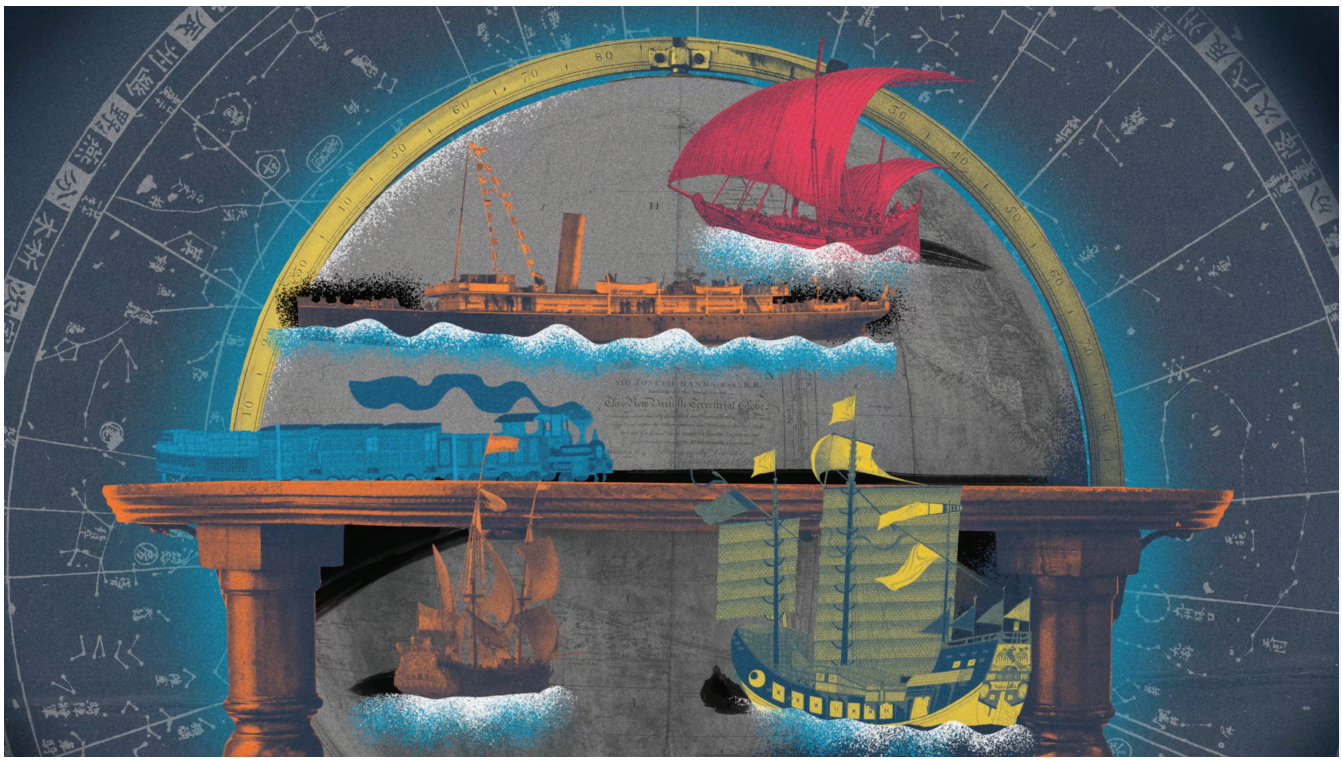
OER PROJECT

WORLD HISTORY COURSE GUIDE



OER Project: World History (WH) is a high-school history curriculum like no other. Easily aligned to your state's social studies standards, WH provides you with the tools to turn every student into a young historian.

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Why teach OER Project: World History?

Each school, district, and state is distinct in its approach to world history. That's why we've designed world history courses that give you the flexibility to meet your specific requirements. Choose from our three offerings—Origins, 1200, or 1750—or pick and choose lessons or materials from each. We also offer an AP® version, designed to align with the Modern World History: Course and Exam Description. Click here to learn more. Whatever course you choose, you and your students will have access to the content, tools, and essential skills woven throughout the curriculum.

Course Goals

1. Develop an understanding of the role history plays in shaping our present and future.
2. Build critical-thinking skills needed to consider important questions, gather and analyze evidence, and build informed arguments in a way that is applicable across disciplines.
3. Engage in meaningful historical inquiry through analysis of a wide range of materials from different perspectives.

Our approach

Encourage inquiry-based learning: Lesson plans and activities allow students to explore historical causes, impacts, and potential solutions.

Focus on skills: WH courses emphasize eight core skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Claim testing
- Sourcing
- Causation
- Comparison
- Contextualization
- Continuity and change over time

Inspire interest: Articles, videos, graphic biographies, activities, and more, all designed to engage students at many levels.

Overview of OER Project: World History Courses

The "Flavors" of World History

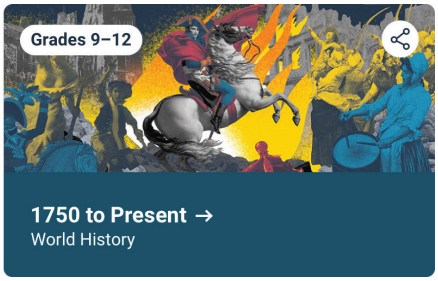
World-history standards vary widely among states. With that in mind, we offer three WH periodizations: Origins to the Present, 1200 to the Present, and 1750 to the Present. Each version of the course includes carefully scaffolded units and lessons that you can use throughout your school year. Our world-history course materials (activities, readings, videos, writing assessments, and more) will support your students in drawing a line from the past to the present, with an eye to the future.

Which Periodization Is Right for You?

If your state standards start with early humans, the **WH Origins** course is the best choice. If your state standards begin a bit later in history, the **WH 1200** course provides more context for the massive worldwide changes that manifested around 1450 CE. The **WH 1750** course is best for teachers in states like California and New York, where state world-history standards begin around the year 1750 CE. Do you need more flexibility than the full WH courses provide? Feel free to use materials from all three versions to create your own scope and sequence for the year. Check out the individual course overviews to learn more about each course: Origins, 1200, 1750.







Course Problem and Learning Objectives

Course Problem:

How have human communities connected and diverged over our long history?

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Understand that history is a narrative, or a combination of narratives, shaped by the sources and perspectives you use to tell that story.
2. Apply the evidence from sources using multiple perspectives and scales to evaluate (support, extend, or challenge) different narratives.
3. Engage in meaningful historical inquiry by analyzing primary and secondary sources from multiple perspectives of gender, race, socioeconomic status, and other hierarchies to gain a deeper understanding of human history.
4. Analyze the narrative of history using the course's three frames: communities, networks, and production and distribution.
5. Use historical thinking skills and reasoning practices such as contextualization, claim testing, sourcing, comparison, causation, and continuity and change over time to understand and evaluate the historical narrative.
6. Create and support arguments using historical evidence to communicate conclusions through individual or shared writing.

Course Frames

Regardless of which course you teach, OER Project: World History asks you and your students to examine world history through different lenses, or *frames*. The course frames are **communities**, **networks**, and **production and distribution**. The frames help students organize the information they'll encounter in world history, and provide a way for them to make sense of all the ways in which someone could tell the history of the world. This approach highlights the idea that historical accounts are based on perspective. More important, these frames provide students with big picture, historical "stories," thus providing a backdrop they can use to develop their own understanding of history. As students move through the course, they'll examine how each frame has changed over our long history. Learn more in the Frames Guide.



Course Structure and Materials

Every OER Project: World History course is divided into units and lessons. Each unit is divided into a set of suggested lesson plans, which typically include a mix of articles, videos, and activities. You can use the structure we suggest or incorporate the material into your own lesson plans. All lessons are designed to be flexible and easily integrated into your classroom setting. Each course can be taught as a full-year program or through standalone lessons. This flexibility allows you to tailor the curriculum to meet specific learning goals, schedules, and student needs. Whether you choose to teach an entire course or select individual lessons or materials to focus on topics of interest, course materials follow a clear, cohesive structure that keeps students engaged and learning.

We want students of different ages, backgrounds, and skills to be able to use our course content and stay engaged with their work. To achieve that, we include a mix of activities, articles, and videos throughout our courses and we provide you with a flexible structure for how you present that content to your students. The **articles** are offered at multiple reading levels, and the majority have accompanying audio versions. We provide different types of **videos** because not all learners respond to the same media, and variety will help you target what works for different students. **Activities** are widely varied, from more-traditional skills work to fun projects, explorations, and simulations. **Opener and closer** activities are provided at the beginning and end of every single lesson—these are great opportunities to activate students' prior knowledge, check for student understanding, and provide time for informal writing. Learn more about these foundational material types in their respective guides:

- Activities Guide
- Video Guide
- Reading Guide
- Openers & Closers Guide



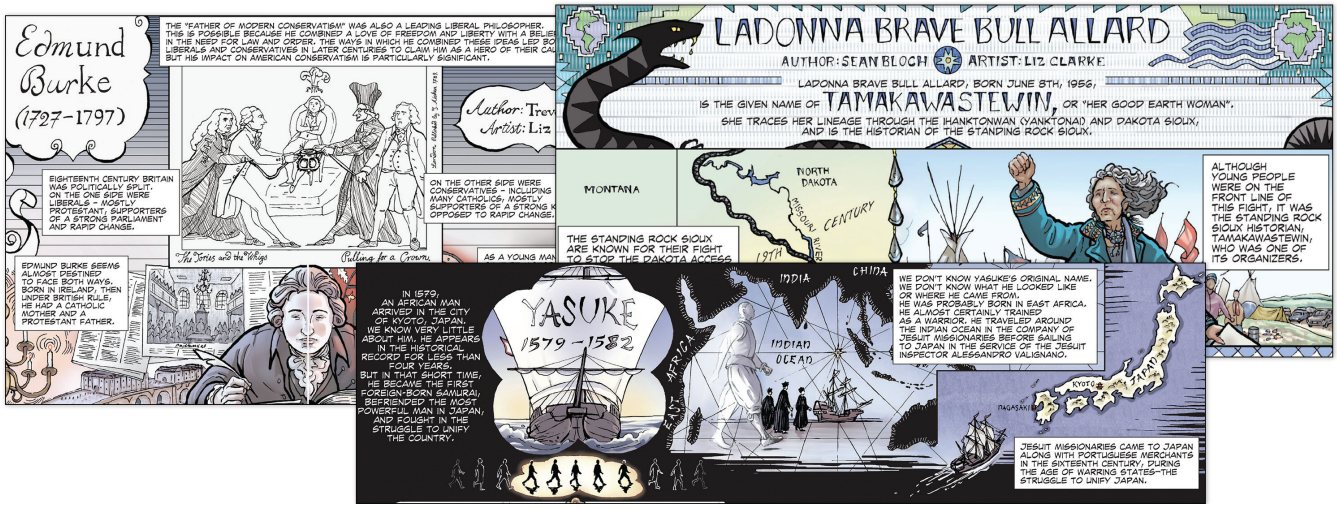
A selection of WH course materials.

Graphic Biographies

One unique feature of WH courses is our series of graphic biographies, which are illustrated one-page histories of individuals. Whether they're "important" or "everyday" figures, each of these individuals has their own story, their own history, and those stories weave in and out of the global themes of their era. Their experiences highlight—and sometimes bring into question—developments on a global scale that

students are studying as part of the frame narratives presented in the course. These biographies are one of the best ways for students to zoom in, which will bring nuance to their understanding of history. In some cases, the biographies will complicate the frame narratives—the experience of an individual might not fit with the global experience—but they don't invalidate the frames; they just deepen and enrich them.

Find all our **graphic biographies here** and **click here to learn more** about how to use graphic biographies in your classroom.



A selection of WH graphic biographies

Standards Alignment

WH courses are designed to align with many existing state standards as well as National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) standards and the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3 Framework). Check out our standards alignment documents to see how our courses were built with Common Core, state standards, and the C3 framework in mind.

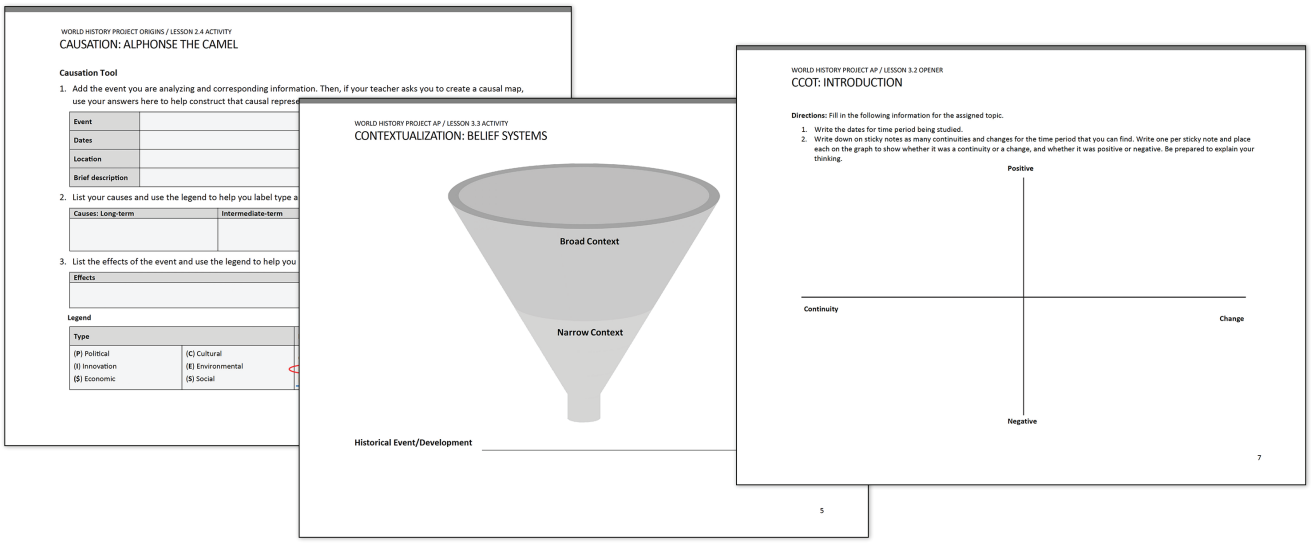
Skills

Historical Thinking Skills

The integration of skills and content is foundational to OER Project courses. Skills development is just as important—if not more—as content knowledge for student thinking and learning in social studies classes. Throughout WH courses, students encounter numerous scaffolded opportunities to practice **causation**, **comparison**, **continuity and change over time**, **contextualization**, **sourcing**, and **making and testing claims**. We use practice progressions—a series of activities that increase in complexity—to develop each of these core skills.

Practice progressions are made up of three categories: progression activities, thinking tools, and feedback forms. Each activity in a progression is more sophisticated than the one before, challenging students along the way but also supporting them as they do this work. The thinking tools provide students with a visual organizer to help them develop their understanding of a particular skill—the more comfortable students are with the skill, the less they'll need the tool. Finally, feedback forms allow you to provide specific and detailed feedback to help students build their competence.

Learn more in our **Historical Thinking Skills Guide**.



A selection of WH thinking tools

Reading

Being able to evaluate different texts is a fundamental element of historical study. OER Project: World History includes primary sources and articles written by a diverse range of scholars and OER Project staff. Some of the reading involved in OER Project courses can be challenging, but it is vital for engaging with the course content. All texts in the course—other than those that are part of DBQs or are primary source materials—have been Lexile leveled, and each article has three or four versions to accommodate students of all reading levels.

To support analysis of these texts, WH provides a structured reading routine to build student reading success. While our approach is only one of many available, we encourage you to try it with your students.

OER Project Three-Step Reading Routine

- **Before You Read** is a quick skim to capture the gist of the material.
- **While You Read** is more factual, focusing on the specific content and key ideas covered in the reading.
- **After You Read** is more conceptual, asking students to evaluate the text through the lens of the lesson's big questions.

Guiding Questions

Before you read

Preview the questions below, and then skim the comic, paying attention to things like prominent colors, shapes, and types of text and fonts. How do you know where to start and in which direction to read? What's in the gutters (the space between panels)? Who or what is the focus of the comic?

While you read

1. Who was Sorqoqtani Beki and what was her relationship to the Mongol royal family?
2. What was the cause of Sorqoqtani Beki's conflict with Oghul-Qaimish?
3. How and why did Sorqoqtani Beki win this conflict?
4. Batu, Sorqoqtani Beki's nephew, agreed to support her. What did he get in return, and what was the eventual result?
5. How does the artist use art and design to demonstrate the ways in which competition between women—and their support of each other—helped determine Mongol politics?

After you read

Respond to this question: How does this graphic biography of Sorqoqtani Beki support, extend, or challenge what you have learned about the Mongols?

An example of Guiding Questions that accompany articles

You'll find this approach embedded in the Guiding Questions found below each article in the course.

Learn more in our **Reading Guide**.

Writing

Writing is an integral component of studying history and learning how to communicate understanding and ideas. In WH, students write both *informally*—to express their initial understandings—and *formally*—to solidify their thinking and refine their arguments. They write, review, and refine their work multiple times. This is not easy for most students. However (and unsurprisingly), our research shows that this hard work makes a real difference in the quality of their writing

Throughout WH courses, you will find extended writing opportunities. These writing assessments can take the form of document-based questions (DBQs) or open-ended long-essay questions (LEQs). Each prompt is offered on its own if you'd like to assign an LEQ, or with an accompanying set of sources, if you'd like to assign a DBQ. And they're always optional—you determine how many essays you want your students to write.

Click here to learn more about our writing approach.

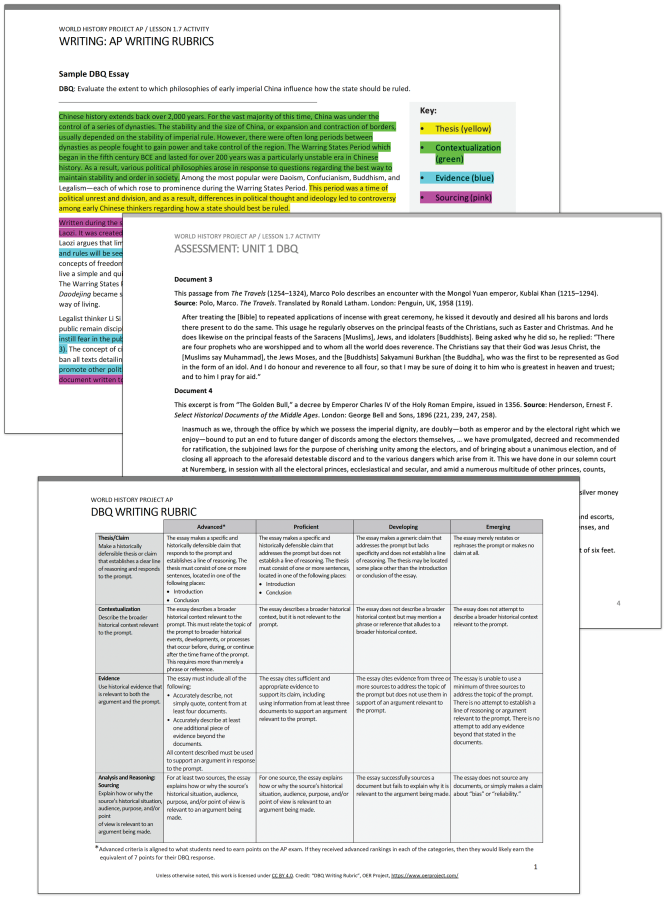
Click here for informal writing routines.

Assessment

Assessment needs to be a comprehensive strategy, not just a test at the end of a unit. For this reason, WH embeds assessments throughout the course—all activities, including openers and closers, are developed to help both students and teachers gain insight into their understanding. All articles, videos, and graphic biographies contain Guiding Questions, which can be done as a class or individually to assess understanding.

We encourage the use of formative assessment (or, as we find it helpful to think about it, *informative* assessment—assessment that informs) as opposed to the exclusive use of summative assessment. Instead of making every quiz, test, or extended writing a one-shot opportunity—à la summative assessments—we favor assessment opportunities that allow students to revisit and revise their work, as that's one of the best ways for them to learn. For more information, check out the **Assessment Guide**.

OER Project does not provide guidance on grading. You know your students, instructional context, and routines best, and are without doubt in the best position to assess students fairly. Learn more in our **Assessment Guide**.


WORLD HISTORY PROJECT AP / LESSON 1.7 ACTIVITY

WRITING: AP WRITING RUBRICS

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.

Key:

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

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT AP / LESSON 1.7 ACTIVITY

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,

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT AP

DBQ WRITING RUBRIC

	Advanced*	Proficient	Developing	Emerging
Thesis/Claim Make a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a clear line of reasoning and responds to the prompt.	The essay makes a specific and historically defensible claim that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences, located in one of the following places: • Introduction • Conclusion	The essay makes a specific and historically defensible claim that addresses the prompt but does not establish a line of reasoning. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences, located in one of the following places: • Introduction • Conclusion	The essay makes a generic claim that addresses the prompt but lacks specificity and does not establish a line of reasoning. The thesis may be located some place other than the introduction or conclusion of the essay.	The essay merely restates or rephrases the prompt or makes no claim at all.
Contextualization Describe the broader historical context relevant to the prompt.	The essay describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. This must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the prompt. This requires more than merely a phrase or reference.	The essay describes a broader historical context, but it is not relevant to the prompt.	The essay does not describe a broader historical context but may mention a phrase or reference that alludes to a broader historical context.	The essay does not attempt to describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
Evidence Use historical evidence that is relevant to both the argument and the prompt.	The essay must include all of the following: • Accurately describe, not simply quote, content from at least four documents. • Accurately describe at least one additional piece of evidence beyond the documents. All content described must be used to support an argument in response to the prompt.	The essay cites sufficient and appropriate evidence to support its claim, including using information from at least three documents to support an argument relevant to the prompt.	The essay cites evidence from three or more sources to address the topic of the prompt but does not use them in support of an argument relevant to the prompt.	The essay is unable to use a minimum of three sources to address the topic of the prompt. There is no attempt to establish a line of reasoning or argument relevant to the prompt. There is no attempt to add any evidence beyond that stated in the documents.
Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing Explain how or why the source's historical situation, audience, purpose, and/or point of view is relevant to an argument being made.	For at least two sources, the essay explains how or why the source's historical situation, audience, purpose, and/or point of view is relevant to an argument being made.	For one source, the essay explains how or why the source's historical situation, audience, purpose, and/or point of view is relevant to an argument being made.	The essay successfully sources a document but fails to explain why it is relevant to the argument being made.	The essay does not source any documents, or simply makes a claim about "bias" or "reliability."

*Advanced criteria is aligned to what students need to earn points on the AP exam. If they received advanced rankings in each of the categories, then they would likely earn the equivalent of 7 points for their DBQ response.

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Sample WH assessment rubrics

Support and contact information

OER Project collaborates with historians, academics, and educators globally to deliver relevant and engaging information to teachers. Through live, virtual webinars, educators can connect and learn about exciting new content, effective classroom strategies and techniques, current social-studies topics, and hear from individuals leading change in education. While OER Project team members occasionally present these sessions, we prioritize featuring others who are making significant contributions to support educators and education. Explore our **planned events here**.

OER Project Teacher Community: The OER Project Teacher Community is active, open, and brings together the collective wisdom and support of thousands of helpful people. Here you will find educators teaching OER Project courses across grade levels, subjects, and regions.

OER Project email: team@oerproject.com

Course home