ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Preparation

- [Download the WHP DBQ Rubric](#)
- Have the Comparison, CCOT, and Causation Tools available (find all resources on the [Student Resources page](#))

Purpose

This assessment helps prepare you for the document-based questions (DBQs) you will encounter on the AP® World History: Modern exam. It will also give you a better understanding of your skills development and overall progress related to constructing an argument, interpreting historical documents, and employing the historical reasoning processes you are using in this course.

Practices

Contextualization, sourcing, reading, writing

All DBQs require you to contextualize, research, and source documents, and of course as part of this, read and write.

Process

Day 1

In this activity, you're going to prepare to respond to a DBQ, or document-based question. In this course, document-based questions give you a prompt or question along with seven source documents, and you'll use the information in those documents (and additional knowledge you have) to respond to the prompt. Your responses will be written in essay format and will usually be five to six paragraphs long.

This DBQ asks you to respond to the following prompt: *Develop an argument that evaluates the similarities and differences in the ways states were organized in different parts of the world from c. 1200 to 1450 CE.* To make sure you're clear on what you're being asked, take out the Question Parsing Tool. Work with your classmates to deconstruct the prompt.

Next, take out the DBQ and relevant historical thinking tool to help you analyze the documents. Take a look at the document library. As you do with the Three Close Reads process, quickly skim the documents for gist. Then, do a closer read of each one. For each document, write down the information you think you might use in your essay. You must provide source information for at least two of the documents in your essay. Write your ideas on the relevant tool as you work through the documents. Discuss your ideas with the class.

Now, come up with a major claim or thesis statement that responds to the prompt. Use the information from your thinking tool to help you come up with an idea. What you have written should help you support your claim. One common mistake students make when responding to a DBQ is not directly answering the prompt—so, in creating your thesis, make sure that it directly answers and is relevant to the prompt.

Finally, it's time to contextualize. Remember that ALL historical essays require you to contextualize. If you need to refresh your memory, contextualization is the process of placing a document, an event, a person, or process within its larger historical setting, and includes situating it in time, space, and sociocultural setting. In this case, you are contextualizing the documents. Contextualization will often come at the beginning of your essay, or at least in the first paragraph, either before or after your thesis statement. As needed, you can use the Contextualization Tool for this part of the process.

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Day 2

This second day is your writing day. Feel free to use your tools and notes from any prewriting work you completed as you craft your essay response. Make sure you have a copy of the WHP DBQ Writing Rubric available to remind you of what's important to include in your essay. And don't forget to contextualize! In doing so, think of the entire time period, not just the time immediately preceding the historical event or process you are writing about. Your teacher will give you a time limit for completing your five- to six-paragraph essay responding to the DBQ.

UNIT 1 DBQ

Directions: This question is based on the accompanying documents. In your response, make sure to include the following:

❑ Thesis/major claim – respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a clear line of reasoning.

❑ Contextualization – describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. Think of the entire time period, not just the time immediately preceding the historical event or process.

❑ Evidence and use of documents – use at least four of the documents to support your thesis or argument.

❑ Outside evidence – use at least one additional piece of historical evidence (outside of those found in the document collection) that is relevant to your argument and the prompt.

❑ Sourcing – for at least two documents, include how or why the source's historical situation, audience, purpose, and/or point of view is relevant to your argument.

❑ Complexity - demonstrate a complex understanding of the topic by using advanced argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.

Develop an argument that evaluates the similarities and differences in the ways states were organized in different parts of the world from c. 1200 to 1450 CE.

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Document 1

This passage, "Account of the Outbreak of the Tartars [Mongols] into the Lands of Islam," was written by the Arab historian, Ali ibn al-Athir (1160–1233). **Source:** Browne, Edward G., ed. *A Literary History of Persia*, Volume II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928 (428). Source has been edited for brevity and clarity.

> Nay, it is unlikely that mankind will see the like of this calamity, until the world comes to an end and perishes. …
>
> For even the Antichrist will spare such as follow him, though he destroy those who oppose him, but these [Tartars] spared none, slaying women and men and children … Truly to God do we belong, and unto Him do we return, and there is no strength and no power save in God, the High, the Almighty, in face of this catastrophe, whereof the sparks flew far and wide, and the hurt was universal; and which passed over the lands like clouds driven by the wind. For these were a people who emerged from the confines of China, and attacked the cities of Turkestan, like Kashgar and Balasagun, and thence advanced on the cities of [Uzbekistan], such as Samarkand, Bukhara and the like, taking possession of them, and treating their inhabitants in such ways as we shall mention; and of them one division then passed on into Khorasan [Iran], until they had made an end of taking possession, and destroying, and slaying, and plundering, and then passing on to Ray [Tehran], Hamadan and the Highlands, and the cities contained therein, even to the limits of Iraq, where they marched on the towns … destroying them and slaying most of their inhabitants, of whom none escaped save a small remnant; and all this in less than a year; this is a thing whereof the like has not been heard.

Document 2

In this excerpt from the fourteenth-century Yuan Shi (History of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty), the emperor of the Jurchen Jin Dynasty (present-day northern China) negotiates a peace settlement. **Source:** Bretschneider, E. *Mediæval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1887 (33-4). Source has been edited for brevity and clarity.

> In this year the Jin emperor dispatched Wu-ku-sun Chung tuan to Chinghiz [Chinggis/Genghis Khan] with a letter, in which he begged for peace. He agreed to be the emperor's younger brother (i.e., his vassal), but made the condition to retain the title of emperor. …
>
> In autumn Wu-ku-sun was presented to Chinghiz in the country of the Hui-ho (Mohammedans). The emperor said to him, "I formerly asked of your sovereign to cede the land north of the Yellow River, and to reign over the country south of it with the title of wang (king). On these conditions I would have suspended the war. But now Muhua-li [one of Chinggis' generals] has already conquered all these countries, and you are compelled to sue for peace." Wu-ku-sun then implored the emperor to have pity. Chinghiz replied: "It is only in consideration of the great distance you have come that I can be indulgent. The land north of the Yellow River is in my possession, but there are still some cities in Kuan si [to the west] which have not surrendered. Tell your sovereign to surrender these cities, and then he may reign south of the Yellow River, with the title of wang." After this Wu-ku-sun returned home.

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Document 3

This passage from *The Travels* (1254–1324), Marco Polo describes an encounter with the Mongol Yuan emperor, Kublai Khan (1215–1294). **Source:** Polo, Marco. *The Travels*. Translated by Ronald Latham. London: Penguin, UK, 1958 (119).

> After treating the [Bible] to repeated applications of incense with great ceremony, he kissed it devoutly and desired all his barons and lords there present to do the same. This usage he regularly observes on the principal feasts of the Christians, such as Easter and Christmas. And he does likewise on the principal feasts of the Saracens [Muslims], Jews, and idolaters [Buddhists]. Being asked why he did so, he replied: "There are four prophets who are worshipped and to whom all the world does reverence. The Christians say that their God was Jesus Christ, the [Muslims say Muhammad], the Jews Moses, and the [Buddhists] Sakyamuni Burkhan [the Buddha], who was the first to be represented as God in the form of an idol. And I do honour and reverence to all four, so that I may be sure of doing it to him who is greatest in heaven and truest; and to him I pray for aid."

Document 4

This excerpt is from "The Golden Bull," a decree by Emperor Charles IV of the Holy Roman Empire, issued in 1356. **Source:** Henderson, Ernest F. *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1896 (221, 239, 247, 258).

> Inasmuch as we, through the office by which we possess the imperial dignity, are doubly—both as emperor and by the electoral right which we enjoy—bound to put an end to future danger of discords among the electors themselves, … we have promulgated, decreed and recommended for ratification, the subjoined laws for the purpose of cherishing unity among the electors, and of bringing about a unanimous election, and of closing all approach to the aforesaid detestable discord and to the various dangers which arise from it. This we have done in our solemn court at Nuremberg, in session with all the electoral princes, ecclesiastical and secular, and amid a numerous multitude of other princes, counts, barons, magnates, nobles and citizens …

> We decree, moreover, that our successor, the king for the time being of Bohemia, shall have the same right … of coining gold and silver money and of circulating it in every way and manner observed up to this time in this same kingdom of Bohemia in such matters …

> We prohibit also each and every unjust war and feud, and all unjust burnings, spoliations and rapines, unlawful and unusual tolls and escorts, and the exactions usually extorted for such escorts, under the penalties by which the sacred laws prescribe that the foregoing offenses, and any one of them, are to be punished. …

> Moreover the imperial or royal table ought so to be arranged that it shall be elevated above the other tables in the hall by a height of six feet. And at it, on the day of a solemn court, shall sit no one at all except alone the emperor or king of the Romans. …

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Document 5

Ibn Battuta (1304–c. 1368) recounts his travels in West Africa. **Source:** Ross, E. Denison and Eileen Power, eds. *Ibn Battuta Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*. Translated by H.A.R. Gibb. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1929 (320-21).

> My stay at Iwalatan [Oualata, Mauritania] lasted about fifty days; and I was shown honour and entertained by its inhabitants. …
>
> Their women are of surpassing beauty, and are shown more respect than the men. The state of affairs amongst these people is indeed extraordinary. Their men show no signs of jealousy whatever; no one claims descent from his father, but on the contrary from his mother's brother. A person's heirs are his sister's sons, not his own sons. This is a thing which I have seen nowhere in the world except among the Indians of Malabar. But those are heathens; these people are Muslims, punctilious [attentive] in observing the hours of prayer, studying books of law, and memorizing the Koran. Yet their women show no bashfulness before men and do not veil themselves, although they are assiduous [attentive] in attending the prayers.

Document 6

This is an excerpt from an edict by Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398) the Hongwu Emperor and founder of the Chinese Ming Dynasty (1388–1644). **Source:** Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, ed. *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook, Second Edition*. New York: The Free Press, 1993 (205-6).

> Those of you in charge of money and grain have stolen them yourselves; those of you in charge of criminal laws and punishments have neglected the regulations. In this way grievances are not redressed and false charges are ignored. … Occasionally these unjust matters come to my attention. After I discover the truth, I capture and imprison the corrupt, villainous, and oppressive officials involved. I punish them with the death penalty or forced labor or have them flogged with bamboo sticks in order to make manifest the consequences of good and evil actions.
>
> … during the final years of the Yuan dynasty, there were many ambitious men competing for power who did not treasure their sons and daughters but prized jade and silk, coveted fine horses and beautiful clothes, relished drunken singing and unrestrained pleasure, and enjoyed separating people from their parents, wives, and children. I also lived in that chaotic period. How did I avoid such snares? I was able to do so because I valued my reputation and wanted to preserve my life. Therefore I did not dare to do these evil things.
>
> … In order to protect my reputation and to preserve my life, I have done away with music, beautiful girls, and valuable objects. Those who love such things are usually "a success in the morning, a failure in the evening." Being aware of the fallacy of such behavior, I will not indulge such foolish fancies. It is not really that hard to do away with these tempting things.

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Document 7

The Madrid Codex is a Maya almanac dated c. 1250–1520 CE that contains information on religious rituals, agriculture, and astronomical observations.
Source: Detail of a page from the codex Troana Cortesianus, also known as the Madrid Codex. © Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images.

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Name: Date:

Question Parsing Tool

Directions: Follow the steps to parse the prompt you are presented with. Use the key at the bottom to help you with the historical reasoning process and composition questions.

1. **Prompt**:

2. Rewrite the prompt in your own words:

3. **Periodization**: What is the time period you are being asked to consider? Write out the years if you are given something in terms of century (for example, twentieth century = 1900s).

4. **Location**: What areas of the world are included in this prompt?

5. **Topic**: What is the main topic being asked about in this prompt?

6. **AP Theme:** What AP theme is the prompt asking you to address as part of your response? Please explain your reasoning. PIECES is a helpful reminder for the AP themes.

ASSESSMENT – UNIT 1 DBQ

Name: _____ Date: _____

7. **Historical reasoning process**: What historical reasoning process is this prompt asking you to engage in? Provide justification for why you chose the one you did.

8. **Composition**: What is the prompt stem asking you to do as part of your response? Remember the prompt stem is usually a verb.

Key

Historical Reasoning Process	Words/Phrases to Look For
Causation	Cause, effect, led to, lead to, emergence, resulted, bring about, give rise to, be the cause of, result in, produce, generate, spawn, precipitate, prompt, induce, promote, foster, provoke, trigger
Comparison	Similarities, differences, compare, contrast, set side-by-side, juxtapose, differentiate, liken, equate
CCOT	Continuities, changes, continuation, persistence, consistent, over time, two points in time
Prompt Stem Examples	**What It's Asking in Simpler Language**
To what extent	Weigh, evaluate, assess
Evaluate, assess	How much—needs a quantitative answer/thesis/claim (Note: A quantitative answer is one that includes an amount or a number. For example: a lot, a little)
Analyze, develop	Describe and explain
Argue, argument	Make a claim