

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Preparation

- [Download the WHP LEQ Rubric](#)
- [Download the WHP DBQ Rubric](#)

Purpose

Being able to write clearly and convincingly—to write well—helps us communicate our thinking and conclusions. Writing well will help you in many areas of life, such as preparing you to take the AP® World History: Modern exam. Being a good general writer is a prerequisite for being a good historical writer. Your historical writing is assessed at the end of each unit in this course, either through a long essay question (LEQ) or document-based question (DBQ). To help you become a better writer, we have a series of rubric-based writing activities in the course. The first of these activities will help ensure you have a solid grasp on what is expected of you when you write. Later in the writing progression, you'll have opportunities to revise writing, which will give you a chance to practice different vital aspects of the writing process. Now, in this activity, you'll become familiar with the writing rubrics that are based on those used for the AP® World History: Modern exam as you begin your journey to become more skilled writers.

Practices

Reading

In this activity, you will review two sample essays and the rubrics used to evaluate these essays. Each of the writing progression activities will involve some reading, which likely won't surprise you, since reading and writing are often considered two sides of the same coin.

Process

Did you know that grammar can save lives? Take a look at these two images, and you'll see why.



OK, these are silly, but they're also a good reminder of why being able to write well is an important skill to develop. Throughout the course, you're going to spend time focusing on your writing skills. No, this is not your English language arts class, but being a writer who can communicate well is vital to being a historian. Most historians share their ideas through writing, and as student historians, you are asked to do the same. The next activity is a writing assignment, and it's important that you understand what is expected of you when writing in this course.

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Before you begin reviewing the rubrics and sample essays, think about the following questions and discuss each one with your class.

1. What is a claim?
2. What does a claim do in an essay?
3. What does it mean to contextualize in an essay?
4. What is evidence and how should it be used in an essay?
5. What does it mean to provide sourcing information in an essay?
6. How would you demonstrate historical reasoning in an essay?

Once you've covered these concepts, review the rubrics and sample essays. First, review each row of the WHP LEQ Writing Rubric and the sections of the sample LEQ essay that pertain to each row. As you review, think about how the author of the sample essay fulfills the criteria outlined in the rubric. You should know that these are exemplar essays that represent solid AP LEQ writing skills. Note that to score points on the AP® World History: Modern exam, you must meet the criteria as laid out in the "Advanced" column of the rubric.

Then, do the same thing for the WHP DBQ Writing Rubric using the sample DBQ essay. There are different requirements for each type of essay. For the DBQ, AP requires that students use at least four of the seven documents as evidence to support the thesis/claim along with at least one outside piece of evidence in order to achieve a score of Advanced. Also, for at least two of those documents, you will have to provide source information including details about how the historical situation/context, audience, purpose, or point of view is relevant to the argument outlined in the essay. Don't worry, there will be more writing activities that concentrate on these rows of the rubric, but it's a good idea to become familiar with these requirements before you start writing.

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Name: Date:

Sample LEQ Essay

Directions: Review the sample essays below for examples of how to meet the criteria for each row of the rubric.

LEQ Prompt: *Develop an argument that evaluates the extent to which states responded to societal and state collapse after the fall of the Roman Empire and Han Dynasty China up to c. 1200 CE.*

Key:

- Thesis (yellow)
- Contextualization (green)
- Evidence (blue)

For hundreds of years the Roman Empire and the Han Dynasty in China dominated Eurasia as the bookends of the Silk Road. But by the fifth century CE, both the Han and the Western Roman Empire had collapsed. Both of these empires collapsed in similar ways, mainly due to a combination of factors. These similarities include weak leaders, the spread of disease, and loss of income due to inefficient tax collection and wars. While the Roman Empire and Han dynasty collapsed in similar ways, the communities left behind recovered, usually by using people's shared culture and beliefs to unify them into new states.

Both the Roman Empire and Han dynasty, known for their size and stability, dominated their respective regions for centuries, with the Roman Empire officially founded in the first century BCE while the Han first came together in the third century BCE. However, neither was the first empire to rule over their particular geographic areas. Before the Roman Empire there was Alexander's short-lived empire and the longer lasting Persian empire and before the Han there were the Qin and Zhou dynasties. These two great empires would also not be the last to reign, as each would be transformed into different states and empires in the centuries after their collapses. In the east, new dynasties would take over China after periods of wars while in the west the same occurred. Patterns of societal and state collapse have occurred throughout history but there are often different ways in which new societies are formed, some unite around shared belief systems, others around shared cultural values such as language, history, or politics.

The Han dynasty was the first to fall in 220 CE, and it divided into almost 20 warring factions. As "barbarians" invaded and migrated to northern sections of the former empire, those living in the south began to unite around their shared culture. A clear division existed between these two regions. Those in the south developed a common language and focused on defining "authentic" Chinese culture. These shared cultural experiences brought the people together during a time of recovery and united them. As a result, this blurring of cultures began to create new bonds between people. Communities became more unified and stronger, which made recovery more viable. The spread of Buddhism across China also helped to unite the people. In addition, the teachings of Buddhism and its focus on overcoming suffering to achieve enlightenment provided a sense of calm in a time of

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Name: Date:

war and uncertainty. These shared beliefs and the desire for stability allowed for a new dynasty to take control of China—the Sui. While the Sui rule was short-lived, it did provide the basis for recovery that would allow the dynasty that followed—the Tang—to reign over a period of stability and prosperity.

Similarly, the Roman Empire also split into different societies after its fall in 476 CE. The Byzantine Empire maintained control of the Eastern Roman Empire. In the west, smaller Christian kingdoms (Latin Christendom) established themselves as successors to Rome. The whole of Europe shared a common culture. They all considered themselves to be descendants of the Roman Empire, and most kingdoms incorporated Roman laws and culture into their new societies. They also shared the same faith, even though they often interpreted it differently. However, one successor to Rome was different from the others. Established first in western Asia and then spreading to northern Africa and portions of modern-day Spain, Islamic caliphs became powerful religious and political rulers. All three of these successors to the Roman Empire shared a monotheistic faith with the same origins but all were also very different. For both the Christian kingdoms in the west and the Byzantine Empire in the east, Christianity was the driving force behind recovery. However, those ruling over Muslim regions also felt this sense of shared culture and faith through Islam. These similarities generated stability and allowed new states to form. The areas formerly controlled by the Roman Empire never truly recovered to their full size and strength after its collapse. In its place a number of new states emerged. In contrast, China would eventually be united under a new dynasty and the Han borders would be reestablished and even expanded. But there are similarities in how each region recovered from collapse. Societies in the Europe, western Asia, and China recovered from imperial collapse through the development of a common culture. In addition, these regions recovered with the aid of belief systems. Through the wide adoption of belief systems such as Christianity in Europe, Islam in western Asia and north Africa, and Buddhism in China, people found strength and a sense of community among others. These shared beliefs would eventually lead to the formation of new kingdoms, empires, and dynasties.

Both the Roman Empire and the Han dynasty collapsed but the communities that made up these empires did not disappear. Collapse does not mean that societies die but rather that they reorganize or transform into something new that is built from what remains. While these specific empires did not recover, the communities that made up these empires survived. They reformed states by building upon each empire's legacy. New states such as the kingdoms of Latin Christendom and the Sui and Tang dynasties were formed from shared cultures and belief systems, many of which had existed previously in the Roman Empire and Han China.

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Name: Date:

Sample DBQ Essay

DBQ: Evaluate the extent to which philosophies of early imperial China influence how the state should be ruled.

Chinese history extends back over 2,000 years. For the vast majority of this time, China was under the control of a series of dynasties. The stability and the size of China, or expansion and contraction of borders, usually depended on the stability of imperial rule. However, there were often long periods between dynasties as people fought to gain power and take control of the region. The Warring States Period which began in the fifth century BCE and lasted for over 200 years was a particularly unstable era in Chinese history. As a result, various political philosophies arose in response to questions regarding the best way to maintain stability and order in society. Among the most popular were Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Legalism—each of which rose to prominence during the Warring States Period. This period was a time of political unrest and division, and as a result, differences in political thought and ideology led to controversy among early Chinese thinkers regarding how a state should best be ruled.

Written during the sixth century BCE, the *Daodejing* is a primary source detailing the political thoughts of Laozi. It was created for the Chinese public with the goal of educating citizens on Daoist beliefs through the teachings of a wise Sage. In his work, Laozi argues that limited government intervention in public affairs will result in a more stable and peaceful state. Increased enforcement of laws and rules will be seen by citizens as a form of “prying and meddling”, thus leading to an increase in crimes and rebellion (Document 1). The concepts of freedom and independence are important to the Daoist political philosophy and Daoists firmly believe that it should be one’s goal to live a simple and quiet life. Like other Chinese philosophies, Daoism attempts to provide answers to the problems faced by the Chinese people. The Warring States Period was a time of conflict, greed, and distress and Daoism provided an alternative to this life. Daoist works such as the *Daodejing* became significant during this period because they may have encouraged some leaders to rule less harshly and promote a peaceful way of living.

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 to maintain the social order. He asserts that even the slightest of infractions should be met with severe punishments to instill fear in the public for if severe penalties can be levied for petty crimes then what might be done to punish more serious offenses (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

Key:

- Thesis (yellow)
- Contextualization (green)
- Evidence (blue)
(*Student brings in outside evidence that relates back to the prompt/thesis).
- Sourcing (pink)

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Name: Date:

thought. He recommends execution and the public display of bodies of those who dare to promote other political philosophies (Document 6). These ideas come from Li Si's "Memorial on the Burning of Books", a primary source document written to warn Chinese citizens of the consequences of possessing any texts that criticize the Qin dynasty. Responsible for the end of the Warring States Period and the reunification of China, the Qin Dynasty believed that the best way to prevent war and suffering was to implement a strict, authoritarian government. Documents such as the "Memorial on the Burning of Books" are significant because they outline the goals and actions of the Qin Dynasty in their attempt to unite the country and prevent further conflict.

Confucianism takes a much more moderate approach than the extremist political philosophies 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 (Document 2). Confucius argues that a leader who rules with virtue will have the support of his citizens. A second-hand account of the teachings of Confucius, the *Analects* were written for Confucian students as a means of preserving Confucius's teachings. During the Warring States Period, the teachings of Confucius were significant because they called for a morally good and virtuous government as opposed to the chaos of opposing factions attempting to wrestle control of the region. Ideally, this would help China unite and overcome the period of division that Confucius lived through. The Confucian philosopher Mencius echoes these teachings and suggests that the ruler should be "humane", for the people would then follow their leader and share in his virtuous humanity (Document 7). Therefore, in leading by example, rulers would be able to promote peace and prosperity. Confucian philosophy had the most influence on Chinese rulers and was often seen as a political philosophy that encouraged people to obey their emperor. But other belief systems also had a significant impact on both Chinese rulers and their subjects, with Buddhism being one of the most popular of these philosophies.

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. Huiyuan downplays the traditional divine and all-powerful image of a ruler, stating that while rulers can provide peace for their subjects, they cannot prevent all unhappiness (Document 4). By highlighting the inability of rulers to extend life or take away one's sorrows, Huiyuan characterizes them as mortal, imperfect, and ordinary. In contrast, Huiyuan argues that Buddhist monks work outside the framework of ordinary life, and therefore, should not be considered of equal status to other Chinese citizens. For this reason, 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. *Many Chinese emperors took issue with the popularity of Buddhism, as it was often interpreted as being dangerous to the stability of imperial rule, with some Chinese emperors

WRITING—AP WRITING RUBRICS

Name:

Date:

attempting to regulate and even abolish Buddhist monasteries to eliminate the supposed threat of this belief system.

In conclusion, proponents of each of these early philosophies argue that a different form of government is best for China. The Daoists believe that government should be essentially absent, the Legalists that government should be authoritarian, the Confucian philosophers that government should be virtuous, and the Buddhists that they are independent from government.

*Despite their differences, however, it is important to note that some emperors of early China used syncretic belief systems by incorporating elements from each school of thought into their political philosophies. By doing this, emperors were able to tailor the Daoist, Legalist, Confucian, and Buddhist philosophies to meet their individual needs. Using syncretic beliefs rather than choosing one philosophy above all others also helped to unite the Chinese people. This was particularly important considering the turmoil experienced during the Warring States period, as these syncretic ideas would also help to unite the empire after multiple periods of disunity that China experienced throughout its long history.