possible Points**: **7****Thesis and Argument Development: 0-2 points**

This strand of the rubric targets your historical argumentation skills. To do well on this strand, you must:

* Write a thesis that is “historically defensible” (i.e. that you can back up with historically accurate arguments. In other words, you must use *facts*)
* Respond to ALL parts of the question
* Use this thesis to develop a cogent argument that takes into account historical evidence AND demonstrates a relationship between different types of historical evidence

It is that last bullet point that may confound you the most. Remember, the question will be complex and ask about relationships between different types of evidence.

You may be asked to demonstrate how different types of evidence contradict one another, corroborate or strengthen one another, or change one another. The important thing is that you demonstrate a strong understanding of all the evidence as well as how each piece is related to the other.

*A few more helpful tips…*

You may be used to writing a standard five-paragraph essay with one opening paragraph, of which the thesis is the last line. Forget this style.

For a DBQ, you must locate your thesis in either the introduction OR conclusion of your essay, but remember: your intro and conclusion can be LONGER than one paragraph. This flexibility gives you room to write a thesis that explicitly addresses all parts of the question, makes an accurate and well-supported argument, and uses complex reasoning to illustrate historical relationships and reasoning. In other words, a thesis for a DBQ will never look like a spitback answer, like “World War One started on July 28, 1914.” You can expect your thesis to be longer than that, and in fact, the College Board takes into account that your thesis may well be longer than one sentence.

**Document Analysis (0-2 points)**

This strand of the rubric targets your ability to analyze evidence and use the evidence to support the argument laid out in your thesis.