

## Writing the Long Essay Question

The second of the two essays on the AP World History test is the long essay question (LEQ). This essay will measure the use of historical thinking skills to explain and analyze significant issues in world history as defined by the thematic learning objective. The question will focus on comparison, continuity and change over time, or causation. You will be given three choices of similar difficulty, but from different time periods, and will have 40 minutes to write the essay.

### RUBRIC

	Points
<p><b>A. <u>Thesis</u>— Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.</b></p> <p>To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt, rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.</p>	1
<p><b>B. <u>Contextualization</u>—Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.</b></p> <p>To earn this point, the response 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 question. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or a reference.</p>	1
<p><b>C. <u>Evidence</u>—Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence</b></p> <p>To earn one point, the response must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</p> <p>To earn two points the response must use specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.</p>	(1)  2
<p><b>D. <u>Analysis and Reasoning: Analysis</u>—Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt</b></p> <p>To earn this point, the response must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced.</p>	1

<p><b>E. <u>Analysis and Reasoning: Synthesis</u>—Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question</b></p> <p>To earn this point, the response must demonstrate a complex understanding. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables</li> <li>• <u>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects</u></li> <li>• <u>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods</u></li> <li>• Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes</li> <li>• Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence</li> </ul> <p>This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
<p><b>Total:</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>

**STEPS TO TAKE**

**Step 1: Know Your Task**

To know make sure that you include all parts of the essay, you should remember and use the following acronyms: CASTE

- C = Contextualization
- A = Analysis
- S = Synthesis
- T = Thesis
- E = Evidence

You will have three options to choose from, all measuring the same skill but from different time periods:

1. Units 1/2
2. Units 3/4
3. Units 5/6

## **Step 2: Know Your Historical Thinking Skill**

The LEQ will assess one of three possible historical thinking skills (HTS). The rubric will change ever so slightly depending upon the targeted skill of the question at hand and the precise wording of the prompt. Most of the time you will be asked to address only one thing within that skill (example: causes, BUT NOT effects), but you will be expected to address three aspects within your essay (example: 3 different causes). However, if you also address the other aspect of that skill (example: an effect, in addition to your cause; be sure to have 2 causes AND 1 effect) you can potentially earn the second Analysis and Reasoning point that way.

The three possible HTS are as follows:

- Comparison
  - If the prompt just says “compare”, by definition that means “compare AND contrast.” If it just says “similar” or “different”, they you only are required to address one.
  - You will be expected to compare and/or contrast two regions, ideas, religions, events, etc.
- Causation
  - You will be expected to discuss cause and/or effect over a span of time, historical processes or patterns, or important events
  - Depending on the prompt, you may be asked to do either cause AND effect, which means you must do both, or cause AND/OR effect, which means you choose one.
- Continuity and Change Over Time
  - You will be expected to discuss continuity (what stays the same) and/or what changes over a time span.
  - A continuity does not have to be maintained throughout the entire period, as long as it is for most of it.

### **Step 3: Process the Question**

#### **Directions:**

Choose EITHER question 2 or question 3 or question 4.

For the long essay question, a good response should:

- respond to the question with an evaluative thesis that makes a historically defensible claim. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion. Neither the introduction nor the conclusion is necessarily limited to a single paragraph.
- explain how a relevant historical context influenced the topic addressed in the question. It should also relate the topic of the question to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or after the time frame of the question. This explanation should consist of more than merely a phrase or a reference.
- use historical reasoning to explain relationships among the pieces of evidence provided in the response and how they corroborate, qualify, or modify the argument, made in the thesis, that addresses the entirety of the question

#### **Prompt:**

2. Evaluate the causes of imperial expansion and consolidation in the period circa 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E. (*Historical thinking skill: Causation*)
- ~~3. Evaluate the causes of imperial decline and collapse in the period circa 600 C.E. to 1450 C.E. (*Historical thinking skill: Causation*)~~
- ~~4. Evaluate the causes of imperial expansion and consolidation in the period circa 1750 C.E. to 1900 C.E. (*Historical thinking skill: Causation*)~~

- Read the question carefully. Ask yourself, “What is it they are asking me to accomplish?”
- Identify which HTS you are to use (comparison, causation, or continuity and change over time).
- Identify whether the question has multiple parts. Be sure if you are being asked to address, for example, causes AND effects or just one of the two.
- Identify the parameters of the question (time period, social, political, cultural, economic, expansion, decline, etc.)
- Identify any other key terms in the question.

## Step 4: Build the Framework

Historical Thinking Skill:	Causation	
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Imperial expansion (600 B.C.E—600 C.E.)</b>	
<b>Empires:</b> You should focus your essay on at least two different places that can provide evidence to support your thesis		
<b>Contextualization:</b> What background information can you provide to “set the stage” for your essay?		
<b>Cause #1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is <i>one</i> cause of imperial expansion?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence from your two empires</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze why that evidence led to that cause</li> </ul>		
<b>Cause #2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a <i>second</i> cause of imperial expansion?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence from your two empires</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze why that evidence led to that cause</li> </ul>		
<b>Cause #3:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a <i>third</i> cause of imperial expansion?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence from your two empires</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze why that evidence led to that cause</li> </ul>		
<b>Synthesis</b> How can the argument be extended by connecting it to something else?		

## Step 5: Provide the Evidence

<b>Historical Thinking Skill:</b>	<b>Causation</b>	
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Imperial expansion (600 B.C.E—600 C.E.)</b>	
<b>Empires:</b> Two places?	<b>Rome</b>	<b>China</b>
<b>Contextualization:</b>	Stable states in the classical era saw growing populations. To support, they needed to get additional resources, creating empires through conquest. These empires needed administrations to run them	
<b>Cause #1:</b> • What?	Strong central government	
• Evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powerful emperors</li> <li>• Advised by Senate and consuls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advised by bureaucrats appointed by the exam system</li> </ul>
• Analysis?	Power and authority of the emperors over their subjects allowed large empires to be built and maintained	
<b>Cause #2:</b> • What?	Use of technology	
• Evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military technology to conquer nearby regions</li> <li>• Agricultural technology to maintain empires</li> <li>• Legions</li> <li>• Roads</li> <li>• Aqueducts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Wall</li> <li>• Irrigation, canals, terrace farming</li> </ul>
• Analysis?	Technology allowed Rome and China to feed their subjects, travel and trade throughout the empires, and more easily move troops	
<b>Cause #3:</b> • What?	Cultural unity	
• Evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride in nationalities and bound by common languages and belief systems</li> <li>• Latin</li> <li>• Polytheistic and later Christian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese</li> <li>• Confucian and Daoist</li> </ul>
• Analysis?	Other empires like Mauryan or Gupta were too diverse culturally, but the similarities in Rome and China led to a common culture	
<b>Synthesis</b> Extend the argument?	Mongol empire was able to last only about a century because they had no experience in ruling (no strong central government) and forbid any kind of cultural unity, especially in China.	

## **Step 6: Write the Essay**

### **Paragraph 1**

The period from 600 BCE to 600 CE was a time of imperial expansion and consolidation. States became more stable, and with that stability came a growing population. To get the necessary resources to support that population, states began to compete for resources and ultimately began to expand militarily, creating empires. The growth of these empires necessitated the creation of more sophisticated governmental administrations, developing tools to maintain unity of very large and potentially diverse populations. Two of the most powerful and prominent empires of that time were the Roman Empire and China. While on opposite sides of the world, *both the Roman Empire and China successfully created their powerful empires through a strong central government, technology, and cultural unity.*

(contextualization ; thesis)

What do you notice about the first paragraph?

1. Started with Contextualization, because it “sets the stage” for the essay by providing the circumstances in which this takes place.
2. Thesis is one sentence (the “Two...” sentence just provides the transition from Contextualization to Thesis).
3. Thesis answers the question by providing THREE causes (strong central government, use of technology, and cultural unity). Note: this essay will not change one of those causes to an effect, therefore the last point on the rubric must be earned through Synthesis.

### **Paragraph 2**

Both Rome and China had strong central governments. Rome had a powerful emperor, assisted by the Senate and other consuls. In China, an emperor also held power and was advised by bureaucrats appointed through rigorous examination. IN BOTH EMPIRES, THE RULERS WIELDED CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AUTHORITY OVER THEIR SUBJECTS, WITH THEIR RULE BEING ABSOLUTE OVER ALL OF THEIR SUBJECTS. THUS, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO BUILD UP AND MAINTAIN LARGE EMPIRES.

(evidence ; ANALYSIS)

### **Paragraph 3**

The use of technology was also critical in the empire-building process for Rome and China. Advanced military technology allowed Rome and China to conquer nearby regions, effectively expanding their territory. The Roman legions, in particular, were the most effective fighting force in the Mediterranean for centuries. Technology was also critical to maintaining these large empires. Agricultural technology, such as the Roman aqueducts or irrigation and terrace farming in China helped maintain the large populations of the empires. Infrastructure like the Roman roads or canals and the Great Wall in China helped link all parts of the empire together. THROUGH THEIR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, ROME AND CHINA WERE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR EMPIRES BOTH BECAUSE THE FOOD PRODUCTION AND WATER SUPPLIES WERE ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT THEIR POPULATIONS, AS WELL AS HAVING WAYS TO QUICKLY MOVE TROOPS TO OUTER REGIONS.

(evidence ; ANALYSIS)

#### Paragraph 4

Cultural unity was necessary to maintain the Roman and Chinese empires. Both empires had pride in their respective nationalities and identified with their empires. The people were bound by common languages, like Latin in Rome and the Chinese language. The people also shared similar belief systems, with the majority of people in China following Confucianism or Daoism. Rome also had a unifying religion, with the people having various pagan beliefs with a common set of gods for most of its time, then the empire becoming Christian later on. THIS CULTURAL UNITY MADE CONSOLIDATION OF MANY VARIOUS PEOPLES POSSIBLE. UNLIKE THE MAURYAN AND GUPTA EMPIRES, WHERE THERE WERE TOO MANY DIVERSE ETHNIC GROUPS, ROME AND CHINA COULD SUCCESSFULLY CREATE TRUE EMPIRES.

(evidence ; ANALYSIS)

#### Paragraph 5

Rome and China were successful in their imperial expansion and consolidation because they possessed a strong central government, technology, and cultural unity in spite of the fact they are located on opposite ends of the world. Thus, it is evident that these factors are the most critical pieces to successfully creating strong empires. **An example of an empire that did not have all three of those qualities, and therefore did not create a long-lasting empire was the Mongols. While they certainly had the military technology and might that allowed them to rapidly create the largest land-based empire the world has ever seen, most all of it was lost within a century. The Mongols did not have a strong central government or bureaucracy to maintain it. And with regards to culture, only a tiny percentage of the people were Mongolian and little to no effort was made to increase cultural unity. In fact, in China, the Mongols actively separated themselves from their Chinese subjects by forbidding them to learn the Mongol language.**

(synthesis)

#### Rubric

- ✓ Contextualization
  - ✓ Thesis
  - ✓ Evidence
  - ✓ Analysis and Reasoning—Analysis
  - ✓ Analysis and Reasoning—Synthesis
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## TIPS

### **Are you addressing the historical thinking skill required?**

- Comparison
- Causation
- Continuity and Change Over Time

### **Did you include your contextualization?**

- This should situate the thesis argument, or parts of the event to broader events, developments or processes.
- It must connect the topic to overarching historical events.
- It is best situated into your introduction to “set the stage” for the rest of your essay.

### **Does your thesis address all parts of the question?**

- The thesis should not be more than one sentence and should be located at the end of the introductory paragraph after your contextualization.
- It cannot simply repeat the question.
- It must address all issues or themes specified.
  - Pay careful attention to words like “causes” or “causes and/or effects” or “causes and effects”, because those are three very different essays
- Regardless of which skill, you are expected to address **three** aspects of that within your essay (example: 3 changes). But you can potentially earn additional rubric points by doing **two** of what is being asked for (example: 2 changes) and **one** of the other half of the skill (example: 1 continuity)
- Your thesis must be **specific** for what you will be writing about.
  - Unacceptable: *There are similarities and differences between the Aztec and Incan empires.*
  - Unacceptable: *The Aztec and the Incan empires were similar in their political structure, but different in their cultural aspects.*
  - Acceptable: *The Aztec and Incan empires were similar politically in that they both were large, diverse empires ruled over by an all-powerful ruler, while they were different culturally because blood sacrifices were far more common in the Aztecs than the Inca and the Aztecs had a system of writing, but the Inca did not.*

### **Did you provide appropriate specific historical evidence (SHE)?**

- Each aspect of your thesis should be a body paragraph.
- For each of your aspects in your thesis, you should provide at least **two** pieces of evidence to support it.

**Did you analyze the reasons for the similarities/differences, causes/effects, changes/continuities?**

- Analysis is crucial for building a sophisticated LEQ. For each aspect in your thesis you must provide a reason **WHY** it happened.
  - For comparison essays that ask you to do both similarities and differences, you must state **WHAT** is similar and **WHAT** is different, and then explain **WHY** they are similar and **WHY** they are different.
  - For causation essays that ask you to do both causes and effects, you must state **WHAT** causes there were and **WHAT** effects there, and then explain **WHY** those causes happened and **WHY** those effects happened.
  - For continuity and change over time essays that ask you to do both continuities and changes, you must state **WHAT** changed and **WHAT** stayed the same, and then explain **WHY** those changes occurred and **WHY** those continuities were maintained.
- Example: *“Rome was located on the Mediterranean Sea; consequently its trade was water-based to a great extent. The Aztec Empire differed since its location within Mesoamerica meant that its trade was not as focused on water travel.”*

**Did you include synthesis?**

- You must extend the argument by considering another one of the following and how it compares to the situation in your essay:
  - Geographic area (same time)
  - Historical era
  - Situation
- Your connection must be relevant, plausible, and explained beyond a mere mention
- Your synthesis would be best placed as a conclusion.

**Remember that AP World History essays are asset-graded, meaning you only get points for what is right and do not lose points for what is not**