

How to Write a DBQ

Part I: The Question

As you read the documents, remember to constantly keep “The Question” in mind as any information in the documents that helps you to answer “The Question” is valuable.

Using the documents, analyze the means by which Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam spread into regions outside their place of origin and evaluate their success. What kinds of additional documents would you need to assess the process of conversion?

What is the question asking you to *do*? (What’s the *verb* in the question? Restate the verb(s) in your own words.)

O.K., now what is the object of the verb? (Analyze and Evaluate *what? where? when?*) Make sure you focus your essay so that it answers ALL of these key characteristics.

What _____

Where _____

When _____

Historical Background

The Historical Background is presented in most (but not all) DBQs in order to “jog the memory” of students. Unfortunately too many students don’t realize that the HB paragraph is there to help them and all too often ignore it or don’t realize that it contains valuable information.

Historical Background: By the 16th century Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam had spread thousands of miles from the place(s) of origin. This spread was not steady, but occurred at uneven rates over the centuries. Each religion confronted various obstacles in spreading to new regions and cultures, and each met these obstacles in a variety of ways.

1. Try to summarize the Historical Background (HB) paragraph above. *What* does it say?

2. Based on the information in the HB, how are you going to approach the documents any differently than you would if you hadn’t read the HB? Are there any hints in the HB paragraph that will influence how you read, interpret, and categorize the documents?

Part II: Reading and Analyzing Documents

Document Characteristics

What notes should one take as one reads the documents? Much of that depends on the question being asked, but there are several common characteristics in each document that one should look for because any of these characteristics can influence how a document should be interpreted and analyzed. The acronym “SOAPSTONE” is often useful as a guide for these characteristics.

Subject	What is the main topic of this document?
Occasion	When was this document produced? Was it created for a particular event or occasion, or even during an era when other similar documents were produced?
Audience	Who was this document’s intended audience? Was the document written to be read privately by a specific person (who?), a public announcement, or an official proclamation?
Purpose	Why was this document produced? What was the purpose or motivation of the writer/author of the document, based on what limited information you have about them? What effect did the author hope this document would have? What did the author want the reader(s) of this document to <i>do</i> ?
Speaker	Who was the Speaker of this document? Was it an official person representing a government, or an informal, anonymous individual? Usually a document’s author and speaker are the same individual, but occasionally they may actually be different. (e.g. a speech may be written by a speech writer, but spoken by a government official)
Tone	Is there any apparent tone or “voice” in this document that would influence one’s interpretation? Is it filled with any apparent emotion? (e.g. sarcasm, exuberance, anger, disdain, admiration, etc.) Underline any unusual vocabulary in the document that serves as a clue to this interpretation.

As you read each document, write a brief note above and to the left of each document re: these characteristics. Do worry if you can’t detect answers for every “SOAPSTONE” category. No single document will have complete answers for *all* these categories, just do the best you can.

Additional Document

After you read a document, you’ll notice that some of the SOAPSTONE characteristics you looked for above were answerable, but others weren’t. Below and to the left of each document write down a type of document that would complete the missing information not contained in the given document. Sometimes it is helpful to think of the Additional Document as a “Missing Voice.” Who would be a good type of person (not already heard from) to create a document that would help answer this question, and what information would that person likely have? You don’t have to name a specific, actual document, but you must do two things with this Additional Document

1. Describe the *kind of document* that would give more information, or the *kind of information* you’d like to see in an additional document.
2. A short explanation of *how* that information *would help a historian answer the question* more completely.

Here’s a chart to help you visualize how the Additional Document rubric category works.

“It would help to have a document from a (type of source) that deals with (subject matter) so that historians could better (use information to *do* what?).”

or

“It would help to have a (kind of) document showing (description of what kind of information/evidence desired) so that historians could (describe what conclusion you’d like to be able to draw from this evidence).”

Missing Voice / Additional Document	Type of information/evidence	How would this document would help answer the question more completely? (How would an historian <i>use</i> this document?)

Grouping

When you’re finished reading all the documents, look back over your SOAPSTONE notes written above each document on the left side. Do you notice any characteristics that *more than one document share*? Rewrite these commonly shared characteristics above and to the right of each document. You’ll use this information to plan and structure your paragraphs in a few minutes when you begin to write.

Point of View (POV)

The purpose of the DBQ is to test students’ ability to *do* what professional historians actually do. Well, what do professional historians do? One essential task is to interpret historical documents. History is not *just* facts, a large part is also *interpretation* of facts. This is one area that makes history both fun and controversial, because different historians interpret identical documents differently. Remember the Habits of Mind? They are all designed to (among other things) develop students’ thinking and interpretation skills.¹

So as you read and interpret each document, what clues are there that any particular document means anything *other* than the literal words on the paper? Are there any reasons why although a document says “x” it should be interpreted as meaning something more, less, or different? All the intangible circumstances surrounding a document that influence how one should interpret that document comprise what is called the Point of View (POV).

¹ Your essay will *never* be graded according to whether the reader agrees or disagrees with your interpretation of the documents. As long as you “Construct and evaluate arguments using evidence to make plausible arguments” (Habit of Mind #1) your interpretation is perfectly acceptable. It is of course possible to misinterpret documents, which does carry a penalty for Rubric category #2, but as long as you include all the documents somewhere in your essay and misinterpret no more than one document, you’ll earn full credit for your interpretation as long as you can make a plausible case for your interpretation.

If this concept seems meaningless to you, pretend that two people tell you *exactly the same words*. Will you interpret and respond to each person identically, or will you take each person’s identity into account when you weigh whether to take their words seriously? Imagine the following situation:

Document 1

“If you park your car there, you’ll get in trouble,” says your six-year-old sister.

Document 2

“If you park your car there, you’ll get in trouble,” says the police officer.

You’d interpret these two statements *very* differently, wouldn’t you? Obviously the identity of the source makes a huge difference in how seriously one interprets the document. Note, however, that one should not come to the conclusion that Document 1 is “wrong” while Document 2 is “right.” (Can you think of any circumstances that might make your sister be correct? Just because she’s six doesn’t mean she’s *automatically* wrong, it just means that you’d probably want some more information re: the context of your sister’s comments before you render judgement on her words. After all, she might have just heard your parent say, “If that car isn’t moved your older sibling will be punished!”)

POV is far more subtle than simply labeling documents as “right” or “wrong.” You have to be *very specific* in deciding *to what degree* a document should be interpreted *a certain way*. Ultimately, you should be able to place each document on a spectrum of the document’s “trustworthiness.”

Limitations Value

What characteristics limit/reduce the value of this document?	What characteristics strengthen/enhance the value of this document?

So, how does one interpret a document’s POV? The most common ways are listed below. (Some of them are the same SOAPSTONE characteristics you’ve already done!)

1. Who produced this document? Is this author have any special knowledge about the topic? How credible is this author? Discuss the author’s gender, age, ethnicity, social status, religion, level of education, intellectual or political philosophy, etc. (You won’t know all this information, but give as much detail as possible.)
2. When was this document produced? Can it be connected with a significant historical event or era? (Think back to the Historical Background information.)
3. Who was the intended audience? Was the document written to be read by a specific person (who?) a public announcement, or an official proclamation?
4. Why was this document produced? What was the purpose or motivation of the author of the document, based on what limited information you have about them? What effect did the author hope this document would have? What did the author want the document reader to *do*?
5. Is there any apparent tone or “voice” in this document that would influence one’s interpretation? Is it filled with any apparent emotion? (e.g. sarcasm, exuberance, anger, disdain, admiration, etc.) Underline any unusual vocabulary in the document that serves as a clue to this interpretation.

As you read each document, write your POV notes below and to the right of each document. When you’ve completed all these tasks, your notes on the DBQ will look something like this: (these are meant

to be illustrative, not an exhaustive list of all possible notes)

SOAPSTONE

- S - account of adoption of Christianity
- O - after conversion, document possibly paid for by Clovis?
- A - probably public, written for general population
- P - reinforce Christianity (“true God” vs. “mortal gods”)
- S - Gregory of Tours favors Christianity
- Tone - reverent (“true God, beseech, thine, pious”)

Grouping

- Pro-Christian world view (John, Doc #5; Columbus Doc #7; Guadalupe, Doc #8)
- Eyewitness account meant for non-eyewitnesses (Buddhist scroll, Doc #2; Ibn Battuta, Doc #6)
- Glorification of religion & accomplishments by member of a religion (Buddhist scroll, Doc #2; Great Mosque, Doc #3)
- Public audience (Buddhist scroll, Doc #2; Chinese block print, Doc #4; John, Doc #5; Guadalupe, Doc #8)

Document 1

Source: Gregory of Tours on the Conversion of Clovis, sixth century C.E.

The queen [Clotilda] did not cease to urge him [Clovis] to recognize the true God and cease worshipping idols. But he could not be influenced in any way to this belief, until at last a war arose with the Alamanni, in which he was driven by necessity to confess what before he had of his free will denied. It came about that as the two armies were fighting fiercely, there was much slaughter, and Clovis’s army began to be in danger of destruction. He saw it and raised his eyes to heaven and with remorse in his heart he burst into tears and cried: “Jesus Christ, ... I beseech the glory of thy aid ... if thou wilt grant me victory over these enemies ... I will believe in thee and be baptized in thine name ...” And when he said this, the Alamanni turned their backs, and began to disperse ...

And the bishop sent for him secretly and began to urge him to believe ... But the king said: “I gladly hear you, most holy father, but there remains one thing: the people who follow me cannot endure to abandon their gods ...” He met with his followers, but before he could speak, the power of God anticipated him, and all the people cried out together: “O pious king, we reject our mortal gods ...”

Additional Document

- account by Alamanni king explaining why battle was lost (to see if he agrees with Clovis’ account)
- account by Clovis himself (to verify Gregory’s deference to Clovis and reverence for Christianity)
- another document written by Gregory of Tours (to see if he describes *all* religious conversions this way, or if Clovis’ story is unique)

POV

- Purpose - meant to legitimize religious conversion
- Author - member of same faith as being promoted, objectivity is questionable
- Occasion - Who paid for this document? (original must have been hand-written, very expensive. Perhaps Clovis himself wanted an account?)

Part III: Organize Essay Paragraphs by Document Characteristics

Look back over your notes on the documents. Make a list of all the characteristics that are shared by more than one document or author. (Look above each document on the right side) Note: Documents can belong in more than one group, because documents have more than one characteristic. In fact, excellent essays often have one document that is simultaneously organized into three or four groups of documents.

This characteristic ...	is shared by these documents ...	as shown by this specific text from the document (cite the evidence).

This chart will eventually become an outline of your essay's main body paragraphs. The topic sentence of each paragraph will be the characteristic in the left column, while the rest of the sentences in the each paragraph will center around the documents and specific text you've noted in the middle and right columns.

When you've finished planning your paragraphs, double check your notes and outline to make sure that you haven't missed any of the Rubric requirements.

“Using” Documents for the DBQ				
Many students ask, “How many documents do I have to ‘use’ for the DBQ?” Well, the answer is actually quite complex, because there are four different Rubric categories that require students to “use” documents. Each Rubric category requires the “use” of a different number of documents.				
Rubric Category	Official Rubric Description	Shorthand Description	Cognitive Skill or Habit of Mind	Number of Documents Required
2	Addresses all of the documents and demonstrates understanding of all of all but one.	Meaning	Acknowledging Existence of Evidence	Must <i>attempt</i> to understand all documents. (cannot ignore or completely leave out any document)
			Reading Comprehension	Must <i>correctly</i> understand all but one document.
3	Supports thesis with appropriate evidence from all or all but one document.	Evidence	Construct and evaluate arguments using evidence to make plausible arguments.	All or all but one document = 2 pts
				All but two docs = 1 pt
4	Analyzes point of view in at least two documents.	POV	Develop the skills necessary to analyze point of view, context, and to understand and interpret information.	No less than 2 (but minimum could be more)
5	Analyzes documents by grouping them in two or three ways, depending on the question.	Grouping	Analysis	No less than 2 (but minimum could be 3)

Part IV: The Thesis

The Thesis is the most important part of an essay. It is the overall argument that the rest of the essay will set out to prove. There are three basic tasks that a good thesis should perform:

The Thesis should:

1. Address all parts of the question
2. Take a position on the question
3. Set out categories for later discussion in the essay

You have already completed a careful analysis of all the documents' according to their characteristics. Take a minute to examine all of your notes. Do you see any overall trend or pattern in your interpretation of the documents? That overall trend is your thesis. There may be inconsistencies or contradictions in the trend (not *every* fact may agree with the overall trend) but the trend itself will become your thesis. Unfortunately too many students write poor quality theses because of some simple, preventable mistakes. Here's a guide to the most common mistakes students make when attempting to write a thesis.

	Mistake	Example	How to Fix It
1 Thesis	No Thesis		Pre-writing organization. Read the question, then plan/outline your response <u>before</u> you begin to write.
	Thesis not directly related to the question	<i>Buddhism had a large impact wherever it spread. In fact, my next door neighbor is a Buddhist.</i>	<u>Read the question.</u> Focus on the language of the question: <u>verbs, adjectives, geographic region, and/or time frame.</u> Writing a good thesis is a little like the oath witnesses take when testifying in court: Answer the question Answer the whole question. Answer nothing but the question.
	Thesis repeats or just paraphrases the question	<i>Buddhism, Christianity and Islam spread throughout the world by very many means.</i>	Try to “argue” your thesis. Could you take an “opposite” position? If not, then the thesis doesn’t really <i>say</i> anything. Avoid the “thesis killer” words ² (very, many, things, lots, stuff, etc.).
	Thesis is too vague	<i>Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam are all practiced throughout the world.</i>	

² Any thesis that contains the “thesis killer” words is likely to be too vague or incomplete to be of any value. The ability to form a sophisticated, complex thesis is difficult skill to learn. One strategy to combat this is to require students to begin their thesis sentence with either “While,” “Although,” or “Despite/In spite of.” These words strongly encourage students to formulate a mature thesis that helps structure the rest of their essay. Once students can consistently write a competent thesis sentence, then they should concentrate on developing an essay preview/outline of later paragraphs. The result should be a thesis paragraph that is several sentences long (the paragraph should NOT just be a single sentence).

Background / Introduction (Optional)

Some people prefer to write a “warm up” sentence rather than starting immediately with their thesis. Feel free to “set the context or background,” but do NOT take more than one sentence to do so.

My Thesis (1-2 sentences)

Suggestion: Begin your thesis sentence with “While,” “Although,” “Despite,” or “In spite of.”

The rest of the Thesis Paragraph (“Road Map”)

Now summarize the main points that you’ll use to support or prove your thesis. The second part of the Thesis Paragraph should preview the topic sentences of your later paragraphs. By the time your reader finishes the Thesis Paragraph, s/he should know what your thesis is, and have an idea of what evidence you will use to prove it. How do you know what evidence you’ll use to support your thesis? Look back at the document characteristics chart in Part III. Those document characteristics that are shared by more than one document now become a “Road Map” previewing the topic sentences of your body paragraphs.

Main Point / Body Paragraph #1

Main Point / Body Paragraph #2

Main Point / Body Paragraph #3

Main Point / Body Paragraph #4 (as needed)

Section V: Suggested Generic DBQ Structure

Below is a suggested structure for DBQs. This is only a generic guide, not an absolute “formula,” but it should help remind you to do all the necessary tasks that a DBQ should do.

Thesis Paragraph

- Background/Context sentence (Optional. “Where does this question fall in the larger context of history?”)
- Thesis Statement (1-2 sentences)
- “Road Map” (preview of later categories of document Groupings/Analysis)
- Additional Document (Optional)

Body Paragraph #1 (1st Group of Analyzed Doc’s)

- Topic Sentence (what characteristic do these doc’s share, and how does that support the thesis?)
- Evidence Doc #1 (what text from doc #1 supports the thesis or this paragraph’s topic?)
POV/Analysis of doc #1 (see notes from below right side of each document)
- Evidence Doc #2 (what text from doc #2 supports the thesis or this paragraph’s topic?)
POV/Analysis of doc #2
- Evidence Doc #3 (what text from doc #3 supports the thesis or this paragraph’s topic?)
POV/Analysis of doc #3
- How these doc’s relate/compare to each other. (The fullest understanding of any individual document emerges only when that document is viewed within the wider context of ALL the documents.)
- Additional Doc (be sure to describe what evidence this document should contain and how/why this evidence would be useful in better answering the question)
- Conclusion/transition to next paragraph (optional)

Additional Body Paragraphs as needed

- Check to make sure that all doc’s are included, with explicit discussion of specific Evidence and POV analysis from each doc.

Conclusion

- Include Additional Doc (if not included previously)
- Restatement/Summarization of Thesis (optional but recommended)

Now, in order to help you visualize how to write an excellent DBQ, see the “Annotated Rubric” on the following pages.

The Question:

Using the documents, analyze the means by which Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam spread into regions outside their place of origin and evaluate their success. What kinds of additional documents would you need to assess the process of conversion?

Category	Rubric Description <i>Required Characteristics</i>	Example and Commentary
<p align="center">1 Thesis</p>	<p>Has an acceptable thesis. 1 pt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Must be explicitly stated in the introduction or conclusion of the essay.</i> • <i>May appear as 1 sentence or as multiple (contiguous) sentences.</i> • <i>May not be split among separated sentences, or a mere restatement of the question.</i> 	<p>Unacceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam both spread through very many means. <i>This is a mere restatement of the question.</i> • Although the spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam were different in some ways, they were also alike. <i>This thesis is also far too vague.</i> • Overall, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam advanced in different geographic regions over time. <i>True, but the question asks about the means and degree of success in spreading religion, not geography. Geography may be a factor in influencing how the religions spread, but it is not directly relevant to the question.</i> • Buddhism and Christianity both used missionary efforts to spread their religion. <i>True, but what about Islam?</i> • Christianity and Islam have been more successful than Buddhism in spreading to distant lands. <i>This statement addresses the “evaluate the success,” but ignores the “analyze the means” part of the question.</i> <p>Acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Christianity and Islam used military victories to gain converts, while Buddhism relied more on missionary efforts. Over time all three have successfully spread to the “four corners” of the world. <i>Answers exactly what the question asks. The second sentence is a little weak on the “evaluating the success” part of the question, but at least acknowledges the issue.</i> <p>Excellent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While Muslims and Christians often converted themselves or their enemies during periods of conquest but many successful conversions occurred through trade and missionary work as in Buddhism and later examples of Christianity and Islam. However, the varying degrees of compliance with religious standards in the new converts might have given the strictly adherent pause to wonder about their sincerity.

Category	Rubric Description <i>Required Characteristics</i>	Example and Commentary
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Document Meaning</p>	<p>Addresses all of the documents and demonstrates understanding of all of all but one. 1 pt</p> <p><i>There are <u>eight</u> documents. Students must</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Address (mention) all documents in the essay,</i> • <i>Demonstrate a correct understanding of the basic meaning of at least <u>seven</u> documents.</i> <p><i>Listing the documents separately or listing the documents as part of a group does <u>not</u> sufficiently demonstrate an understanding of basic meaning.</i></p>	<p><i>There are two skills being addressed in this Rubric category: 1) Confronting all available relevant evidence; and 2) interpreting the evidence correctly. The biggest mistake students make is ignoring relevant documentary evidence, especially if/when that evidence contradicts their thesis. The second mistake is in incorrectly interpreting the meaning of a document.</i></p> <p>Unacceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Doc #2 says ...” Unfortunately, too many students think that in order to correctly interpret a document they have to <u>summarize</u> that document. The directions explicitly say, “Do not simply summarize the documents individually.” Summarization is an important skill in classroom discussion, but not in essay writing. The DBQ is not a “book report” requiring you to summarize documents so the Reader doesn’t have to. Rather than trying to explicitly state a document’s meaning, students should use their understanding of a document’s meaning to make an argument or conclusion. One’s correct understanding of a document’s meaning will be <u>implicitly</u> clear when using that document to make an argument.</i> • <i>“Docs #2, #3, #4, and #8 are all visual documents.” This listing of documents as a group does not demonstrate that the student understands the <u>content</u> of the documents. If the rest of the paragraph expanded on the content of each document, then this would count as “addressing,” but by itself this sentence would not count as “addressing” the documents mentioned. Note: it is helpful (but not necessary) to cite the document being referenced as “(Doc #5)” in the essay just to aid the Reader in making sure that all the documents are addressed somewhere in the essay.</i> • <i>[essay in which seven of eight documents are correctly understood] All the documents must be “addressed” somewhere in the essay. Students must at least <u>attempt</u> to deal with <u>all</u> the documents even if they don’t correctly understand one of the documents. Likewise, if two documents are misunderstood, then no credit is earned.</i> <p>Acceptable <i>There are a myriad of acceptable interpretations of documents. Readers take notes & are thoroughly familiar with the documents before reading. Suffice to say that readers will know a correct interpretation of a doc’s meaning when they see it.</i></p> <p>Excellent <i>Any essay that shows careful and insightful analysis of the documents’ meaning.</i></p>

Category	Rubric Description <i>Required Characteristics</i>	Example and <i>Commentary</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Evidence</p>	<p>Supports thesis with appropriate evidence from all or all but one document. 2 pts</p> <p><i>Evidence must be drawn from 7 or 8 documents <u>and</u> must address the question.</i></p> <p>(Supports thesis with appropriate evidence from all but two documents.) 1 pt</p> <p><i>Evidence must be drawn from 6 documents <u>and</u> must address the question.</i></p> <p><i>The most common mistake students make is to merely <u>quote</u>, <u>summarize</u>, <u>paraphrase</u>, or <u>attribute something</u> to a document, rather than truly <u>support</u> the thesis with evidence from the document. (See comments for Meaning on previous page)</i></p>	<p><i>To earn the point for “supports thesis with appropriate evidence from documents,” students must unambiguously use any document characteristic to show why that document supports their thesis. In the cases where an essay does not have an acceptable thesis, it is possible to earn the points for evidence if the evidence cited would support a (non-existent) thesis. In other words, essays aren’t ‘double penalized’ for not having a thesis.</i></p> <p>Unacceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Doc #1 Clovis says, “I beseech the glory of thy aid ... if thou wilt grant me victory over these enemies ... I will believe in thee and be baptized in thine name ...” <i>This is merely a long quotation from a document, irrelevant to the question. Note also how the quotation is far too long. It adds nothing to the significance of the essay, and in fact is often typical of essays that try to disguise weak writing. If you must quote a document, try to focus on a single, significant word (e.g. “beseech”). NEVER quote an entire sentence. Readers are thoroughly familiar with all the documents, so they will instantly recognize that you have correctly used a specific piece of evidence from a document.</i> • In Doc #5 John of Montecorvino says he has started a church and baptized thousands of people ...” <i>This is merely a (correct) summary of the document’s meaning, not evidence used in support of a thesis that has to do with the means of spreading religion. Any paragraph that begins, “Doc #X says ...” is almost sure to be nothing more than a summarization, paraphrasing, or quotation. Students must go beyond mere summarization to connect the evidence in the documents to their thesis.</i> <p>Acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clovis’ willingness to adopt Christian values and reverent language (Doc #1) reflects the close relationship between military success and religious conversion. <i>Here the evidence from a document is used to support the thesis/topic sentence. The document is used to support the essay, rather than the other way around.</i> <p>Excellent <i>Essays that recognize temporal differences among documents, change over time, or historical context of the documents, or that analyze all documents well.</i></p>

Category	Rubric Description <i>Required Characteristics</i>	Example and <i>Commentary</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">4 Point of View</p>	<p>Analyzes Point of View (POV) in at least two documents. 1 pt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explains why this particular person might have this particular opinion OR what particular feature informs the author's or intended audience's POV.</i> • <i>Must move beyond a mere description of that individual by considering and explaining the tone, characteristics of the author, intended audience, and/ or how the intended outcome may have influenced the author's opinion.</i> • <i>Mere attribution (copying or repeating info verbatim from the source line of the doc) is <u>not</u> sufficient.</i> 	<p>Unacceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gregory of Tours' (Doc #1) POV is pro-Christian. <i>POV is not the same as 'opinion.'</i></i> • <i>Gregory of Tours (Doc #1) was a Christian, so it is questionable exactly how reliable the source is. Many students simply stated that "an individual is unreliable because they are X, Y, or Z" and then believed they had fulfilled the requirements for POV. Instead, students must go beyond a mere description of an individual or defining characteristic and explain <u>why</u> this fact is significant in the analysis of the document. Mere attribution is not POV any more than "being a student automatically makes your essay bad."</i> • <i>Ibn Battuta's POV is that of a Muslim scholar and legal advisor. Here the student has merely attributed the source verbatim from the source information given with the document and tried to claim POV by using the phrase 'POV'.</i> <p>Acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ibn Battuta's disapproval of local dress codes (Doc #6) is mostly likely explained by Battuta's own conservative upbringing. This example not only recognizes the author's background, but explains how that relates to the author's attitude.³ This statement would simultaneously apply toward rubric categories #2 (Meaning), #3 (Evidence) & #4 (POV).</i> • <i>The Chinese block printing (Doc #4) pairs together a religious message with visual arts, which might well have impressed the intended reader with China's sophistication of high technology. Note how although there is no (English) text in Doc #4, it is still possible to analyze the POV behind the document. This is a credible theory of the document's author's motives behind a document's creation.</i> <p>Excellent <i>An essay that analyzes point of view in most or all documents.</i></p>

³ Note how in this example this student cited *the author* as the source, NOT just the document #. While this may seem an unimportant distinction, students who recognize that documents are created *by people* are more likely to consistently practice good POV analysis skills. *Documents* have POV only because *people* do.

Category	Rubric Description <i>Required Characteristics</i>	Example and <i>Commentary</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">5 Grouping</p>	<p>Analyzes documents by grouping them in two or three ways, depending on the question. 1 pt</p> <p><i>Must explicitly group the documents in at least <u>two</u> ways.</i></p> <p><i>Look for some characteristic that more than one document share, then create a group under the title of that characteristic.</i></p>	<p><i>Most students group documents according to obvious, appropriately, (e.g. Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim documents), but relatively few identified more subtle, sophisticated groupings.</i></p> <p>Unacceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doc #3 is the only document that features architecture. <i>A single doc cannot be a “group.” However, a single doc CAN belong to more than one group.</i> <p>Acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not only did merchants travel the trade routes, but the Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian hierarchy actively sent missionaries to seek converts along the roads. (Docs 2, 5, 6) <i>This is an acceptable topic sentence that may lend itself to document analysis and appropriately relates back to the thesis. It also properly interprets the meaning of three documents (Rubric Category #2). The rest of the paragraph will use evidence from those documents as well. (Rubric Category #3) High quality writing often satisfies several rubric categories simultaneously.</i> <p>Excellent An essay that analyzes the documents in additional ways—groupings, comparisons, synthesis. <i>Superb examples of content analysis could include multiple groupings, comparisons of specific characteristics of documents, or synthesizing information in the documents.</i></p> <p>Example(s) of common document groupings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents sorted by Religion of (Buddhist = 2, 4; Christian = 1, 5, 7, 8; Muslim = 3,6) • Role of trade routes (5, 6, 7) • Role of technology in promoting respect for religion (3, 4) • Role of art in promoting appreciation for religion (2, 3, 4, 8)

Category	Rubric Description <i>Required Characteristics</i>	Example and Commentary
<p style="text-align: center;">6 Additional Document</p>	<p>Identifies and explains the need for one type of appropriate additional document or source. 1 pt</p> <p><i>Students must identify an appropriate additional document or source <u>and</u> explain how that document or source will contribute to an analysis of the means of spread of religions and/or their success.</i></p>	<p>Unacceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be good to have a document from a peasant. <i>WHY would it be good to hear from a peasant? How do you think a peasant might have thought about these issues differently from any of the given documents? What questions would an historian be able to answer with a peasant’s perspective that aren’t possible to answer now?</i> • None of these documents represent a woman’s perspective. <i>True, but be more explicit. How do you anticipate women felt differently from men? What difference would a woman’s perspective make to an historian?</i> <p>Acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doc’s #6 & #7 reflect only the opinion of the upper-class elite. An additional document explaining the view of an unskilled laborer would provide evidence of how widespread the upper-class’ opinions were.” <i>Simple, effective description of an additional document and an explanation of the use/need of it.</i> • After seeing the opinions of those already convinced of their religious conviction, a document detailing the reasons someone did not hold a religious view would have been helpful to see what conversion methods were ineffective. <p>Excellent <i>An essay that explains why additional types of document(s) or sources are needed.</i></p> <p>Common examples of Additional Documents often asked for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Docs by women: to explore whether there are similarities or differences on how religions spread. • Docs by peasants or workers: to explore the attitudes of those classes who might be motivated by different reasons than upper/ruling class individuals. • Docs with data about how many members belonged to each religion, to help gauge the effectiveness of missionary efforts. • Docs re: the economic effects of religious conversion to see if individuals were economically motivated to change religion

Model DBQ Essay

Below is a model DBQ essay that is NOT representative of what could be done in 45 minutes under test conditions. That's right, we have written and reworked it several times so that we may point out the best possible response. An actual essay would be considerably shorter with fewer careful details but could still demonstrate enough proficiency to earn a high score. Read it carefully and note the comments in the margin on the side about how this essay would be scored.

Analyze the means by which Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam spread into regions outside their place of origin and evaluate their success. What kinds of additional documents would you need to assess the process of conversion?

A religion might be spread to another society in three ways, each with varying levels of success. While Muslims and Christians often converted themselves or their enemies during periods of conquest but many successful conversions occurred through trade and missionary work as in Buddhism and later examples of Christianity and Islam. However, the varying degrees of compliance with religious standards in the new converts might have given the strictly adherent pause to wonder about their sincerity. Warfare provided a quick and obvious means of spreading religion, but often came with questionable permanence. Trade-based contacts tended to be longer-lasting, while missionary efforts depended heavily on the credibility of the individual missionaries.

During periods of warfare, there had been active conversion of enemies as seen during the Muslim conquest of Spain three centuries before the Grand Mosque was built (doc. 3). Also it was apparent when Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas (doc. 7). but surprisingly, sometimes the warriors themselves who had resisted earlier attempts converted on the battlefield, like the Frankish king, Clovis (doc. 1). He went on to effect the mass conversion of his own men and later his descendent Charlemagne spread it throughout Europe. This account has all the elements of miraculous conversion in the face of dire tribulations that is useful for proselytizing on the part of Catholic bishop and later saint, Gregory of Tours. Clovis may have had a battlefield conversion but it is more likely that he forced his men to convert to the faith. As for Columbus, he points out that the Mexica appear to be ripe for conversion. When that statement is combined with the painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe (doc. 8), based on an account of a vision received by a peasant thirty-eight years later, it appears that Columbus was correct. Columbus relates that the Mexica considered the Europeans as gods in flesh from their own pantheon and realized that one of his voiced goals to bring new souls to the Catholic faith, which had been useful in persuading Isabella and Ferdinand to fund his exploration, was within his reach. It would not be surprising if he exaggerated the Mexica response to the Catholic faith in order to please his patrons. The mosque at Cordoba represents the apex of Muslim success in Spain, the end point of the process of conversion stemming from earlier military victory. To investigate the topic of conversion by conquest more closely, it would be important to have additional documents describing actual conversions of the Spanish people to

**Introduction/
Background (optional)**

Thesis (2 sentences)

“Road Map”

#1 warfare

#2 trade

#3 missionary

Topic Sentence - War

Doc #3

Doc #7

Doc #1

**Doc #1 POV (purpose,
motivation)**

Doc #7

Doc #8

**Doc #7 POV (purpose,
audience)**

**Doc #3 POV (context =
“represents the apex”)**

Additional Doc #1

Islam or descriptions of the Christianization of the Baltic region.

Conversion also occurred regularly through trade networks where Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian merchants traveled. It is particularly noteworthy that Muslim traders had good success in conversion of Africans (doc. 6) while Buddhists spread their faith successfully into China, although it was periodically viewed with suspicion by Confucian authorities (doc. 2). To prove the acceptance of Buddhism in Chinese society, Xuanzang's return to China, likely painted by a Buddhist monk, is an exuberant rush of horses with bundles of collected Buddhist items from his long pilgrimage to India. Over the centuries, Buddhist monks and their journeys became very familiar to the Chinese. (doc 4) Also, Nestorian Christians had become firmly planted in the farthest western regions of China. Ibn Battuta, noted world traveler and Muslim cleric, was determined to instruct all converts in the best practices of Islam. He admired the devotion of west Africans to prayer and study of the Quran, but he was continually appalled when the pure faith was not practiced as he believed it should be. And, the freedom of west African women unnerved him. Nevertheless, one can see that Islam had made great inroads into African society in the three centuries since it arrived. Since these accounts are coincidental to conversion along trade routes, it would be helpful to find letters or diaries from Muslim or Buddhist merchants describing incidents in which inquiries on faith were made and actual conversions occurred.

Not only did merchants travel the trade routes, but the Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian hierarchy actively sent missionaries to seek converts along the roads. Xuanzang traveled west along the routes that Buddhist monks had used for centuries while Sufi mystics along with Muslim and Christian clergy moved east along those same routes (docs 2, 5, 6). Buddhism remained in China for centuries even though there were difficult periods of active persecution. It is fair to say that even Sufi mystics known for their tolerance of local customs made only slight inroads into China but had considerably more success in northern India and central Asia. However, Catholic Christians never achieved much success in regions of east Asia despite claims to the opposite by John of Montecorvino (doc. 5). It is easy to imagine that John of Montecorvino wrote the overly enthusiastic letter to his superiors to persuade them to invest more men and funds into his venture. The fact that he had to purchase young boys to convert to Christianity gives some idea of his lack of success in the general population. Ironically, as the region with fewest missionaries, Africa accepted the tenets of Islam more completely than those regions with active evangelism. Early documents from the few Muslim regions of China might shed some light on conversion, and Buddhist scrolls from monasteries in China might also flesh out the early missionary experiences of Buddhist monks.

By the time that Xuanzang made his pilgrimage to India, Buddhism had been accepted by Tang authorities although it had entered China with Buddhist merchants as early as the Han. Likewise, Muslim merchants in west Africa began the process a few centuries before the arrival of Ibn Battuta. On the other hand, the conversion of Europe went very fast once the Franks had

Topic Sentence - Trade

Doc #6

**Doc #2 POV - attitude
("exuberant rush")**

Doc #4

Doc #6

**Doc #6 POV - tone
("continually appalled")**

Additional Doc #2

**Topic Sentence #3 -
Missionaries**

Doc #2

**Doc #5
POV - author's motive**

Doc #3 POV - occasion

Additional Doc #3

**Comparison of three
paragraphs (Expanded
Core - insightful
analysis)**

accepted its precepts. Unlike Buddhism, the other religions went through a period of warfare as they spread, but it is clear that their most successful spread occurred along trade routes with merchants and missionaries.

**Conclusion /
Restatement of Thesis**