

# Mrs. Farley's Global Essay Writing Guide

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# Thematic Essay Overview

## About Thematic Essays

Writing a thematic essay is a required component of every Global Studies & Geography Regents Exam. You may feel overwhelmed with the idea of writing essays on top of answering multiple choice questions for an exam, but you will all learn how to improve and fine tune your essay writing this year.

One important thing to remember is that a thematic essay is an essay based on a particular theme from the Global Studies & Geography curriculum. After the theme is stated, you will be given a task which must be completed in thematic essay format.

Probably one of the hardest aspects of thematic essay writing that makes it different than a DBQ essay, is the absence of documents to help answer the essay task. Instead, you have to have prior knowledge of the theme and topics in order to address the essay task thoroughly. However, each essay task provides you with suggested topics to use in your essay.

## Thematic Essay Structure & Guidelines

Like any essay, thematic essays are broken into 3-5 paragraphs (depending on the task)

### Introduction

- Prior knowledge of theme
- Address the essay task (what is going to be in your essay)

### Body Paragraph 1

- describing, details, facts, analysis, discussion, arguments supporting theme & task

### Body Paragraph 2

- same as body paragraph 1, but apply to different topic

### Conclusion

- readdress what you stated in your intro
- this is the cherry on top, the bow on the present --> wrap up what this essay was about

**Guideline #1: Read the theme & task carefully:**

The theme will introduce the main topic you will be writing about. This is where you must have prior knowledge. In this case, knowledge about historical people who brought change to society

**Theme: Change**

Individuals have brought about great changes in history. These individuals have had positive and/or negative effects on nations or regions.

**Task:**

Choose *two* individuals from your study of global history and geography and for *each* individual chosen:

- Discuss *two* specific changes made by the individual in a specific nation or region
- Evaluate whether these changes have had a positive or a negative effect on that nation or region

You may use any example from your study of global history and geography. Some suggestions you might wish to consider include Elizabeth I, Genghis Khan, Muhammed, Martin Luther, Napoleon Bonaparte, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Boris Yeltsin, Deng Xiaoping, and Yasir Arafat.

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The task is what you will be asked to specifically answer about the theme. Make sure to read it carefully. Many tasks ask you to do more than one thing in your essay



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Underneath every task there are suggestions provided for you. You are never limited to these choices, but they are there to give you an idea if you are unsure of the theme

**Guideline #2: Prewriting**

I cannot stress enough the importance of the prewriting step in essay writing. This helps you organize your thoughts before you go into writing a draft of your essay. Many times students will begin to write and their writing becomes disorganized or can begin to write off topic. Prewriting will help avoid that.

Prewriting can come in many forms; most common is either a type of graphic organizer or an outline, or sometimes, just jotting down ideas. Whatever way you feel comfortable and will help you organize your thoughts will be the best option for you.

Please be aware that prewriting is not a rough draft. If you are filling out a graphic organizer or an outline, you should not be writing complete sentences. This is very time consuming and you will not have enough time to finish your final essay.

**Guideline #3: Rough Draft & Revision**

We will have plenty of opportunities to work on every step of the essay writing process. However, when you take your Global Studies & Geography Regents Exam at the end of your 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, you will have limited time to complete this essay. During that time, this step is usually ignored and students to straight from prewriting to the final copy.

However, A rough draft will be important in completing during class time. It will give you an opportunity to reflect on your essay writing (where you are struggling, where you are doing well, etc). A rough draft is also an opportunity to revise your essay. When a student is fully involved in writing an essay sometimes they can get bogged down with all the information and forget about grammar, spelling and mechanics. Revision is an opportunity to ensure you have spelled, capitalized and worded your essay in a way that is readable. In class we will be doing a lot of revision and peer evaluations with your writing.

**Guideline #4: Final Copy**

Think of your final copy as a reflection of yourself. This is an original piece of work of yours that someone else will be reading, sometimes a stranger. Your name is at the top of that page and you are being judged on how well you have communicated in written form.

Don't strive for average. If you think you've added enough material, you haven't. If you think you've added way too much, you've probably added enough. Strive for excellence in writing. If you push yourself hard enough, eventually the writing process will become easier.

# Potential Thematic Essay Topics

Belief Systems (Unity/conflict)  
Belief Systems (Influence of)  
Change (Individuals)  
Change (Individuals Who Have Changed History)  
Change (Leaders)  
Change (Nonpolitical Revolutions)  
Change (Philosophers and Leaders)  
Change (Political Events)  
Change (Political Revolutions)  
Change (Turning Points)  
Conflict  
Conflict (Threatened Peace)  
Economic Change (Industrialization)  
Economic Systems  
Geography  
Geography and Cultural Diffusion  
Geography (How Humans Change Their Environment)  
Geography (Positive or Negative Effect)  
Geography and Society  
Global Problems  
Human and Physical Geography (Geographic Impact of Societies)  
Human Rights [06.09]  
Human Rights Violations  
Justice and Human Rights  
Movement of People and Goods: Trade  
Political Change  
Political Systems  
Science and Technology  
Turning Points

## Thematic Writing Do's & Don'ts

- The Do's**
1. Fully address the task. A way to be sure you will stick to the task is Rewrite the task into your introduction and reference back to that Rewritten statement in every body paragraph
  2. Use the suggestions that are provided with every thematic essay Task. Don't be afraid to choose a topic you know a lot about, Even if it is not listed/suggested.
  3. Always outline or organize your information, you don't have to Produce a fancy graphic organizer, but plan out your essay
  4. Be aware of how you will be graded, know what is expected in the Essay

- The Don'ts**
1. Do not use your body paragraphs to list terms or events and then Define them
  2. Do not write your own opinion, these are expository essays (meaning factual, historical evidence based)
  3. Do not be vague, try and be specific as possible, no slang like "things", "this time", "the people", etc.

# Document Based Questions (DBQ) Essay Overview

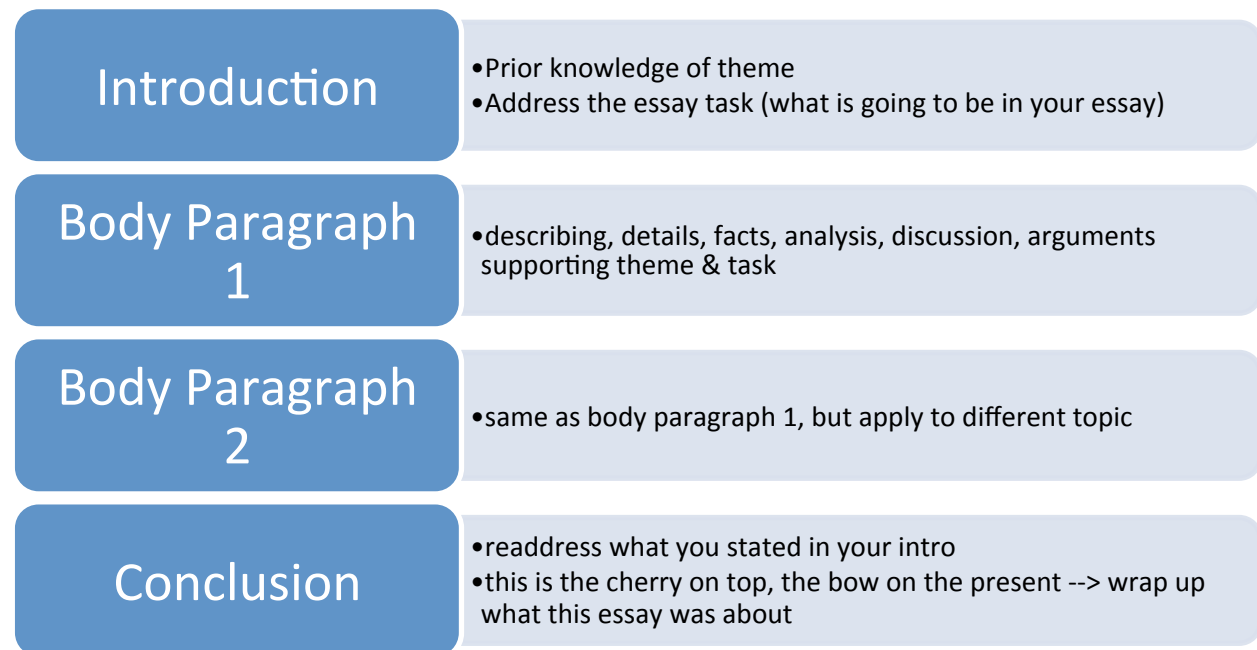
## About DBQ Essays

DBQ essays have two parts: 1) document based questions (DBQs) based on a series of primary sources (documents) that all fall under a certain theme (ex. Change, culture diffusion, foreign policy, etc.) and 2) an essay in which you incorporate information from the DBQs and your own knowledge of the topic.

Just like thematic essays, DBQ essays have their own challenges. One being they can be very time consuming due to the 2 parts of it. It can also be challenging because you have to remember to incorporate information from the documents as well as your own knowledge.

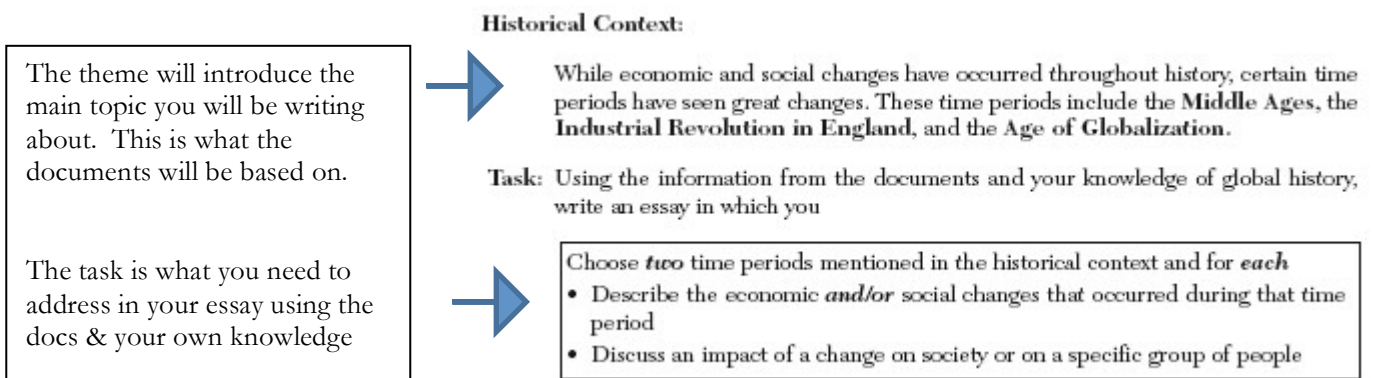
## DBQ Essay Structure & Guidelines

The structure of DBQ essays are almost the exact same as the thematic essays. The only difference is within the body paragraphs you must cite the information you are using from the documents and you must include your own information about the theme/topic as well.



## DBQ Essay Guideline #1: Read the theme & task carefully

They will look the same as the theme & task in the thematic essay instructions



**DBQ Essay Guideline #2: Prewriting**

This step may be even more important in the DBQ essays than the thematic. It will help you organize your thoughts and prevent you from writing off topic, but more importantly, it is an opportunity for you to organize and separate info from the documents and your own info.

In your DBQ essays you will be required to “cite” what documents you used, meaning you have to show that some information came from the documents, not your brain. In order to do this efficiently, it is important you sort out which documents you are using. Most of the time they will be lettered (Document 1) or lettered (Document A)

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## DBQ Essay Topics

Autocratic Rulers  
British Imperialism  
Cold War  
Communism and Capitalism  
Conquests  
Economic Reform  
Economic Systems  
Effect of Geographic Factors (Great Britain and Japan)  
Environmental Effects of Industrialization  
Epidemics  
Effects of the Industrial Revolution on European Society  
French Revolution (1789-1814)  
Governmental Decision-Making  
Human Rights Abuses (Children)  
Human Rights Abuses (Post-World War II Era)  
Individuals  
Mass Migration  
Migrations of People  
Modern Crises  
Nationalism  
Natural Resources and the Development of Nations  
Perspectives of Imperialism  
Revolutions (Non-Political)  
Revolutions (Political)  
Technology  
Turning Points  
Turning Points  
Wars  
Women's Roles

## The DBQ Do's & Don'ts

### The Do's:

1. Read and interpret all parts of the essay question, looking for keys such as **Change Over Time**.
2. Read and analyze each of the documents, looking for **Point of View**.
3. Determine the working order of the documents, **Grouping Them**.
4. Read the historical background, **Determine its Significance**.
5. Reread documents, looking for significant keys; **Name, Position, Reliability**.
6. Develop the thesis, **Address All Parts of the Question**.
7. Develop paragraphs being sure to answer all parts of the question, **Refer Frequently to the Terms of the Question**.
8. One does not have to use all documents, but for a "Nine" **You Must Use a Preponderance**.
9. Integrate the documents into your response, **Be Sure to Analyze**.
10. Common indicators of analysis include; essay structure, juxtaposition of documents, recognition of contradictory point of view, use of external information to illustrate the documents.

### The Don'ts:

1. **Don't** use the documents in a laundry list fashion, quickest way to a low score.
2. **Don't** simply explain or summarize the documents, group them together.
3. **Don't** forget to analyze the documents when incorporating them into your essay.
4. **Don't** fail to answer the question in an effort to use all the documents.
5. **Don't** "parrot" the views of the documents, analyze those views.