## Preparation

* Download the [WHP Writing Rubric](https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/Teacher-Resources/WHP-Writing-Rubric)

## Purpose

As we continue the progression on writing, you will look at the elements of organization and language and style to ensure you have a solid grasp on each of these essentials of good writing. You will analyze another student essay to both identify and improve upon these aspects of the essay, helping to make sure you are improving your historical writing skills.

## Process

1. It’s time for another writing activity! By now, you’re probably getting familiar with these. In this one, you’re going to examine another student essay this time against the WHP Writing Rubric criteria for organization and language and style. The essay was written in response to the prompt, “Compare the philosophies of early imperial China (Legalism, Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism) regarding how a state should be ruled.”
2. Before starting your analysis, take a look at the WHP Writing Rubric and review the Organization and Language and Style rows of the rubric with your class.
3. Once you’ve reviewed these criteria, your teacher will probably put you into pairs or small groups to work collaboratively on the Writing – Organization and Language and Style worksheet.
4. Work with your group to identify the major claim in the essay. While the thesis is not the focus of this activity, it’s difficult to assess the rest of the essay without being aware of the major claim, since everything in the essay should be tied to that claim.
5. Review the essay, first paying close attention to important elements of language and style. Underline any elements of language and style that could be improved upon.
6. Suggest improvements for two of the issues you’ve identified.
7. Look at the organization of the essay and highlight any areas where organization could be improved. For example, if there are any missing transitions, highlight this issue as an area that could be improved upon.
8. Provide suggested improvements to two of the issues you’ve found with the essay’s organization.
9. Finally, provide a score (advanced, proficient, developing, or emerging) and comments for each of these rows of the rubric.
10. Be prepared to share your answers with your class!

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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

**Directions:** Follow the steps below to annotate, correct, and grade the organization and language and style elements of the essay.

1. Circle the major claim in the paper.
2. Look for any issues with and language and style and underline the areas that could be improved.
3. Pick two of the issues you underlined and write your suggested corrections in the margin of the essay. Only one of these can be a spelling error.
4. Look for any issues with organization in the essay and highlight areas that could be improved.
5. Pick two of the issues you highlighted and write your suggested corrections in the margin of the essay.
6. Provide a grade (advanced, proficient, developing, or emerging) and comment for both organization and language and style. Make sure the comment justifies and explains the grade you assigned for each section of the rubric.

**Essay prompt:** *Compare the philosophies of early imperial China (Legalism, Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism) regarding how a state should be ruled.*

Throughout the history of early imperial China, various political philosophes arose in response to questions regarding the best way to maintain stability and order in society. Among the most popular were Daoism, Confusianism, Buddhism, and Legalism. Although each at one point played an important role in the governance of the early Chinese state, differences in political thought led to controversy among Chinese thinkers regarding how a state should best be ruled.

Increased enforcement of laws and rules will be seen by citizens as a form of “prying and meddling”, leading to an increase in “infraction[s] of the law” (Document 1). Daoist philosopher Laozi argues that limited government intervention in public affairs will result in a more stable and peaceful state. The concepts of freedom and independence are important to the Daoist political philosophy, as is evidenced in Document 5. When asked if he would accept a government position in the kingdom of Chu, Master Zhuang scoffs at the state officials sent to retrieve him, telling them to leave. A government position would likely leave him trapped “dragging [his] tail through the mud” or stuck in an “ancestral temple… preserved as an object of worship”, unable to fully leave this world after his death (Document 5).

Legalist thinker Li Si strongly disagrees with the philosophy of Laozi, arguing that a strict, authoritarian government is vital to ensuring that the public remain disciplined and that social order is maintained. He asserts that even the slightest of infractions should be met with “heavy punishment” so that the public is not tempted to violate state law out of fear of what “will be done against a [more] serious offense” (Document 3). The concept of civil obedience is important to Li Si’s Legalist political philosophy and he is firm in his opinion that the Chinese emperor should ban all texts detailing other political schools of thought. He maintains that “Those who dare to talk to each other about the classical texts should be executed and their bodies exposed in the marketplace” so that others will think twice before criticizing the government (Document 6).

Confusianism takes a much more moderate approach than the extremist political philosophes of Laozi and Li Si. Similar to the Legalist perspective, Confucianism argues that a strong government involved in state affairs is necessary to ruling a large population. However,

unlike his Legalist counterparts, Confucius calls for a virtuous and fair government that engages in morally good actions. As is stated in Document 2, “He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star” (Document 2). Just as all other stars face and support the north star, a leader who rules with virtue will have the support of his citizens. For example, as the Confucian philosopher Mencius states, “If the ruler is humane everyone will be humane” … [and] “if the ruler keeps to rightness, everyone will keep to rightness” (Document 7).

Buddhist monk and philosopher Huiyuan does not fully agree or disagree with the Daoist, Legalist, or Confucian perspectives instead he acknowledges the existence of government in early imperial China but argues that Buddhist monks should be separate from it.

Additionally, Huiyuan downplays the traditional divine and all-powerful image of a ruler, highlighting the inability of kings and princes to extend life or take away one’s sorrows. He further argues that because Buddhist monks work outside the framework of an ordinary lay person’s life, they should not be considered of equal status to other Chinese citizens. For these reasons, Huiyuan believes that Buddhist monks should not be required to show the same acts of political worship (such as bowing before the emperor) as normal citizens.

In conclusion, each political philosophy of early imperial China argues that a different form of government is best. These differences eventually became the basis of controversy among early Chinese philosophers regarding how a state should best be ruled.

**Language and Style Score:**

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**Comment:**

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**Organization Score:**

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**Comment:**

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