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The Effect of Metacognitive Reflective Tools on Historical Writing Ability and Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

Previous research has revealed that students typically struggle with analytical writing, particularly if it deviates from the commonly taught "writing structure" (Murphree, 2014). This struggle is frequently coupled with a lack of understanding of course content materials, or the often-ambiguous nature of analysis in writing, which students typically do not encounter in a structured, standards-based classroom. The pressure surrounding these writing struggles is seemingly amplified in a rigorous, high-performing dual-enrollment high school setting where students are required to demonstrate proficiency in analytical ability and argumentative writing prior to their 10th grade year.

This study aims to develop a more comprehensive model to teaching analytical writing by implementing a combination of a skills-based approach and an approach that promotes self-efficacy and meta-cognitive reflection. This combination seeks to not only alleviate anxiety and lack of confidence in the writing process, but also equip students with tools that can increase the accuracy of self-assessment and overall writing scores.

The effect of metacognitive tools on student analytical writing in this study is measured primarily through student performance on a series of AP World History-style Document Based Question (DBQ) essays and academic confidence self-evaluation surveys. Data consists of outcomes from one baseline DBQ (prior to supplemental instruction) and outcomes from two DBQ essays after direct instruction of three metacognitive tools and the introduction of a series of surveys designed to promote self-efficacy. Each measure was cross analyzed based on the introduction of a series of three metacognitive strategies to aid in writing DBQs (Pre-write Graphic Organizer, Formatting Guide, and Peer Evaluation Tool) and compared to the baseline scores collected after the pre-intervention DBQ Assessment.

Preliminary results indicate that average student confidence, as measured by self-efficacy surveys prior to each DBQ writing assignment, rose over time, with content-based confidence and overall DBQ scoring confidence exhibiting the greatest change. Students initially demonstrated a period of "false confidence" during their baseline assessment, followed by a dip (lack of confidence) and rise (increasing confidence) correlating with increased accuracy in scoring as time progressed. Students' ability to accurately predict their success on the DBQ rubric increased over time.

However, the greatest improvement in this metacognitive skill can be observed in areas related to content knowledge.

Keywords

metacognitive, reflection, analytical writing, history

Introduction

Students historically find analytical writing in the humanities to be a challenging and often mysterious endeavor. This is frequently coupled with a lack of understanding of course content materials, or the often-ambiguous nature of analysis in writing, which students typically do not encounter in a structured, standards-based classroom. Regardless of the origins of this apprehension, the high school aged students at our dual-enrollment high school program are required to demonstrate proficiency in analytical ability and argumentative writing before they are promoted to their 10th grade year. This task has proven difficult to achieve not only for my students, but for myself as well. In my classroom, I approach this problem by focusing on historical thinking skills (Appendix A), rather than rote memorization of content and structured formatting. This allows students to experiment with abstract writing styles, rather than to produce formulaic responses to rudimentary prompts. Using these skills in conjunction with their content knowledge not only encourages students to use higher-order thinking to solve historical problems, but guides students in developing their ability to write both with intent and analytically.

According to Alexander et al. (2023), "students who struggle with argumentation may lack the metacognitive skills needed to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own writing processes" (p. 486), thus to introduce these higher-order analytical skills to my students in a more streamlined format, I incorporated a variety of meta-cognitive activities into my lessons to help students decode the writing process when approaching the analysis of historical documents. I used strategies such as pre-planning graphic organizers to help students anticipate either challenges or opportunities for exploration in writing, writing guides for use during the writing process, as well as post-writing evaluations to help students identify strengths and weaknesses in their own, as well as their peers', writing samples. My goal was to alleviate the stress and anxiety that often accompanies the writing process for many of our students, as well as to allow students to deconstruct their own writing to identify and correct errors in reasoning and grammar or syntax errors. This research sought to address the research question: To what extent will meta-cognitive reflection activities aid in increasing confidence and analytical historical writing ability in students?

Literature Review

Research agrees that educators often struggle to find ways of making analytical writing more approachable to students. In fact, students frequently feel that writing in a secondary classroom is far too abstract and lacks any continuity between teachers, nonetheless subject areas- leading to a sense of subjectivity, hence making writing mastery difficult (Murphree, 2014). In fact, Nokes & De La Paz (2018) highlight the complexity of historical argumentation in particular, arguing that it requires that students not only interpret historical evidence, but also analyze the complex influence of context, perspective, empathy, and moral/intellectual virtues of the time, which can

leave students feeling lost and overwhelmed. This feeling of helplessness, along with the expectation of combining content knowledge into this equation, causes severe apprehension in students when writing in an historical application (De La Paz, 2017).

Attitude alone is not the entire problem when analyzing student approaches towards writing. Many students lack the skills necessary to successfully write in an academic setting. This, coupled with the intricacies of approaching historical content, leaves students feeling that writing at the level required to be successful is simply out of reach. Frederick (2008) suggests introducing simplistic formulaic approaches to writing that many students are already familiar with, while scaffolding higher-order skills into the curriculum to showcase how prior knowledge can be used as a foundation to make academic writing more approachable. Mohammadi et al. (2021), also underscores the importance of direct instruction of structured reflective processes, such as self-evaluation rubrics and writing guides, helping students "set goals, plan and organize behavior, monitor and evaluate performance, and adjust behavior as needed."

Although often overlooked, a student's social-emotional state can be just as important as content knowledge or writing ability to the analytical process. Students' social-emotional well-being can be a strong predictor of success in an academic setting, primarily their perception of self-efficacy (Davis, 2014). Reflection on learning can also reveal weak points in instruction or add opportunities for revelation in thought for students. Frederick (2008) discovered this very result when introducing self-reflective activities after every writing assessment. Students who were previously identified as "low-ability level students" were able to meet or exceed the same expectations of "high-ability level students" after the introduction of self and peer reflection activities into the curriculum of secondary classrooms. Booth Olsen (2023) had similar results in their examination of cognitive strategies for analytical writing development within an English Language Learner setting (Booth Olson et al., 2023, p. 406).

Context

This study was conducted within a dual-enrollment high school that partners with a local university. High school students commence the first year of the program on the high school campus, but then proceed to take college classes full-time at the university after ninth grade. Students are expected to choose a major and work towards both high school graduation and the completion of their bachelor's degree. The student population is extremely diverse in ethnic, socio-economic, and linguistic background, but is selected through an application process that isolates students of exceptional academic ability. Only 150 of the thousands of applicants are selected for ninth grade enrollment each academic year. During this study (2018-2019), our student body consisted of 570 high school students, of which 306 were females and 264 were males. Ethnically, our students are divided into 20% Asian or Pacific Islander, 18.42% Black, 24.39% Hispanic/Latino, 66.84% White, and 4.91% of mixed ethnic origin. There are 6 students classified as students with disabilities (ESE), 12 classified with Limited English Proficiency, and 184 considered low socio-economic status (FRL). Data from this study was collected from one class section, which was comprised of 23 ninth grade students. The demographics of this class section were as follows:

- Gender: 16 females, 7 males

- Race/Ethnicity: 6 Black, 4 Asian, 5 Hispanic, 8 White

- Socio-Economic Factors: 7 low SES students

Similar to Booth Olsen's students, my students also did not demonstrate consistency in analytical writing until the introduction of self-efficacy evaluation tools to promote metacognitive analysis of confidence vs. implementation (Booth Olson et al., 2023).

Within my classroom, we used direct instruction, written guides, and rubrics to ensure students were well-aware of what constitutes "success" on a Document Based Assignment (Appendix B). Once pillars of success were established, students were prompted to assess their confidence levels in regard to each rubric pillar both pre and post DBQ assignment. Student confidence scores were then tagged as either "matches" or "mismatches," guiding later reflections on how to better hone not only skills, but also metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy.

Methodology

Over the course of eight weeks of instruction, students were given a total of three Document-Based Question (DBQ) assessments, one baseline DBQ without supplemental instruction and two DBQs after detailed scoring instruction and introduction of all three metacognitive tools. Additionally, they were given a series of surveys designed to measure student confidence in scoring as well as effectiveness of each metacognitive tool on increasing confidence and accuracy in scoring. Once these student-provided responses were collected, I measured a student's accuracy in self-scoring vs. peer scores and self-scores vs. teacher-produced scores. Each measure was then cross analyzed based on the introduction of a series of three metacognitive strategies to aid in writing DBQs (Pre-write Graphic Organizer, Formatting Guide, and Peer Evaluation Tool) and compared to the baseline scores collected after the first DBQ Assessment without the introduction of any metacognitive strategies or rubric instruction.

Findings/Results

Following data analysis, two striking areas of student scoring growth became evident: rubric row labeled 'evidence from the documents" and rubric row labeled "evidence outside of the documents."

Within the rubric row labeled "Evidence from the Documents" (Appendix B, rubric row C-Evidence from the Documents) student skill mastery scores rose significantly from initially only 6 students demonstrating the ability to "effectively support an argument using at least six (out of seven) documents" (2 points) on the Unit 2 assignment, to 12 students on the Unit 3 assignment, to eventually 16 students earning both points on the Unit 4 assignment. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between students' average confidence in their ability to score the baseline (M=1.96; SD=.98) and Unit 4 (M=3.96; SD=.83); [t(22) = 7.498, p <.001]. A Pearson Chi-Square test suggests that there is a significant difference between the number of students who earned points on the Unit 4 assessment, as compared to the baseline. $\chi 2$ (1)= 8.712, p = .003 So not only

did students' ability to earn full credit rise steadily after each assessment, but student confidence levels and ultimately accuracy in predicting scores, were elevated as well (Figure 1).

The next striking area of growth was within the "Evidence beyond the Documents" rubric row (Appendix B, rubric row C- Evidence beyond the Documents). Scores in this row went up significantly from originally only 4 students demonstrating the ability to "use at least two additional pieces of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt" on the Unit 2 assignment rubric row, to 10 students earning the point in Unit 3, and eventually 18 students earning the point on the Unit 4 assignment. A Pearson Chi-Square test suggests that there is a significant difference between the number of students who earned points in Unit 4 compared to the baseline. $\chi 2 \ (1)= 17.07; \ p <.001.$

Data analysis also revealed many areas of weakness in my students; the rubric rows of Thesis Development, Sourcing, and Argument Complexity were particularly challenging for students to earn a point (Figure 2).

Figure 1

Student Confidence Scores Spanning Three Assessments and Divided by Rubric Categories
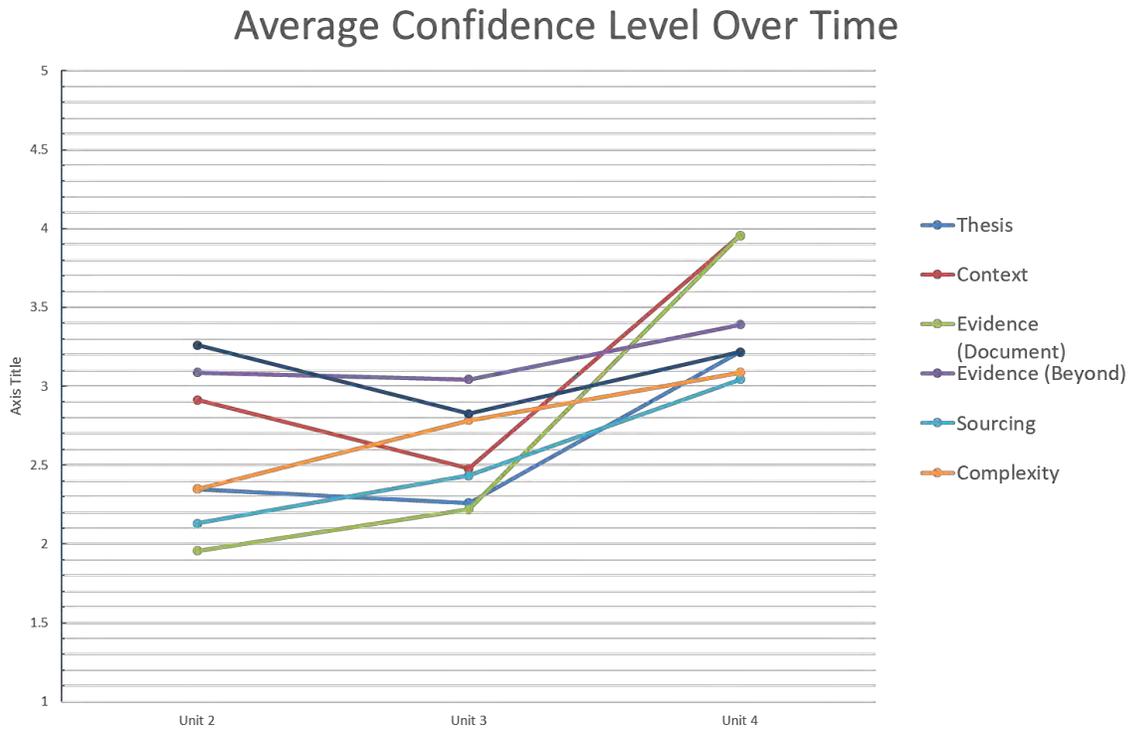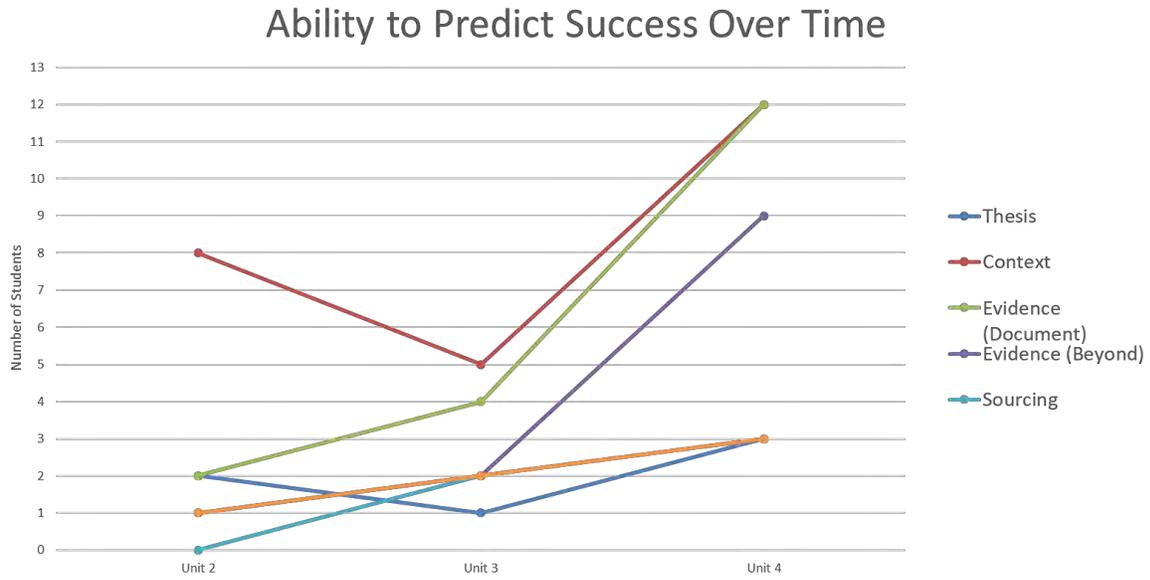
Figure 2

Number of Accurate Success Predictions Spanning Three Assessments and Divided by Rubric Categories

Ability to Predict Success Over Time

Metacognitive Tool Effectiveness

Negretti (2012) suggests that task perception plays a crucial role in metacognitive processes, as it influences students' goals, strategies, and evaluations of their writing performance, therefore a key component of my study involved the evaluation of provided metacognitive tools.

The DBQ Writing Guide (an in-depth manual) was ranked least helpful by students with an overall average score of 3.13/5. Students generally found the writing guide helpful but felt that its uses were limited in comparison to the other two resources provided. Many students felt that after they began writing, the guide itself served little more than as a reminder of what to include in their essay as student 22 wrote, "I did not refer to this tool often, but I review it before starting to read and write so I remember what I need to include." Student 4 believed that "It is very helpful to read before I start and while I'm writing, although sometimes I forget it's there and I don't use it." The writing guide was typically underutilized by students who felt that it was little more than a complex version of the rubric itself and was far more detail-oriented than was necessary. This detail, however, did aid some in remembering specific strategies on how to score the sourcing point as student 5 points out "I like how much detail it provides about sourcing, making it clearer to me what I need to include to get the points."

The DBQ Planning Guide (graphic organizer) was deemed second most helpful with an overall average score of 3.52/5. Most students gravitated towards using the planning guide due to its step-by-step nature. As student 2 describes "The planning guide enables me to map out the structure and foundation of my essay more efficiently, organizing information in an easy-to-read format and clearly defining the requirements for receiving points in terms beyond that of the rubric." This was a common description among students, but many also were concerned with the amount of time that it took to use it to its complete potential. As student 20 describes "it helps remind me with what I have to include in my essay, but at the same time, I never have enough time to actually fill it out. If I spend too much time on the planning guide, then I would not have time to complete my essay."

The Peer Review Guide was deemed most helpful by students with an overall average score of 3.83/5. By analyzing others who are performing the exact same task, students were able to then recognize their own mistakes with better accuracy- a testament to metacognitive thinking. As student 1 elaborates "Seeing other people's flaws helps me to recognize my own in a long-term sense, improving the quality of my self-review and my overall writing ability." The most common reasoning behind preference for this resource was that students gained clarity after analyzing multiple perspectives, as opposed to seeing their own work in repetition. As student 2 describes, "Having guidelines for grading another student's paper enables perception through a new perspective and is very helpful in thinking about what meets the requirements and what does not. This can further be reflected in my own essays, as I can view them while thinking to myself what score I would give myself."

Based on the metacognitive tool effectiveness data and the professional experience of the researcher, it is recommended that DBQ instruction be implemented through a scaffolded approach. The teacher should first provide direct instruction and context about the assessment,

which includes document analysis and historical argumentation foundational skill building. Following initial teacher-led instruction and modeling, students should then be given the opportunity to explore the available metacognitive tools to support their DBQ writing growth. It is recommended that students start by reading the DBQ Writing Guide (an in-depth manual), as it sets a strong foundation for growth. Once the students begin their own analysis and writing process, it is recommended they refer to the DBQ Planning Guide (graphic organizer) as a roadmap to completing the assignment. Finally, once the students are confident in their foundational skills and process, the "Peer Review Guide" prompts metacognitive thinking and deepens student understanding using both examples and non-examples. A key element for success is that metacognitive tools should be readily accessible for students. In the researcher's case, he not only provided paper copies, but also created an organized file repository for student reference within his online course support website (Canvas).

Implications

To what extent did the metacognitive resources and activities increase the expected results vs. expected improvement due to sheer repetition? Based on the data and timeline of the study, it can be inferred that students showed a larger improvement between Unit 3 and Unit 4 (where heavy emphasis was put on the usefulness of planning and preparation), as opposed to sheer repetition between Unit 2 and Unit 3. Possibly this reinforcement, coupled with increased comfort with the nature of writing a DBQ as well, contributed to this increased success. Perhaps with a few more assessment sequences, results would be a bit clearer. Additionally, there was a clear positive trend within students' ability to accurately predict their scores via confidence levels (Figure 2). Through qualitative feedback, every student attributed this positive trend with at least one of the provided metacognitive tools as well, yet what impact does the act of reflection in general have on improving both confidence and ability?

A possible confounding variable could be students' access to after school resources and tutoring. Some students took part in instructor drop-in hours, where they were given guided feedback. These optional sessions could have aided in increasing both confidence and ability in students as well.

Opportunities for new research based on this study could lie with the exploration of a standardization of writing skills/vocabulary among disciplines to increase student understanding of writing requirements. Many students stated that there was a confusion between similar vocabulary used within English and History disciplines that created a miscommunication regarding the requirements of the rubric. Experimentation with timing or focusing on weaker aspects of the rubric through guided instruction could also be an added feature for consideration in future studies. Perhaps focusing on common thematic topics for DBQ prompts vs. obscure historical topics could also lead to a variation in results as well. As a lifelong learner myself, I see the value of metacognitive techniques when re-assessing the effectiveness and clarity of my learning resources to better serve the needs of my students.

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Appendix A
Adapted from AP Historical Thinking Skills

Overview of Historical Thinking Skills (HTS)

The AP World History course seeks to help you develop historical thinking skills while learning about the past. There are four types of skills and each have specific thinking skills that are part of that type.

Chronological reasoning and **comparison and contextualization** focus on "thinking historically," or the habits of mind that historians use when they approach the past in a critical way.

Crafting historical arguments from historical evidence and **historical interpretation and synthesis** focus on describing the skills used by historians when they construct and test arguments about the past.

Skill Type	Historical Thinking Skill
I. Chronological Reasoning	1. Historical Causation
	2. Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time
	3. Periodization
II. Comparison and Contextualization	4. Comparison
	5. Contextualization
III. Crafting Historical Arguments from Historical Evidence	6. Historical Argumentation
	7. Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence
IV. Historical Interpretation and Synthesis	8. Interpretation
	9. Synthesis

Skill Type I: Chronological Reasoning

Skill 1: Historical Causation
This skill involves the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate the relationships among multiple historical causes and effects, distinguishing between those that are long term and proximate, and among coincidence, causation, and correlation.
Proficient students should be able to …
- Compare causes and/or effects, including between short-term and long-term effects.
- Analyze and evaluate the interaction of multiple causes and/or effects.
- Assess historical circumstances by distinguishing among coincidence, causation, and correlation, as well as critique existing interpretations of cause and effect.

Skill 2: Patterns of Continuity and Change over Time
This skill involves the ability to recognize, analyze, and evaluate the dynamics of historical continuity and change over periods of time of varying length, as well as the ability to relate these patterns to larger historical processes or themes.
Proficient students should be able to …
- Analyze and evaluate historical patterns of continuity and change over time.
- Connect patterns of continuity and change over time to larger historical processes or themes.

Skill 3: Periodization
This skill involves the ability to describe, analyze, evaluate, and construct models that historians use to divide history into discrete periods. To accomplish this periodization, historians identify turning points, and they recognize that the choice of specific dates could differ based on the group or region affected by the turning points. How one defines historical periods depends on what one considers most significant in society — economic, social, religious, or cultural life — so historical thinking involves being aware of how the circumstances and contexts of a historian's work might shape his or her choices about periodization.
Proficient students should be able to …
- Explain ways that historical events and processes can be organized within blocks of time.
- Analyze and evaluate competing models of periodization of world history.

Skill Type II: Comparison and Contextualization

Skill 4: Comparison
This skill involves the ability to describe, compare, and evaluate multiple historical developments within one society, one or more developments across or between different societies, and in various chronological and geographical contexts. It also involves the ability to identify, compare, and evaluate multiple perspectives on a given historical experience.

Proficient students should be able to …
- Compare related historical developments and processes across place, time, and/or different societies, or within one society.
- Explain and evaluate multiple and differing perspectives on a given historical phenomenon.

Skill 5: Contextualization
This skill involves the ability to connect historical events and processes to specific circumstances of time and place and to broader regional, national, or global processes.

Proficient students should be able to …
- Explain and evaluate ways in which specific historical events connect to broader regional, national, or global processes occurring at the same time.
- Explain and evaluate ways in which an event connects to other, similar historical events across time and place.

Skill Type III: Crafting Historical Arguments from Historical Evidence

Skill 6: Historical Argumentation
This skill involves the ability to define and frame a question about the past and to address that question through the construction of an argument. A plausible and persuasive argument requires a clear, comprehensive, and analytical thesis, supported by relevant historical evidence — not simply evidence that supports a preferred or preconceived position. Additionally, argumentation involves the capacity to describe, analyze, and evaluate the arguments of others in light of available evidence.

Proficient students should be able to …
- Analyze commonly accepted historical arguments and explain how an argument has been constructed from historical evidence.
- Construct convincing interpretations through analysis of disparate, relevant historical evidence.
- Evaluate and synthesize conflicting historical evidence to construct persuasive historical arguments.

Skill 7: Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence
This skill involves the ability to describe and evaluate evidence about the past from multiple sources (including written documents, works of art, archaeological artifacts, oral traditions, and other primary sources), and requires paying attention to the content, authorship, purpose, format, and audience of such sources. It involves the capacity to extract useful information, make supportable inferences, and draw appropriate conclusions from historical evidence, while also noting the context in which the evidence was produced and used, recognizing its limitations, and assessing the points of view it reflects.

Proficient students should be able to …
- Analyze features of historical evidence such as audience, purpose, point of view, format, argument, limitations, and context germane to the evidence considered.
- Based on analysis and evaluation of historical evidence, make supportable inferences and draw appropriate conclusions.

Skill Type IV: Historical Interpretation and Synthesis

Skill 8: Interpretation

This skill involves the ability to describe, analyze, evaluate, and construct diverse interpretations of the past, and to be aware of how particular circumstances and contexts in which individual historians work and write also shape their interpretations of past events. Historical interpretation requires analyzing evidence, reasoning, contexts, and points of view found in both primary and secondary sources.

Proficient students should be able to ...

- Analyze diverse historical interpretations.
- Evaluate how historians' perspectives influence their interpretations and how models of historical interpretation change over time.

Skill 9: Synthesis

This skill involves the ability to develop meaningful and persuasive new understandings of the past by applying all of the other historical thinking skills, by drawing appropriately on ideas and methods from different fields of inquiry or disciplines, and by creatively fusing disparate, relevant, and sometimes contradictory evidence from primary sources and secondary works. Additionally, synthesis may involve applying insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances, including the present.

Proficient students should be able to ...

- Draw appropriately on ideas and methods from different fields of inquiry or disciplines.
- Combine disparate, sometimes contradictory evidence from primary sources and secondary works in order to create a persuasive understanding of the past.
- Apply insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances, including the present.

Appendix B
Adapted from College Board. AP World History: Scoring Guidelines 2022

AP History DBQ Rubric

Name: _____

Points Earned	Scoring Criteria	Decision Rules: (See circled/highlighted)
___/1 ☐ Did not specifically address the prompt. ☐ Insufficiently analytical ☐ No attempted thesis	**A. Thesis Claim/1 pt.** Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.	To earn this point, the thesis must make a specific claim that responds to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more contiguous sentences located either in the introduction or the conclusion & must be clear & analytical.
___/1 ☐ Insufficient information ☐ Irrelevant/not historically significant	**B. Contextualization 1 pt.** Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.	To earn this point, the response must situate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. Context must be thoroughly detailed, & more than a phrase/sentence
___/3 ☐ Doc 1 ☐ Doc 2 ☐ Doc 3 ☐ Doc 4 ☐ Doc 5 ☐ Doc 6 ☐ Doc 7	**C. Evidence from the Documents** **1 pt.** OR **2 pts.** Uses the content of at least **three** documents to address the **topic** of the prompt. / Supports an **argument** in responses to the prompt using at least **six** documents.	To earn one point, the response must accurately describe — rather than simply quote — the content from at least three of the documents. To earn two points, the response must accurately describe — rather than simply quote — the content from at least six documents. In addition, the response must use the content of the documents to support an argument in response to the prompt.
☐ Outside Evidence explained, specific and relevant. ☐ Outside evidence insufficient, not specific, not relevant to the prompt.	**C. Evidence beyond the Documents** **1 pt.:** Uses at least two additional pieces of the specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt	To earn this point, the response must describe the evidence and must use more than a phrase or reference. This additional piece of evidence must be different from the evidence used to earn the point for contextualization.
___/2 ☐ Doc 1 H I P P ☐ Doc 2 H I P P ☐ Doc 3 H I P P	**D. Analysis & Reasoning: Analyzing Documents 1 pt.** For at least **three** documents, explains how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.	To earn this point, the response must explain how or why (rather than simply identifying) the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, or audience is relevant to an argument about the prompt for each of the three documents sourced. Always attempt at least 4!
☐ Doc 4 H I P P ☐ Doc 5 H I P P ☐ Doc 6 H I P P ☐ Doc 7 H I P P ☐ Demonstrated a complex understanding of the question using supporting evidence. ☐ Essay explanation simplistic, does not show nuance or depth of historical understanding. ☐ Unbalanced, did not address both elements of the historical thinking skill (HTS)	**D. Analysis & Reasoning: Essay Complexity & Quality 1 pt.** Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.	A response may demonstrate a complex understanding in a variety of ways, such as: ☐ Explaining nuance by analyzing multiple variables ☐ Explaining both similarity & difference, or explaining both continuity & change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both cause & effect ☐ Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods ☐ Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes ☐ Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.

Score: Grade: 7=100 6=90 5=85 4=80 3=75 2=70 1= 65 0= 60 (if attempted) Range set by teacher: scale subject to change.	Comments: