

APUSH Essay Rubric

8-9

- Has a clear well developed thesis that “answers” the prompt and which guides the essay throughout.
 - Demonstrates understanding of the complexity of the topic.
 - Effectively uses all or a substantial number of documents and interprets them correctly (DBQ); uses many accurate facts and details from the time period (FR).
 - Effectively analyzes, interprets, and makes inferences from the information.
 - Supports thesis with many relevant facts and interprets that information correctly.
 - May contain insignificant errors that do not hinder argument or organization.
 - Is clearly organized and well written.
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5-7

- Has a thesis which addresses the essay prompt.
 - Clearly explains the differences or similarities of the issue; some imbalance is acceptable.
 - Effectively uses some of the documents (DBQ) or uses some facts to support interpretation (FR).
 - Includes some outside facts with little or superficial interpretation.
 - May contain minor errors that do not interfere with comprehension.
 - Shows acceptable organization and writing; language errors do not interfere with the comprehension of the essay.
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2-4

- Has a limited, confused, or poorly developed thesis, that may restate the prompt, or has weak organization and writing.
 - Describes differences or similarities in a general or simplistic manner; may cover only part of the topic.
 - Briefly cites documents (sometimes in a “laundry list”) or quotes documents (DBQ), interprets documents or outside facts incorrectly (DBQ & FR), simply mentions facts without interpretation (FR).
 - Contains few facts or contains facts that are irrelevant or inaccurate.
 - May contain major historical errors.
 - May be poorly organized and/or written.
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0-1

- Has no thesis or a thesis that does not address the topic.
- Shows inadequate or inaccurate understanding of the question.
- Contains little or no understanding of the documents or ignores them completely.
- Contains inappropriate facts or no outside facts.
- Includes numerous errors, both major and minor.
- Written so poorly that it inhibits understanding.

