

OIB HG Document-Based Essay Question (DBQ)

General overview:

The aim of the document-based essay question (DBQ) is to respond to a question or prompt with the formulation of an arguable thesis based on supporting evidence; inclusion of personal knowledge relating to the class curriculum is required. A further goal is to incorporate the documents provided, assessing each for its value and limitation in response to the central essay question. Citing author and genre/nature, identifying historical context, defining relevant terminology, and assessing perspective, bias, and omission of important information, are all required elements in the document analysis.

Some Guidelines:

- Documents need NOT be mentioned in the introductory paragraph. The first time the document is used, it must be contextualized and this context must be explained briefly. [See the example]
- Documents should be referred to in the body of the essay, preferably early on, and can be used throughout.
- An ideal use of the documents is their smooth interweaving with relevant personal knowledge throughout the essay to argue the central thesis.
- The DBQ is NOT a detailed, intensive analysis, limited to the document(s) only. Rather, the essay goes beyond the presented documents, using them as reference points in framing the overall argument.
- The documents must be analyzed for their value and limitation. This is most effectively done when the content of the document is being discussed. Use the phrase 'value and limitation' in order to ensure that the examiner sees that this essential component of the essay has been addressed.
- Do NOT quote documents at length.