



Social Studies Virtual Learning

Period 2 Review: Writing on the AP Exam

April 16, 2020



AP European History

Lesson: April 16, 2020

Objective/Learning Target: The student will be able to write an effective thesis and provide historical context for a long-essay question.

Warm Up

What key terms from lessons 6-8 relate to individualism or government philosophy?

In what ways do those terms/ideas help explain the ways in which individual rights gained political/intellectual prominence?

If you are using flashcards, pull the related flashcards aside. If you have guided notes/other materials set those aside for our LEQ (long essay question) practice.

Lesson/Activity

Today we will practice some writing skills for the AP exam. The prompt we will use for this period is:

Explain THREE ways in which individualism and individual rights were expressed in political theories.

Lesson/Activity

We will not be writing an entire essay today, but rather practicing two specific pieces of it. Those pieces will be:

- 1) An effective thesis
- 2) Pertinent historical context

[Here is another link](#) to the College Board's AP Writing Rubrics for history. Page 2 has the DBQ rubric, and we'll be working on the points for part A (Thesis) and part B (Context). If you prefer Tom Richey's rubric, you can [find it here](#).

Lesson/Activity

Writing your thesis

Considering the prompt: “Explain THREE ways in which individualism and individual rights were expressed in political theories,” create what you believe to be a strong argument using the guidelines laid out in part A of the rubric. Remember, a solid thesis (particularly for an essay this short) should:

- Generally be a single sentence.
- Stake a claim (don’t just restate the prompt)

An example thesis for this prompt might be: **Theories of individual rights began to become intellectually popular during the Enlightenment era, but were expressed more directly during the American and French revolutions.**

Lesson/Activity

Giving context

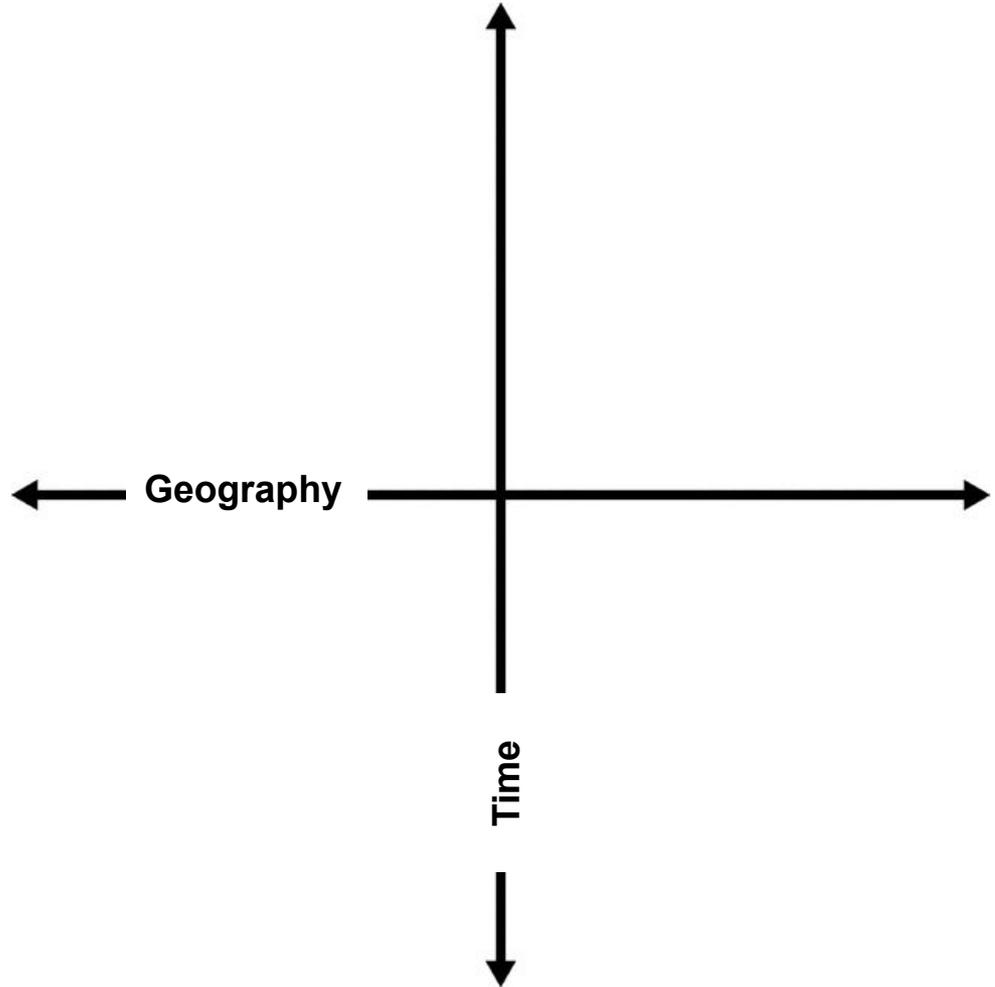
Context can be a little bit trickier, but that doesn't mean it can't easily be done. For the College Board's rubric, refer to part B. Frequently, good context can come in the essay's introduction along with your thesis. Context can be the way that you "set the stage" for your essay before getting to your main argument. Context can come in a couple of different ways:

1. Providing broader geographic context within the same time period
2. Providing broader historical context from a single area/concept

Lesson/Activity

Giving context

That can be confusing. One way to think about it is like a point-graph. The X-axis represents area and the Y-axis represents time. If (0,0) is your essay, then moving along the X-axis provides broader geographic context *from that same time period* while moving up and down on the Y-axis provides historical context *from that same area*.



Lesson/Activity

Giving context

We could use a few different ways to give context for our prompt: **Explain THREE ways in which individualism and individual rights were expressed in political theories.** We could:

1. Describe the difference in the theories of individual rights between Eastern and Western Europe (X-axis)
2. Describe the differences between feudal serfs and American citizens (mostly Y-axis)
3. Compare and contrast the Bill of Rights with the Declaration of the Rights of Man (mostly X-axis)

Lesson/Activity

Giving context

It is important that your context relates more to your thesis than to the prompt. For example, it doesn't do much good to spend a lot of time providing context for the differences between Eastern and Western Europe if we use our sample thesis:

Theories of individual rights began to become intellectually popular during the Enlightenment era, and were expressed more directly during the American and French revolutions.

At the same time, providing context on the American Revolution doesn't do us much good if our thesis were to relate more to Enlightened Absolutism, for example. Know what your thesis is before you begin laying out your context.

Practice

Write out your thesis and lay out the historical context you would use for the prompt:

Explain THREE ways in which individualism and individual rights were expressed in political theories.

Partner up with someone from class and trade your thesis statements and context over email for peer review. Compare what they have to the rubrics--there are two points available between the thesis and context in your essays.

Reply to their email with feedback based on the rubric. What would you score their thesis and context as? Why? Feel free to reach out to your teacher for help if you need it.