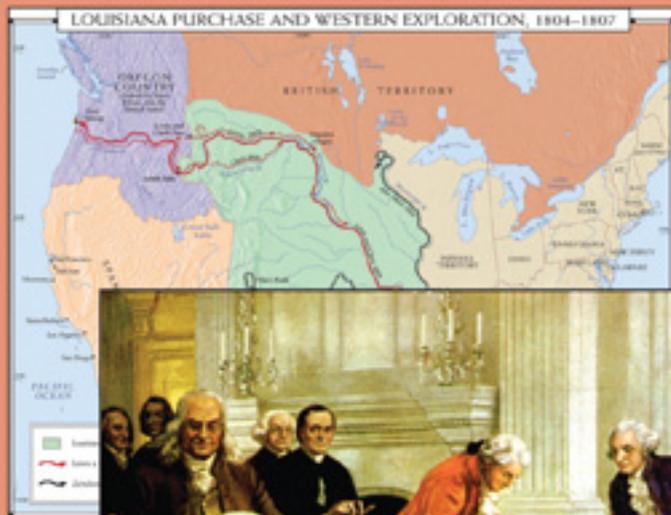


# History

UNFOLDING

## DBQ & ESSAY- WRITING PROGRAM

### U.S. HISTORY, 1600–1865



Teacher's Manual

Product Code: HS390TG

**MindSparks**  
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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# *DBQ & Essay-Writing Program*

*U.S. History, 1600–1865*

## Teacher's Manual

### *History Unfolding*

We are sure that teaching early U.S. history makes a great many nearly impossible demands on you. Perhaps the biggest is the pressure you are under to cover a great deal of “content,” while at the same time giving your students the critical skills they need to analyze, understand, and appreciate that content.

*History Unfolding* is designed to help you succeed at that balancing act.

First, it gives your students the strategies and practice they need to develop three absolutely vital history skills:

- **Interpreting and using primary sources**
- **Mastering the art of answering “document-based questions”**
- **Writing effective history essays**

Moreover, the program provides this training in such a way as to fit smoothly into your ongoing course schedule. Early lessons are based on topics and primary sources you are most likely to be using early in your course. Later lessons draw on sources from the time periods you will cover toward the end of your course. The lessons are clear and ready to use. You won't have to divert time from the substance of the course to help students master these important skills. Training students in these skills becomes a part of your daily work, not a distraction from it.

### **Why a DBQ/Essay-Writing Program?**

History teachers are more than ever using primary sources to promote a spirit of historical inquiry in their classrooms. Many states now include primary sources and document-based questions (DBQs) on state assessments. The need to help students interpret primary sources and master effective DBQ essay-writing skills is essential for student success.

MindSparks has developed a huge array of materials that focus on the use of visual primary sources. We now have a vast archive of visuals, and our booklet sets organize these into lessons designed to help you make the best possible use of such sources. In *History Unfolding*, we've added written sources to our visual archive to provide you with a ready-made set of all sorts of primary sources for this program's eight lessons.

## The Eight Lessons

This Teacher's Manual is organized around eight lessons. Each of these lessons uses several brief exercise worksheets to help students master various strategies for interpreting primary sources, answering DBQs, or writing other kinds of history essays. The eight lessons are

1. Evaluating Evidence and Primary Sources
2. Analyzing Visual Primary Sources
3. Analyzing the Question
4. Developing a Thesis Statement
5. Outlining and Planning the Essay Structure
6. Writing the Introductory Paragraph
7. Writing and Linking Support Paragraphs
8. Writing a Strong Conclusion

Each lesson includes clear objectives and a listing of the key concepts and essay-writing strategies to be taught. Three pages of primary source documents are also provided. Many of these are visual primary sources (all visuals are from the MindSparks booklets that come with the program). Other sources are speeches, letters, magazine articles, etc. There are nine to eleven of these primary sources per lesson. Finally, and most important, several brief exercises are at the core of each lesson. All of these are based on that lesson's primary source documents.

## The Instructional Approach

The exercises in *History Unfolding* reflect a consistent approach to instruction based on the following principles.

- 1. Organize instruction into small, easily manageable tasks.**
- 2. Give students clear definitions or models of correct and incorrect performance.**
- 3. Provide plenty of opportunity for practice.**
- 4. Give immediate and specific feedback.**

Students will get a good deal of writing practice in this program. However, the emphasis is not on practice simply for the sake of practice. The goal of each lesson is to teach students certain key concepts or strategies to use either in interpreting primary sources or in answering DBQs and writing other history essays.

The sequence of exercises within each lesson reflects this instructional approach. The first exercises in a lesson often simply ask students to answer questions about primary sources or to choose among good and bad models of some writing task. Later exercises direct students to edit or add to partially completed writing samples. At the end of most of the lessons, students get to apply the concepts or strategies taught in an essay of their own or in some other writing task.

The purpose of the exercises is to teach as well as test. Encourage students to pay close attention to the detailed instructions at the top of each exercise. These instructions define the basic strategies and concepts illustrated in the exercise. Often they also relate these concepts to what has been learned in earlier exercises.

## Program Components

### Sixteen Digital Image Sets

All the visual sources used in the program's lessons are taken from these sets. In other words,

*You get a high-quality digital image of each visual primary source used in the program!*

You may also use these sets throughout your entire course independently of this writing program. The sets start with colonial life and deal with all the major time periods up to and including the Civil War and Manifest Destiny.

### The Teacher's Manual

The Teacher's Manual provides you with everything you need to guide your students through the lessons and exercises of *History Unfolding* and to evaluate their work effectively.

## How the Teacher's Manual Is Organized

### ***Each lesson in this Teacher's Manual includes the following:***

#### *A Teacher's Introductory Page*

This page describes the primary sources for the lesson, states the goals of the lesson, and lists key concepts and strategies to be taught.

#### *Exercise Summaries*

A one-page or two-page summary of each exercise is provided. It will help to read or re-read each exercise in the student Handouts before looking over its summary here. The summary states the objectives of the exercise. It then gives you two sets of guidelines.

#### **Points to Make with Students**

The definitions and principles needed to understand the goal of the exercise are presented here. **Key points are in bold type.** You may want to write these on the board when introducing the exercise.

#### **Evaluating Student Responses**

Some exercise activities are open-ended or creative tasks for which there is no right answer. In these cases, we give you tips for how to use student responses to extend learning. In most of the exercises, one choice out of several is clearly correct, or at least preferable. In those cases, you get a detailed explanation of points to make about all possible choices.

#### *Student Handouts*

The teacher material for each lesson is followed by the student Handouts and Worksheets. These pages are easy to locate since they have a dark bar across the top (see following page).

# The Lessons

Each lesson in this Teacher’s Manual consists of . . .

1. Teacher Material on the Lesson

2. Reproducible Student Handouts and Worksheets

(These pages appear with the dark bar across the top.)

Teaching the Exercises Lesson 1: Evaluating Evidence & Primary Sources

### Exercise 4

Interpreting Primary Sources: Making Inferences—1

**Objectives for the Exercise**

To teach students the value of making reasonable inferences about sources.  
To teach them that, while they can rarely be certain about any inference, they can still distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable inferences.

**Points to Make with Students**

An inference is a reasoned conclusion based on facts presented. **Usually, students must make inferences about a primary source in order to use it effectively.** Sources are generally created for reasons other than those that interest historians. It's rare for a source to describe the context or the era in which it was created. After all, it is directed at an audience that already knows about its own era. **Many important ideas or meanings are only implied in the source.** Students need to read carefully and with the eye of a detective, looking for all the clues that can reasonably be found in a document. Finally, it is important to stress that **making an inference is not the same as guessing or imagining.** Inferences are never absolutely certain. But students do need to apply basic logic. Any inference should be consistent with everything in the source and everything the student knows about the relevant time period. In this exercise, students judge some inferences about Document 6.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

**Statement 1** A reasonable inference? No.  
The jurors make several references to passages in the Bible to explain why they were wrong in reaching their original judgment. God and Scripture are clearly still the ultimate authority for these people in matters of faith and in matters of law.

**Statement 2** A reasonable inference? Yes.  
The jurors confine their remarks to the accused in Salem. However, they clearly feel they were "prevailed with" by those who supposedly knew better to accept "insufficient" evidence in the trials. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that they might have doubts about decisions by other jurors in other witchcraft trials in the past.

**Statement 3** A reasonable inference? No.  
The jurors talk about the power of the devil ("the prince of the air") over people. And they say only that they were "mistaken" about the accused, not that no witches exist at all.

**Statement 4** A reasonable inference? Yes.  
See the points made about Statement 1 above.

**Statement 5** A reasonable inference? Yes.  
The defendants make it clear that, in their view, their error was in accepting unreliable evidence and that their judgments should have been based on better evidence.

**Statement 6** A reasonable inference? Yes.  
It is clear that the jurors themselves feel they had been "under the power of a strong and general delusion" by Satan. Since they are apologizing to the entire colony in this public statement, it is reasonable to assume they know their audience enough to know that the idea of being deluded by Satan would not seem strange to them.

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Student Worksheet Lesson 1: Evaluating Evidence & Primary Sources

### Exercise 4

Interpreting Primary Sources: Making Inferences—1

You often need to make inferences about primary sources. An "inference" is a belief you come to accept based on other facts. For example, suppose you find milk spilled on the kitchen floor. You may "infer" that your brother spilled it—even though you didn't actually see him do this. This inference is logical and reasonable, yet it still may not be true. For example, the cat may have knocked over a glass of milk, not your brother. You can usually make many reasonable inferences from a primary source. But as this "spilled milk" example shows, you need to be careful about this. Be sure of all your facts and of what the primary source shows. **Use your background knowledge, and keep in mind what knowing about the source's "author, audience, and purpose" tells you.** If the inference still seems logical, you may be able to use it in your essay or answer.

Below are six statements about Document 6 (apology of the Salem Witch Trial jurors). Some of the statements are reasonable inferences; others are not—that is, they are not supported by Document 6. In the spaces provided, write "yes" or "no" for each statement that is or is not a reasonable inference about Document 6.

- The Salem jurors apologized because they had come to doubt the truth of the Christian Bible.  
A reasonable inference? \_\_\_\_\_
- By the time of this apology, these Salem jurors probably believed that many accused witches in the past, in Salem and elsewhere in New England, were innocent of the charges against them.  
A reasonable inference? \_\_\_\_\_
- The Salem jurors making this apology, along with most people in their colony, no longer believed in witches at all.  
A reasonable inference? \_\_\_\_\_
- The Salem jurors still felt that the colony's laws and values should be based on a literal understanding of Christian teachings.  
A reasonable inference? \_\_\_\_\_
- The Salem jurors making this apology felt that decisions in trials had to be based on a close attention to the evidence against the accused.  
A reasonable inference? \_\_\_\_\_
- At the time of this apology, many people in Massachusetts colony probably still believed they could be deceived by Satan.  
A reasonable inference? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Evaluating Evidence & Primary Sources

## **INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS**

The aim of this introductory lesson is to give students some hands-on experience analyzing and interpreting primary sources. All of the primary sources for this lesson have to do in one way or another with society and religion in the colonial period of American history—with the exception of the Ben Franklin statement. Franklin, however, was expressing views that relate back to his life experience growing up in colonial times.

Students will do some writing in this lesson. They won't, however, really begin to focus on DBQs and essay-writing skills until Lesson 3. The first two lessons in the program attempt to familiarize students with the problems involved in interpreting various types of primary sources. This will certainly help them to answer DBQs. It will also aid in teaching them to think critically about the materials presented throughout their history course.

## **KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES**

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. These should help students think more effectively about primary sources and better understand what can and cannot be learned from such sources. The concepts and strategies include the need to

1. Analyze source reliability,
2. Learn to detect bias in sources,
3. Recognize the importance of background knowledge in interpreting any primary source,
4. Learn to make reasonable inferences about sources, and
5. Deal with and use sources that conflict.

## **THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS**

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *Daily Life in Colonial America*, *The Witches of Salem*, and *Colonial America in the 18th Century*.

# Exercise 1

## Primary Sources: How Trustworthy or Reliable?

### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students to question the reliability of the primary sources they use.

To teach that source reliability depends, in part, on the question you ask of the source.

### Points to Make with Students

A document is “reliable” if the evidence in it is dependable in some way. **To say a document is reliable does not necessarily mean it is truthful.** A cartoon’s distorted view of an issue, for example, could be reliable evidence of how people felt about that issue at the time.

**A source can be “authentic” without being reliable.** It’s authentic if it is what it claims to be. A letter supposedly from a famous figure is authentic if it in fact IS from that person. Yet it may be unreliable as evidence of what that person actually believed or did. Finally, **even a reliable document’s value to the student depends on how he or she plans to use it.** That is, its value depends on what question the student is seeking to answer.

### Evaluating Student Responses

#### Doc. 1 Best Answer B

This document is not actually a primary source for the colonial era, since it was created in 1856. This fact should alert students to the need to pay attention to the source’s author and audience, something dealt with in Exercise 2. Given its date of origin, this document cannot be reliable as to John Eliot’s appearance (choice A), nor can a single image like this be the basis for a general statement about what all Puritans felt about the Indians (choice C).

#### Doc. 3 Best Answer C

The phrase “all” (in choice A) should always alert students. It is rare for any single source to offer reliable evidence of how everyone in a group felt. Perhaps a petition signed by a large group could be such evidence. Certainly, a single gravestone is not evidence enough for such a generalization—though the fact that it was allowed in the graveyard may indicate something about general values. Clearly, this tombstone has little to do with town government or social life generally (choice B). However, it does obviously deal with views about death and the afterlife and could indicate the feelings of “some” about these things.

#### Doc. 4 Best Answer A

The existence of a book teaching the alphabet hardly proves a “high” level of education generally (choice B), nor does the book automatically tell us anything about the kind of schooling or school system in which it was used (choice C). But the moral and Biblical messages connected with the letters do indicate that religion and learning were firmly connected to each other for those who used this book.

#### Doc. 6 Best Answer A

Students may choose B in part because they know witches do not exist. But while the jurors do express remorse for their verdicts, they do NOT say there are no witches or that no one accused in Salem was a witch. They only say the evidence for witchcraft in Salem was “insufficient.” (this suggests there could be “sufficient” evidence of witchcraft under certain circumstances.) As for choice C, the jurors really say nothing about the causes of the fears about witchcraft in Salem. Clearly, they do not know what caused those fears.

## Exercise 2

### Primary Sources: How Biased?

#### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students to detect various kinds of bias in the primary sources they use.

To teach them to see how a source's (1) author or creator, (2) its audience, and (3) its purpose can be clues as to possible bias and to a source's overall significance.

#### Points to Make with Students

**Many primary sources are biased**, or one-sided. That is they express a specific opinion or point of view about some topic. Sometimes this bias is easy to notice. That's true when a definite opinion is expressed openly or when emotional language or imagery is used. However, bias is often subtle and hard to detect. In either case, **it helps to pay close attention to the author or creator of a source, its intended audience, and the purposes for which the source was created.** By doing this, students will view the source as a living document meant to have a specific impact. This will also alert them to its possible bias. Finally, it is important to stress that **bias need not make the source less reliable.** A biased document can still teach the historian a great deal about a past era or event.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

Pay close attention to how the student makes the distinction between obvious and subtle bias. This is the heart of the exercise. Documents 3 and 4, for example, express very strongly held views about religion, life, and death. Their bias seems obvious and easy to identify. This is also true of the book cover for Cotton Mather's *Memorable Provinces*. On the other hand, Documents 1, 2, 7, and 8 may seem to be fairly realistic and perfectly objective scenes of colonial life. Yet they also could be said to be biased in more subtle ways. For example, it is hard not to conclude from Document 1 that John Eliot was admired and respected by the Native Americans gazing up at him. Whether or not this was true, the image shapes our positive response to it. Likewise, Document 7 conveys a definite sense of how the slaves and owners on this Virginia plantation regarded one another, a sense that may or may not have been accurate.

The written documents also all express strong personal viewpoints. In a sense, all the documents contain bias. In the case of subtle bias, an analysis of the author, audience, and purpose should be especially useful in providing clues as to the source's bias. If students make a wide variety of choices of documents here (which is likely), you should be able to get a good discussion going about the various forms bias takes. You should also be able to point out that bias does not necessarily make a source unreliable or useless.

## Exercise 3

### Interpreting Primary Sources: Using Your Background Knowledge

#### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students that it takes a broad knowledge of the time period to be able to see a primary source's real significance and to use it effectively in a DBQ essay.

#### Points to Make with Students

Students' abilities to understand a source depends on how much they already know about its time period. That is, **students must use their background knowledge to interpret any source**. Primary sources won't make much sense to anyone who knows little about the time in which they were produced. Without this knowledge, the documents will be "mute." They do not "speak for themselves." **Also, without background knowledge, students may have a tendency to list the documents in a random or unconnected way.** This is what produces the infamous "laundry list" style of referring to sources all too common in DBQ essays. By applying their background knowledge in interpreting the documents, students will be much more likely to use them effectively to deal with the question or problem raised by the DBQ.

We rarely notice how much our own background knowledge affects our view of a written document or visual source. This exercise should make that clear to students, especially if students come up with a wide variety of facts or trends in doing this exercise.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

The aim here should be to get as wide a variety of responses as possible. Some responses may be "wrong," in that some fact or trend might NOT actually add to an understanding of the particular document in question. However, the goal should be to push students to see how much of what they know about the colonial era can help them gain a deeper understanding of these documents. Encourage students to go beyond the identification of figures in a drawing or authors of written statements. They should come to see how the sources can be clarified by a broad knowledge of the history of Puritanism, social and economic conditions in various British colonies, the Great Awakening, the use of slave labor, and many other matters.

# Exercise 4

## Interpreting Primary Sources: Making Inferences—1

### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students the value of making reasonable inferences about sources.

To teach them that, while they can rarely be certain about any inference, they can still distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable inferences.

### Points to Make with Students

An inference is a reasoned conclusion based on facts presented. **Usually, students must make inferences about a primary source in order to use it effectively.** Sources are generally created for reasons other than those that interest historians. It's rare for a source to describe the context or the era in which it was created. After all, it is directed at an audience that already knows about its own era. **Many important ideas or meanings are only implied in the source.** Students need to read carefully and with the eye of a detective, looking for all the clues that can reasonably be found in a document. Finally, it is important to stress that **making an inference is not the same as guessing or imagining.** Inferences are never absolutely certain. But students do need to apply basic logic. Any inference should be consistent with everything in the source and everything the student knows about the relevant time period. In this exercise, students judge some inferences about Document 6.

### Evaluating Student Responses

**Statement 1** A reasonable inference? No

The jurors make several references to passages in the Bible to explain why they were wrong in reaching their original judgment. God and Scripture are clearly still the ultimate authority for these people in matters of faith and in matters of law.

**Statement 2** A reasonable inference? Yes

The jurors confine their remarks to the accused in Salem. However, they clearly feel they were “prevailed with” by those who supposedly knew better to accept “insufficient” evidence in the trials. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that they might have doubts about decisions by other jurors in other witchcraft trials in the past.

**Statement 3** A reasonable inference? No

The jurors talk about the power of the devil (“the prince of the air”) over people. And they say only that they were “mistaken” about the accused, not that no witches exist at all.

**Statement 4** A reasonable inference? Yes

See the points made about Statement 1 above.

**Statement 5** A reasonable inference? Yes

The defendants make it clear that, in their view, their error was in accepting unreliable evidence and that their judgments should have been based on better evidence.

**Statement 6** A reasonable inference? Yes

It is clear that the jurors themselves feel they had been “under the power of a strong and general delusion” by Satan. Since they are apologizing to the entire colony in this public statement, it is reasonable to assume they know their audience enough to know that the idea of being deluded by Satan would not seem strange to them.

# Exercise 5

## Interpreting Primary Sources: Making Inferences—2

### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students the value of making reasonable inferences about sources.

To teach them that, while they can rarely be certain about any inference, they can still distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable inferences.

### Points to Make with Students

Since making inferences is such an important skill in using primary sources, here is another exercise asking students to judge valid and invalid inferences about one of the documents for the lesson. Again, urge students to be sure of their facts and of what the primary source itself shows. **Also, you may want to stress to them that it is a good idea to use their background knowledge in interpreting the source, and to pay close attention to what they can infer from the source’s “author, audience and purpose.”**

### Evaluating Student Responses

**Statement 1** A reasonable inference? No

Franklin’s statement here indicates nothing about how active a participant he was in the debates in the Constitutional Convention. Students may know something in detail about Franklin’s role, but they could not infer much about it from this document alone.

**Statement 2** A reasonable inference? Yes

Since in this speech Franklin is passionately urging the delegates to put aside their objections to the final document, it is reasonable to infer that many disagreements did still exist even at the end of the process.

**Statement 3** A reasonable inference? No

Franklin appears to think the Constitution is flawed. But that is merely his opinion. No evidence of any specific flaw is provided. Even if such evidence were provided, it would still be a matter of judgment, not fact, whether or not it showed a flaw in the Constitution.

**Statement 4** A reasonable inference? Yes

Franklin says explicitly that he has changed his views after getting “better information” or upon “fuller consideration” of other arguments or opinions.

**Statement 5** A reasonable inference? No

Franklin may well have been deeply religious in some way. But in this document, he only expresses skepticism about any and all firmly held beliefs—and in particular, he appears to be critical of many religious sects that think they are in “possession of all truth.”

**Statement 6** A reasonable inference? Yes

Franklin insists on this firmly in this speech. It is possible he is mistaken about himself or is just pretending about this in order to appear modest. However, it is still a reasonable inference to suppose Franklin knows this much about himself.

# Exercise 6

## Interpreting Primary Sources: When Sources Conflict

### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students to expect some primary sources to conflict with one another.

To teach that these conflicts require students to make their own judgments about the sources and qualify their own claims in their essays carefully.

### Points to Make with Students

**Many primary sources appear to offer views in conflict with one another.** Some simply express differing opinions about an issue, event, or trend. Others assert entirely different facts about these issues, events, or trends. In answering a DBQ, this means **students need to make judgments about which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period.** Conflicting sources can be a problem. But these conflicts can also be helpful, especially if the student is trying to understand the varying viewpoints that existed on some controversy in the past. In any case, such conflicts should alert the student to **be cautious in making sweeping statements** about what the sources prove.

### Evaluating Student Responses

None of the primary sources for this lesson conflict with one another in obvious ways. In some cases, however, they express quite different ideas or illustrate different scenes, thereby making it hard to come up with a single sweeping generalization about the period.

This is clearly the case with Document 9 and Document 10, for example. Jonathan Edwards affirms his unshakable convictions about God's sovereignty, while Franklin expresses a skeptical willingness to accept uncertainty. Yet Edwards does also describe a process of growth and maturation somewhat similar to the one Franklin talks about. So perhaps the two documents are not entirely at odds with each other. Along these same lines, the doubts expressed by the Salem jurors (Document 6) certainly conflict with the firmly held views of Cotton Mather (Document 5), whose ideas may well have influenced the jurors in 1692. Finally, images such as those in Document 2 and Document 7 picture very different kinds of colonial family scenes. The two scenes are not really in conflict, since both kinds of families existed in different parts of colonial America. However, these images do require that the student deal with the fact of such differences and account for them.



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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To learn to evaluate the reliability, the bias, and the usefulness of primary source documents.
  2. To use your history background knowledge to understand and make inferences about primary source documents.
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# Evaluating Evidence & Primary Sources

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES****INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

The primary sources for this lesson have to do with society and religion in colonial America. One of the documents is about Benjamin Franklin and the Constitutional Convention of 1787. This, of course, was just *after* the colonial era ended. But this passage of Franklin's expresses the views of one of colonial America's most famous leaders.

These sources could be used to write a complete essay about social attitudes and religious ideas in colonial America. However, in this lesson, we do not give you a document-based question (DBQ) asking you to focus on all nine of the sources. You will deal with DBQs and other essay questions in later lessons. The aim of this lesson is to help you think more carefully about primary sources themselves. Learning to work with such sources is a skill. The exercises for this lesson will help you learn to work with primary sources and better understand what you can and cannot learn from them.

**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Basically, the exercises will focus your attention on the following broad concepts and strategies in analyzing primary sources:

1. You need to decide how **reliable** or trustworthy a primary source is. That is, how accurate it is or how dependable the information or evidence in it is.
2. You need to decide how **biased** or one-sided a source is—and whether or not it is still useful in spite of, or because of, its bias.
3. You need to use all your **background history knowledge** in interpreting, or making sense of, any primary source.
4. You need to make reasonable **inferences**, or logical conclusions, about sources.
5. You need to deal with and use **sources that often conflict** with one another.

# The Documents

## Society and Religion in Colonial America

### Document 1

New England Puritan minister John Eliot is pictured here preaching to some Algonquians in the 1640s. This is an engraving by J. C. Buttre after a drawing by J. A. Oertel done in 1856.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 2

An eighteenth-century engraving of a farm family in colonial America after the day's work is done.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*



### Document 3

Photograph of a New England tombstone from colonial times. Death is shown struggling with an angel who is preventing him from putting out a flame that stands for the life of the spirit.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 4

A page from *The New England Primer*, a book used in Puritan New England in the 1600s to teach children to read.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

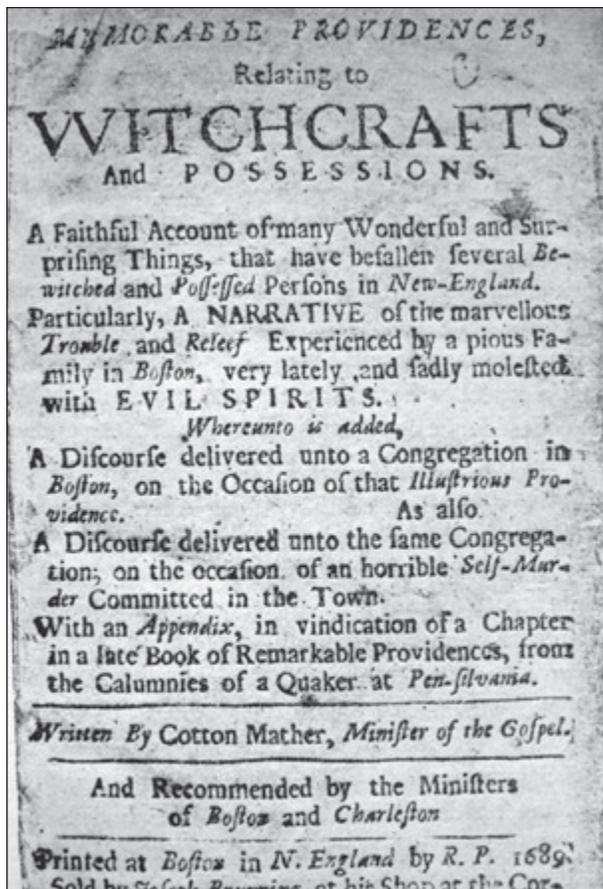


## The Documents

### Document 5

Cover for the book *Memorable Providences*, a 1689 account of a case of witchcraft in New England. The account was written by Cotton Mather, one of the most respected ministers in New England.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 6

#### Apology Years Later by Jurors in the 1692 Salem Witch Trials

"We whose names are under written, being in the year 1692, called to serve as jurors in court at Salem on trial of many who were by some suspected guilty of doing acts of witchcraft upon the bodies of sundry persons.

"We confess that we ourselves were not capable to understand, nor to withstand the mysterious delusions of the powers of darkness, and prince of the air; but were, for want of knowledge in ourselves, and better information from others, prevailed with to take up with such evidence against the accused, as . . . we justly fear was insufficient for the touching the lives of any: Deut. xvii. 6., whereby we fear we have been instrumental with others, though ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring upon ourselves and this people of the Lord, the guilt of innocent blood; which sin the Lord saith in scripture he would not pardon: 2 Kings xxiv, 4: that is, we suppose in regard of his temporal judgment. We do therefore, hereby signify to all . . . our deep sense of sorrow for our errors in acting on such evidence to the condemning of any person.

"And do hereby declare that we justly fear that we were sadly deluded and mistaken, for which we are much disquieted and distressed in our minds; and do therefore humbly beg forgiveness, first of God for Christ's sake for this our error; and pray that God would not impute the guilt of it to ourselves nor others; and we also pray that we may be considered . . . as being then under the power of a strong and general delusion, utterly unacquainted with, and not experienced in matters of that nature. . . ."



### Document 7

An eighteenth-century drawing of a Virginia planter and his wife and child, who are seen visiting the slave quarters on their plantation in the early 1700s.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*

## The Documents



### Document 8

An eighteenth-century drawing of Rev. George Whitefield preaching in a field. Whitefield was one of the most famous traveling preachers during the great upsurge of religious feeling in the colonies in the 1730s and 1740s. This time of religious revival is known as the Great Awakening.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*

### Document 9

“I have vastly a greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God’s grace and strength and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have, and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The thought of any comfort or joy, arising in me, on any consideration reflection on my amiableness, or any of my performances or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. . . .

“Though it seems to me that in some respects I was a far better Christian for two or three years after my first conversion than I am now, and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure, yet of late years I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God and a delight in that sovereignty, and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ as a mediator as revealed in the gospel.”

*Jonathan Edwards, a famous New England Puritan preacher who played a key role in the Great Awakening, in the 1730s. This passage is from his “Personal Narrative,” written around 1740 when Edwards was 37 years old.*

### Document 10

“Mr. President, I confess that there are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve of them. For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions, even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that, the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others. Most men, indeed, as well as most sects in religion, think themselves in possession of all truth, and that wherever others differ from them, it is so far error. . . .

“On the whole, sir, I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention, who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion, doubt a little of his own infallibility, and, to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.”

*Benjamin Franklin, at age 81, making a final statement to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 urging the other delegates to support the new U.S. Constitution.*

## Exercise 1

### Primary Sources: How Trustworthy or Reliable?

Primary sources are records from the past. This does NOT mean they can always tell you exactly how “it really was” in the past. You need to evaluate such sources carefully to be able to learn things from them. For example, one important question you need to ask of every primary source is this:

**How trustworthy or reliable is this source?** In other words, can you depend on it to give you information that you can use to answer the specific DBQ or essay question you have been given? Keep in mind that a reliable source need not be accurate or truthful. An inaccurate report, for example, may still be reliable as evidence of what people believed at the time.

This exercise will help you think about source reliability. Four of the lesson’s documents are listed here. Next to each are three statements about the document’s trustworthiness or reliability. For each document, choose the one statement you agree with most. Mark your choice in the space provided. Discuss your choices in class.

- Doc. 1**
- A.** The document is reliable evidence of what John Eliot and some indigenous students looked like.
  - B.** The document is reliable evidence of what some people in the 1800s thought the Puritans and the Indians of the 1600s looked like.
  - C.** The document is reliable evidence of the Puritan’s peaceful, friendly attitude toward the Indians.

**Your Choice** \_\_\_\_\_

- Doc. 3**
- A.** The document is reliable evidence of how pious and moral all Puritans were.
  - B.** The document is reliable evidence of New England town government and social life.
  - C.** The document is reliable evidence of the strong feelings many Puritans had about death and the afterlife.

**Your Choice** \_\_\_\_\_

- Doc. 4**
- A.** The document is reliable evidence of the strong connection between learning and religion in Puritan New England.
  - B.** The document is reliable evidence of the high level of education attained by most people in Puritan New England.
  - C.** The document is reliable evidence of the existence of a firmly established public school system in Puritan New England.

**Your Choice** \_\_\_\_\_

- Doc. 6**
- A.** The document is reliable evidence that views about witchcraft in colonial New England were changing in the late 1600s and early 1700s.
  - B.** The document is reliable evidence that those accused of witchcraft in Salem in 1692 were totally innocent.
  - C.** The document is reliable evidence about what caused the witchcraft scare in Salem in 1692.

**Your Choice** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Exercise 2**

### **Primary Sources: How Biased?**

Diary entries, letters, newspaper articles, paintings, cartoons, advertisements, photos, and other primary sources are often created by people with specific goals and strong personal opinions. **This can make a source one-sided, or “biased.”** Sometimes this bias is easy to notice—as when an author states a point of view strongly. But more often, the bias is harder to detect. It can be found as much in what is left out as in what is included. Bias can be expressed simply by including some facts while leaving others out. Or it can be shown by exaggerated or emotional language and images. To detect bias, think about emphasis, specific selection of facts, emotional language, etc.

You can also get important clues as to bias by noting the **author or creator** of the source, their **purpose in creating that source**, and the **audience** for the source. To help you think about this, choose two documents from those for this lesson. Choose one that is clearly and strongly biased and one that seems biased but in a much less noticeable way. Then answer the questions below.

**1. Clearly Biased: Document \_\_\_\_\_**

Why do you think this document is biased? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A. How might knowing about the author or creator of the document help explain its bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Who was the intended audience of the document, and how might that help to explain its bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. For what purpose was the document created, and how might that help to explain its bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Bias Harder to Detect: Document \_\_\_\_\_**

Why do you think this document is biased? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A. How might knowing about the author or creator of the document help explain its bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Who was the intended audience of the document, and how might that help to explain its bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. For what purpose was the document created, and how might that help to explain its bias?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 3

### Interpreting Primary Sources: Using Your Background Knowledge

Sometimes, you can understand a primary source even if you know nothing about its time period. But this is rare. Usually, **you must use your background knowledge of the historical period to help you interpret, or make sense of, the source.** Keep this in mind when answering a DBQ. The primary sources won't make much sense if you do not already know something about the time in which they were produced. That is, the documents do not "speak for themselves," and it is not enough just to mention them in laundry list fashion. You need to use your background knowledge to interpret the documents and explain how they help answer the DBQ.

You often won't even notice how much your own background knowledge affects your understanding of a source. This exercise may help you see this better. Study each document for this lesson and think about what a person needs to know to understand that document fully. In the space provided below, write down two facts or broad trends from the colonial era that help explain each document. As a class, share your lists to see how much background knowledge it takes to properly interpret these primary source documents.

Doc. 1 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 2 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 3 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 4 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 5 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 6 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 7 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 8 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Doc. 9 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 4

### Interpreting Primary Sources: Making Inferences—1

You often need to make inferences about primary sources. An **“inference” is a belief you come to accept based on other facts.** For example, suppose you find milk spilled on the kitchen floor. You may “infer” that your brother spilled it—even though you didn’t actually see him do this. This inference is logical and reasonable, yet it still may not be true. For example, the cat may have knocked over a glass of milk, not your brother. You can usually make many reasonable inferences from a primary source. But as this “spilled milk” example shows, you need to be careful about this. Be sure of all your facts and of what the primary source shows. **Use your background knowledge, and keep in mind what knowing about the source’s “author, audience, and purpose” tells you.** If the inference still seems logical, you may be able to use it in your essay or answer.

Below are six statements about **Document 6** (apology of the Salem Witch Trial jurors). Some of the statements are reasonable inferences; others are not—that is, they are not supported by **Document 6**. In the spaces provided, write “yes” or “no” for each statement that is or is not a reasonable inference about **Document 6**.

1. The Salem jurors apologized because they had come to doubt the truth of the Christian Bible.  
**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_
2. By the time of this apology, these Salem jurors probably believed that many accused witches in the past, in Salem and elsewhere in New England, were innocent of the charges against them.  
**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_
3. The Salem jurors making this apology, along with most people in their colony, no longer believed in witches at all.  
**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_
4. The Salem jurors still felt that the colony’s laws and values should be based on a literal understanding of Christian teachings.  
**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Salem jurors making this apology felt that decisions in trials had to be based on a close attention to the evidence against the accused.  
**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_
6. At the time of this apology, many people in Massachusetts colony probably still believed they could be deceived by Satan.  
**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 5

### Interpreting Primary Sources: Making Inferences—2

Making inferences is easily one of the most important skills needed to write effective essays answering DBQs. Often the best ideas you can get from a source are those you infer from it. Therefore, you need to interpret your sources. That is, you need to look at them closely and think about the clues they may contain on the topic of the DBQ. Since making inferences about sources is so important, here is another exercise asking you to do it.

Again, be sure of all your facts and of what the primary source shows. **Use your background knowledge, and keep in mind what knowing about the source’s “author, audience, and purpose” tells you.** If the inference seems logical, you may be able to use it in your essay or answer.

Below are six statements about **Document 10** (Ben Franklin speaking to the Constitutional Convention). Some of the statements are reasonable inferences; others are not—that is, they are not supported by **Document 10**. In the spaces provided, write “yes” or “no” for each statement that is or is not a reasonable inference about **Document 10**.

1. Ben Franklin was among the most active at the Constitutional Convention in designing specific features of the U.S. Constitution.

**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Many delegates to the Constitutional Convention had strong beliefs and disagreed with one another about several features of the Constitution.

**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Constitution did in fact have many flaws.

**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Franklin believed strongly that one’s opinions ought to be based on reasoned arguments and evidence.

**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

5. Franklin was a deeply religious man.

**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

6. Franklin was far more stubborn and certain about things when he was younger.

**A reasonable inference?** \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 6

### Interpreting Primary Sources: When Sources Conflict

**Many primary sources conflict with one another. That is, they offer views or evidence that lead to different or even opposing conclusions about a time period.** This can be a problem when answering a DBQ based on several primary sources. It is a problem every historian faces. Sources rarely all agree with one another. This means that you need to make some decisions—about which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. It also means you must be cautious in making sweeping statements about what the sources prove. (That’s why historians usually say things such as, “For the most part, we know that. . . ,” instead of, “We know for certain that . . . .”)

From the documents for this lesson, choose two to four that you think conflict with one another. In the space below, write a paragraph or two describing the documents you have chosen. Explain how these documents conflict with one another. Then write another paragraph in which you try to explain how such conflicting sources could have come from the same historical time period.

# Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS

This lesson narrows the focus of the first lesson by concentrating on the unique challenges of using various kinds of visual primary sources. Nine visual sources are provided for this lesson—paintings, drawings, posters, and editorial cartoons.

Young people are often told theirs is a “visual generation.” They may think that this makes them especially skillful at handling and interpreting visual information. By and large, they are wrong about this. Most visuals are instantly interesting and motivating as learning tools, it is true. However, this does not mean they are easy to mine for historical meaning. The exercises in this lesson offer students a chance to practice some analytical skills they will need to effectively interpret visual primary sources in the history class.

The visuals for this lesson are of key leaders in early America up to 1860. Your students may not be familiar with all of this history yet. However, the changing image of leadership revealed by these images serves here mainly to clarify certain general problems in using visual sources. Again, no single DBQ is offered on all of the sources. Instead, the aim is to help you teach students to think critically about visual primary sources in general.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. These should help students think more effectively about visual primary sources of all sorts. The concepts and strategies include the need to

1. Recognize the unique emotional power of the visual image,
2. Notice the selective nature of the viewpoint of most visuals,
3. Be aware of how one’s own knowledge and values shape one’s interpretation of any visual image,
4. Learn to analyze the formal features of visuals, not just their content, and
5. Become familiar with the special “language” of editorial cartoons, including symbol, metaphor, and size and shape distortion.

## THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *The Witches of Salem*, *“A Republic, If You Can Keep It,”* and *From Jackson to Lincoln*.

# Exercise 1

## The Power of the Visual Image

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students that the emotional power of the visual image can make visuals vivid and dramatic but can also distort the truth as well as clarify it.

### Points to Make with Students

Visual images often seem to have a life and power of their own. On the one hand, the realism or drama of many visual images is what makes them so interesting. They can help us imagine the past as it was actually lived and help us feel what it was like to live in another culture. On the other hand, the “realistic” quality of many visual images can be a problem. Even when we know for certain that a photo, advertisement, or painting is not real, we still often respond to it as if it were. This gives it a power to affect and influence us even when what it shows us is false, distorted, or biased. This exercise will help students think about the emotional power of the visual image. It will alert them to be on guard against the ability of images to manipulate and fool us. In this way, students will become more critical and more able to use visual primary sources for the truly valid information they often contain.

### Evaluating Student Responses

In this exercise, students are simply asked to think about how visual images trigger emotional reactions that can influence judgment. Most of the images are portraits of famous individuals; a few are satiric cartoons or non-representational images. However, even the portraits were carefully designed to evoke responses (mainly favorable) to their subjects. As you discuss the notes students devise, try to point out how even seemingly realistic images have a power to shape responses, distort understanding, and manipulate the viewer. The notes and discussion here can then be extended to the other exercises—in particular, Exercises 2 and 4.

## Exercise 2

### Visual Sources: Always a Selective View

#### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students that visual images almost always provide a selective view of reality, not reality itself.

To teach students to be on guard for the bias often resulting from this visual selectivity.

#### Points to Make with Students

Visual images often seem to show us what something is “really” like. A crisp clean photo can give you a sense being there on the spot. Yet this is an illusion. Visual images offer “mediated,” or altered, views of reality, not reality itself. **Moreover, a visual display almost always provides a limited, or selective, view of its subject.** It reveals some things and omits others. The selectivity is often hard to notice, especially when you only have one visual image to analyze. Features can be exaggerated or distorted. The setting can be atypical. **The selectivity of the image can conceal a strong bias.**

These points should be easier to grasp in this exercise, where students are asked to compare a pair of images of Thomas Jefferson and another pair of Andrew Jackson. In the exercise, students must think about the educational value of each image. In doing this, they will have to pay close attention to how each pair of images selectively treats the same historical figure in two very different ways.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

##### Thomas Jefferson

###### Document 3

At first, this may seem to be little more than a realistic portrait of Jefferson. But students should notice how Jefferson’s stance and clothing, the backdrop, and the various objects in the scene all convey a definite conception of Jefferson as a man of knowledge, broad vision, and statesmanship.

###### Document 4

Jefferson is presented in a far less flattering way here in this Federalist cartoon. The negative view is conveyed by the scene and its symbols, such as the eagle and the altar, more so than through any distortion of Jefferson’s appearance.

##### Andrew Jackson

###### Document 5

This painting is meant to present Jackson in a positive way, but the traits stressed (military prowess, manliness, boldness, etc.) are quite different from those stressed in the Jefferson portrait (Document 3).

###### Document 6

This editorial cartoon presents Jackson as the corrupt dispenser of political spoils to his followers. The cartoon is almost a satire on the painting, with a pig replacing the horse and the Jackson figure in it looking vain and irritated rather than manly, graceful, and bold.

# Exercise 3

## Visual Sources: You “See” What You Know

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students that a person’s own knowledge and values heavily influence the way they “see” and interpret any visual image.

### Points to Make with Students

**Most visual primary sources are carefully constructed images designed to produce a specific reaction in the viewer.** The first two exercises for this lesson focused on how certain aspects of the image help to do this. This exercise shifts the focus from the image to the viewer. Visual images are often so powerful and immediate in their effect that we seem to react directly and simply to what we see and only to what we see. We rarely realize how much **our own knowledge and experience shapes our understanding of what we see.**

This exercise may help students understand this better. The most important point to stress with them is the need to apply as much background knowledge as they can to the analysis of primary sources of all sorts.

### Evaluating Student Responses

#### Document 4

This anti-Jefferson editorial cartoon was published during the presidential election campaign of 1800, which pitted President John Adams, a Federalist, against Jefferson, whose supporters were starting to refer to themselves as Republicans. Party politics emerged full force on a national level in this election. A key focus was foreign policy. Republicans charged the Federalists with pro-British and pro-monarchy sympathies, while the Federalists accused the Republicans of favoring the anarchy and terror of the most radical phase of the French Revolution. The cartoon portrays Jefferson as a dangerous fanatic who would destroy the Constitution itself. Only with a good deal of background knowledge could a student make much sense of this cartoon or even realize that it is critical of Jefferson.

Of the visual primary sources for this lesson, this is certainly not the only one that could be used for this exercise. In fact, just about any of the others could be substituted for it. You may also want to bring in other images that you or the students find. Photos of odd or ambiguous scenes might work well with this assignment. A wider variety of images would also require different kinds of prior knowledge. In any case, encourage students to take careful notes and press their interview subjects to be as detailed in their descriptions of this cartoon as possible.

## Exercise 4

### Interpreting Visual Sources: Think About Form as Well as Content

#### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students to examine all aspects of any visual primary source, not just its overt content.

To teach them that the formal features of an image affect its meaning in major ways.

#### Points to Make with Students

An image is a “mediated,” or coded, form of communication. That is, it is not the real thing, it is a representation of that thing. And, it constructs that representation through the use of color, shading, cropping, camera angle, painting styles, sharpness or softness of focus, composition, gestures, dress styles, and all sorts of symbols that add significance to the content. **The word “form” or “formal” is used here for all the features that enable the image to represent its subject or content.**

This is a very important point to make with students. Often, the value of a visual primary source in a DBQ essay will have more to do with these formal features than with the content of the image alone. In this exercise, students will look for these formal visual features in a sequence of images of three U.S. presidents.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

##### Washington

In the image of Washington, the setting, dress, lighting, and composition all work to give him a serene, aristocratic, and dignified air. The books on the table and the sword in his hand reinforce the sense of Washington as thoughtful and far-seeing, yet also forceful and capable of decisive action.

##### Jackson

The image of Jackson puts much more emphasis on him as a man of action and boldness. The horse and uniform stress Jackson’s military accomplishments. His pose and the outdoor setting also suggest a somewhat less formal and less aristocratic persona than the Washington image, as well as someone with western, frontier roots.

##### Lincoln

With the painting of Abraham Lincoln, the trend toward idolizing the president as a man of the people reaches a kind of completion. The outdoor setting, the clothing, the ax, and the activity depicted all add to this effect. The posture makes this particular “rail splitter” appear hard-working and determined, yet also dignified and thoughtful.

## Exercise 5

### Interpreting Editorial Cartoons: Symbol & Metaphor, Exaggeration & Distortion

#### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students to notice the way visual symbols and metaphors, and size and shape distortion help editorial cartoons make complex points effectively.

To teach them the unique value of editorial cartoons as primary sources.

#### Points to Make with Students

Editorial cartoons are among the most useful visual primary sources. They are one of several types of political art—along with such items as posters, placards, murals, and campaign buttons. Their unique value, however, is that they are more than mere slogans or calls to action. At their best, **editorial cartoons are reasoned arguments about some topic in the news.** The arguments are presented in a unique language that has its own rules and syntax. In this exercise, students are given definitions of some of the key elements of this visual language.

In presenting the lesson, stress this above all: **The real value of an editorial cartoon as a primary source is often in the WAY it makes its point, not just in the point itself.** The choice of symbols, how they are drawn, what their specific features are, the size and shape distortions in them—these add information to the cartoon's message. Often they are what the historian finds most useful in the source.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

Here are some features of these cartoons to look for in student responses.

##### Symbol and Metaphor

*Document 6:* The pig is the obvious symbol here, replacing the horse as a sign of Jackson's transformation from a military hero to a corrupt dispenser of jobs to political followers ready and willing to feed at the public trough. The plentiful dollar signs are also symbols for what supposedly now motivates political activism.

*Document 7:* In 1840, the Whigs used the symbols of a log cabin and a barrel of hard cider to convey an image of candidate William Henry Harrison as a man of humble origin. (Actually, he grew up in a fairly large house.) The farmer and plow only add to this campaign poster's attempt to portray Harrison as a man of the people. At the same time, the symbol of the eagle suggests Harrison's stature and leadership abilities.

##### Exaggeration and Distortion

*Document 4:* Jefferson's awkward pose could be said to be a kind of exaggeration for dramatic effect, as is the size of the huge eagle about to thwart him. The entire image is actually a form of exaggeration, in that Jefferson in truth supported the Constitution, simply differing from the Federalists in the way he interpreted it. Moreover, while he admired some things about the French Revolution, he mainly distanced himself from its extremes.

*Document 8:* This is an 1848 poster for Whig candidate Zachary Taylor, whose successes in the Mexican War are listed on the letters of his name. The letters and the enormous eagle are clearly exaggerated to convey the notion of Taylor as a man larger than life. The tiny soldiers on the letter tops add to the effect.

# Exercise 6

## Interpreting Editorial Cartoons: Using a Checklist

**Objective for the Exercise**

To teach students a systematic way of analyzing an editorial cartoon quickly in order to use it in a DBQ or other history essay.

**Points to Make with Students**

The checklist with this exercise briefly describes several editorial cartoon techniques or other aspects of this form of political art. Before giving students the exercise, it might be helpful to bring in a wider variety of historical and contemporary cartoons and demonstrate the use of the checklist as a way to analyze these cartoons.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

Simply use the checklist itself to discuss with students all the relevant features of the four cartoons or any others you decide to make available.



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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To appreciate the value of the many kinds of visual primary sources available in any investigation of the past.
  2. To better understand how various features of any visual image can help it to convey information about the past.
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# Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES****INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

Nine primary sources are provided for this lesson. They are all visual primary sources—drawings, paintings, posters, editorial cartoons, etc.

These sources show various famous U.S. leaders (mainly presidents) from the early 1700s to 1865. They are meant to show how views of leadership changed during this time in U.S. history. You may not yet have covered this entire time period in your history class. But that shouldn't be much of a problem for you given the aim of this lesson and the nature of the exercises. Again, no single DBQ is offered on all of these sources. Instead, the aim here is to help you think critically about how to interpret visual primary sources. Visual sources can be fun to work with, but learning to understand and interpret them is not as easy as it may seem. The exercises for this lesson will help you better understand what you can and cannot learn from such sources.

**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Basically, the exercises will focus your attention on the following broad concepts and strategies in analyzing visual primary sources:

1. You need to be aware of **the power of visual images to call forth strong emotions** that can shape the way you respond to or understand the meaning of an image.
2. You need to recognize that **any image is a limited, or selective, view of reality, not reality itself**. The image may leave out or distort aspects of the subject and give you a one-sided view of it without your really being aware of this.
3. You need to realize how **your own knowledge, opinions, and values shape what you see** and how you react to what you see in any visual primary source.
4. You need to think about how the various **formal features** of any visual affect your response to it and the meaning you read into it.
5. With editorial cartoons, you need to pay attention to **symbol and metaphor, and the exaggeration and distortion of objects** in the cartoon. These are some of the elements in the “**language**” of **editorial cartoons** that you should learn to notice.

## The Documents

### Leadership in America: 1700–1865

#### Document 1

Leading New England Puritan minister Cotton Mather. Mather lived from 1663 to 1728. This engraving is not dated.

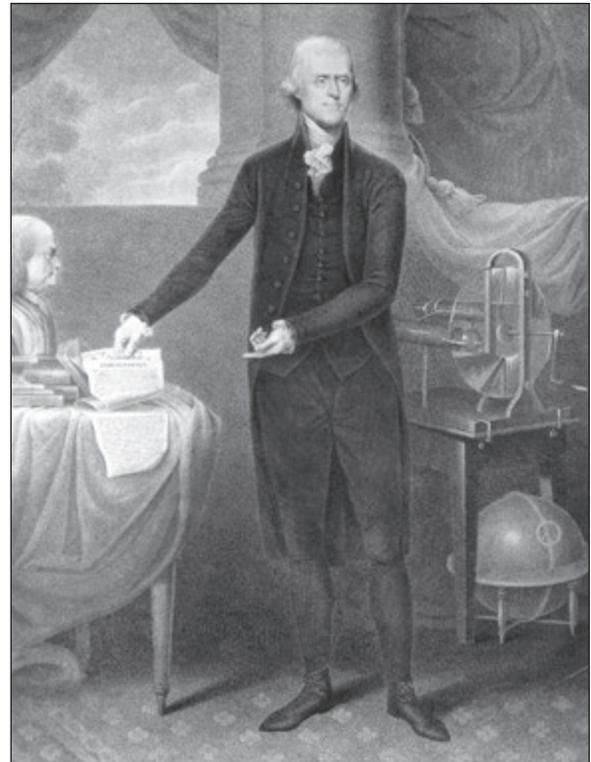
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 2

George Washington, leader of the Continental Army during the American Revolution and the nation's first president under the U.S. Constitution, serving from 1789 to 1797. This painting of Washington was done by Gilbert Stuart in the mid-1800s.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 3

Thomas Jefferson, main author of the Declaration of Independence and third president of the United States (1801–1809). In this 1801 portrait, Jefferson is shown standing beside a table, holding and pointing to the Declaration of Independence.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents



### Document 4

An editorial cartoon by a critic during Jefferson's 1800 campaign for president against Federalist John Adams. In the cartoon, a Federalist eagle tries to stop Jefferson as he sacrifices the Constitution on an altar to "Gallic (that is, French) despotism."

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

### Document 5

Painting of Andrew Jackson, general, military leader, U.S. Senator, and President of the United States from 1829 to 1837.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 6

An editorial cartoon commenting on Jackson's greater use of political patronage—that is, the granting of government jobs to loyal members of his political party. This so-called "spoils system" gets its name from Henry Clay's famous comment that "to the victor belongs the spoils."

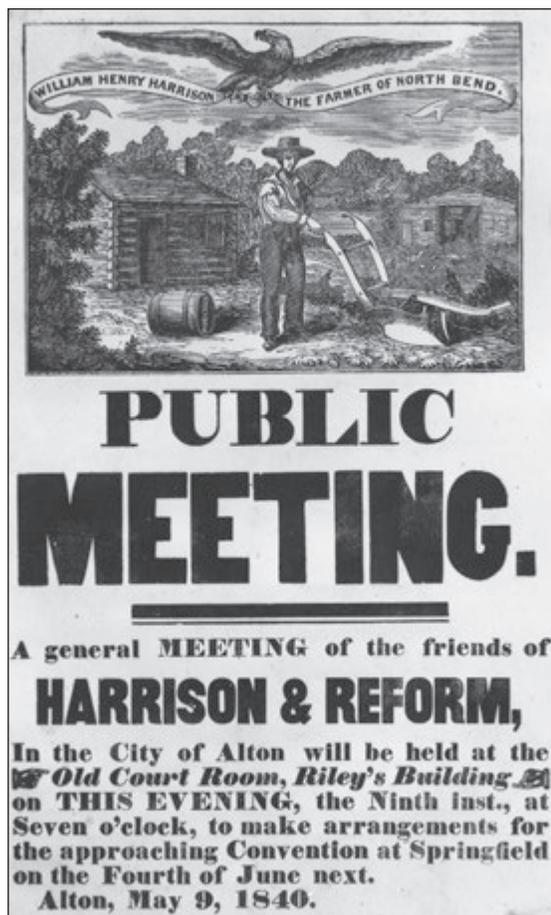
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents

### Document 7

A poster announcing a meeting of backers of William Henry Harrison as the Whig candidate for president in the election of 1840. The campaign pictured Harrison as an ordinary citizen raised in a log cabin and content to drink hard cider rather than fancy wines.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



**WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON THE FARMER OF NORTH BEND.**

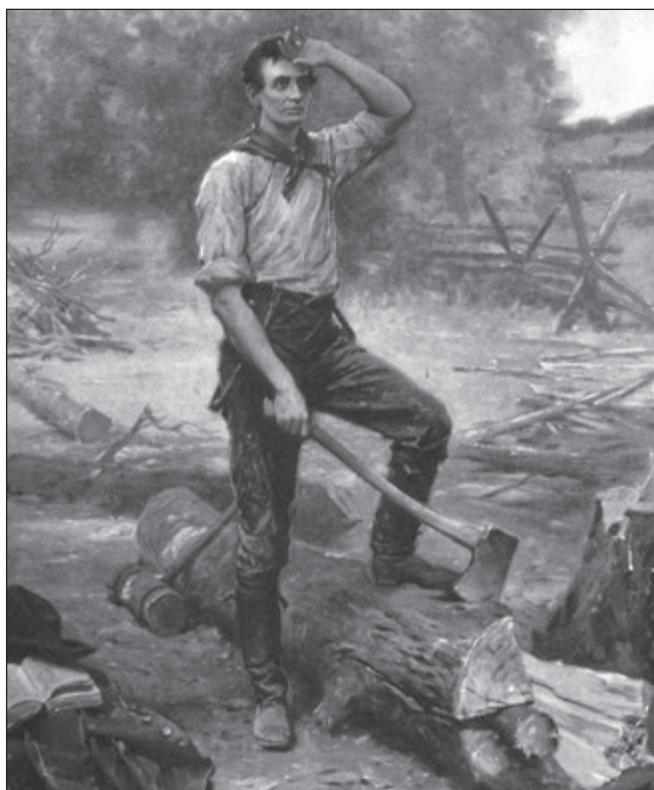
**PUBLIC MEETING.**

A general MEETING of the friends of **HARRISON & REFORM,** In the City of Alton will be held at the **Old Court Room, Riley's Building** on **THIS EVENING,** the Ninth inst., at Seven o'clock, to make arrangements for the approaching Convention at Springfield on the Fourth of June next. Alton, May 9, 1840.

### Document 8

A campaign print for the Whig's 1848 presidential candidate, Zachary Taylor. Taylor was a general in the Mexican War (1846–48). This print features the names of a Taylor military victory on each letter of his name, in addition to various battle scenes.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 9

This painting of President Abraham Lincoln (served 1861–1865) is titled simply "Lincoln, the Rail Splitter."

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## Exercise 1

### The Power of the Visual Image

Visual primary sources can be real aids to understanding past historical periods. **Many visual sources are dramatic and thought-provoking.** Often, in fact, a visual seems much more “real” than mere words on a page. But this power of the visual image can also cause problems. As we will see in this lesson, visuals do not show you the world as it “really” is. All of them leave things out or distort things in one way or another. That means that their powerful appeal can fool you—as can their ability to call out strong feelings.

Each of the visual primary source documents for this lesson is able to call forth some kind of emotional response from each viewer. That is, each image will cause you to react to or feel something about the American leader it shows. In the spaces below, jot down some notes on the kind of emotional response you think each visual source for this lesson is meant to call forth. Then briefly answer the questions below the list of documents. As a class, discuss your results.

Doc. 1

Doc. 2

Doc. 3

Doc. 4

Doc. 5

Doc. 6

Doc. 7

Doc. 8

Doc. 9

Which image calls forth the strongest emotional reaction, positive or negative? Why?

## Exercise 2

### Visual Sources: Always a Selective View

Visual primary sources may seem to offer a direct view of what things were “really like” in the past. However, no image, not even a crisp photograph, is a simple “window” showing you reality itself. Any visual gives you only a partial and sometimes distorted view of its subject. **Most visual images are carefully arranged, and all of them are highly selective views of reality.** That is, every visual image “selects” certain features to include or emphasize and leaves out other features.

For example, **Document 3** and **Document 4** present two very different, quite selective views of President Thomas Jefferson. **Document 5** and **Document 6** offer two very different, quite selective views of President Andrew Jackson. This simple exercise helps make that clear. It will do this by asking you to think about the differences between the two images of each president and their usefulness as visual primary sources. Make your choices as the instructions ask. Then explain them in the spaces provided. As a class, discuss all of your responses.

(You may want to read ahead a bit about these two presidents if you have not covered them yet in your history class.)

1. Of Documents 3 & 4, I would use Document \_\_\_\_ in a lesson on the presidency of Thomas Jefferson.

I would choose this visual document because . . .

(UNDERLINE ONE: I would, I would not) also use the other document because . . .

2. Of Documents 5 & 6, I would use Document \_\_\_\_ in a lesson on the presidency of Andrew Jackson.

I would choose this visual document because . . .

(UNDERLINE ONE: I would, I would not) also use the other document because . . .

## Exercise 3

### Visual Sources: You “See” What You Know

It’s hard to interpret primary sources of any kind without having some background knowledge of their historical time period. This may be even more true of visual primary sources than others. In spite of the famous saying, a picture is often NOT worth a thousand words. If anything, a thousand words of background information may be needed to make sense of a picture. In other words, **your background knowledge deeply affects how you make sense of any visual image you seek to understand.** Or to put it another way, what you see is shaped by what you already know.

This exercise gives you a simple way to prove this to yourself. Block out the information provided with the cartoon labeled **Document 4** for this lesson. Now show the cartoon separately to two friends or family members. Ask them to describe fully what they see and their reactions to it. *Don’t give them any hints about it!* In the spaces provided below, take notes on what these two people say. Then complete the assignment at the bottom of the page. (In the “Shown to” space, you do not need to identify the person by name, if they prefer to be anonymous. Just put “friend” or “relative,” or some other general term.)

**Doc. 4** Shown to \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on discussion

**Doc. 4** Shown to \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on discussion

**Based on the notes above, write a brief report to share in class on how these two individuals interpreted Document 4 and how their own background knowledge seemed to affect their interpretation.**

## Exercise 4

### Interpreting Visual Sources: Think About Form as Well as Content

When you look at a photo or other visual image, you usually pay attention to the subject or the scene in it. That is, you pay attention to its “content.” Yet the real impact of an image often comes from its form not its content. By “form” we mean all the features that affect how the content is presented. For example, in a photo this means the composition of objects in the image, lighting, dress, cropping, color, camera angle, sharpness or softness of focus, gestures or expressions of subjects, etc. In a poster, painting, or political cartoon, form means composition, artistic style, visual symbols, shape and size distortions of various objects, shading and coloring, etc. All these “formal” features add information to the image. They can be very important in interpreting a visual primary source. In answering a DBQ, you may even want to spend more time on these aspects of the image than on the content itself.

Even a simple portrait of an individual can tell you a lot about the times in which that individual lived and the attitudes or values of people then. You can prove this to yourself with this exercise. Do both steps of the exercise. Then, as a class, discuss the single paragraphs you have written.

**1. Take some notes on the “formal” features you notice in each of the following images:**

**George Washington (Document 2)**

**Jackson on a Horse (Document 5)**

**Abraham Lincoln (Document 9)**

**2. Using these images only, write a one-paragraph answer to this question:**

**“What do these images show about changing American views of leadership from 1789 to 1865?”**

## Exercise 5

### Interpreting Editorial Cartoons: Symbol & Metaphor, Exaggeration & Distortion

Editorial cartoons are a unique art form in which images express concepts, ideas, and strong opinions, usually about major social and political issues. Editorial cartoons use a kind of “language” of their own to convey ideas in visual form. Symbols, metaphors, exaggeration, and distortion are key elements of this language.

**Symbol & Metaphor:** A symbol in a cartoon is any object or design that stands for something else—for another object, a group of people, an attitude, or an idea. For example, the figure of Uncle Sam is often used as a symbol for the United States. Symbols work as a kind of shorthand. They make it easy to pack a lot of meaning into a cartoon. Often a single visual symbol can call attention to several aspects of an issue, problem, or public figure. To recognize these various meanings, note how the symbol is drawn, the feelings or emotions it evokes, and the ideas associated with it. In a metaphor, two totally different things are equated on the basis of some common aspect—for example, a huge alligator might be used as a metaphor for a powerful but clumsy government.

**Exaggeration & Distortion:** Cartoonists frequently exaggerate or understate the sizes of the objects they draw. They do this to stress the power or weakness, importance or unimportance, dangerousness or helplessness of some person, group, or social force. Distorting shapes of objects can also be a way to call attention to different aspects of the idea or issue being represented. The distorted images in a cartoon can have a powerful emotional impact—and they often reveal the artist’s unstated beliefs or assumptions.

Use these definitions to help you analyze the four cartoon or cartoon-like documents for this lesson. In the spaces provided below, take notes on either the symbols and metaphors or the exaggeration and distortion in the documents listed. Discuss your notes with the class.

#### 1. Symbol & Metaphor

Document 6

Document 7 (the drawing only)

#### 2. Exaggeration & Distortion

Document 4

Document 8

## Exercise 6

### Interpreting Editorial Cartoons: Using a Checklist

Below is a checklist that should help you to interpret just about any editorial cartoon, historical or current. Save this checklist and use it on a regular basis each time you are asked to discuss or analyze an editorial cartoon.

For this exercise, choose any one of the four cartoon documents you took notes on in Exercise 5. Using the checklist, write a brief essay analyzing in detail the cartoon you chose. Sum up by explaining how the cartoon could best be used in an historical essay on leaders and changing images of leadership in early American history.

#### *The MindSparks Editorial Cartoon Checklist*

- THE ISSUE** Editorial cartoons are NOT just like other comics. They may be funny, but their main purpose is to offer an opinion or point of view about some issue or problem in the news. First try to decide what the issue or problem is in the cartoon you are studying.
- SYMBOLS** A symbol is any object or design that stands for some other thing, person, or idea. For example, a huge thug may stand for the problem of crime. Describe objects in the cartoon that are symbols.
- EXAGGERATION & DISTORTION** Which features in the cartoon are exaggerated? That is, which appear much larger or smaller than they actually are? Changes in size or shape of this sort often add to the cartoon's point. Distorting an object means changing it in some way to make it look funny, ugly, etc. What symbols or other objects in the cartoon are distorted, and how does this add to the cartoon's point?
- STEREOTYPES** A stereotype is a simplistic view of some group. It is often insulting. But it can also help the cartoon make its point quickly. What stereotypes are used in the cartoon? Are they used unfairly, or are they used just to help the cartoon make its point?
- CARICATURE** Caricature is a portrayal of an individual's features in an exaggerated or distorted way. Is caricature used in the cartoon? If so, does it help to make an important point about the person portrayed?
- HUMOR AND IRONY** Humor is important in many editorial cartoons. Irony is one kind of humor. In it, a viewpoint is expressed in such an odd way as to make that view actually seem ridiculous. Is the cartoon you are studying funny or ironic? If so, does the humor add to the cartoon's point? Does the humor present an unfair or highly exaggerated idea of the other side's point of view?
- BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE** A reader usually must know certain things about an issue in order to understand an editorial cartoon on that issue. What kinds of background knowledge do you need in order to make sense of the cartoon you are studying? Where might you get that knowledge if you do not already have it?
- THE ARGUMENT** Slogans tell us what to do or think. "Smoking Kills" or "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute" are slogans. A good editorial cartoon is NOT just a slogan. It gives reasons for its opinion. In other words, it is an argument. What point of view does your cartoon present, and what argument does it offer? How do its symbols, distortions, stereotypes, caricature, or other features help it to make a good argument for its point of view?

# Analyzing the Question

## **INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS**

The ten primary sources for this lesson are from the time of the American Revolution and the framing of the U.S. Constitution. They deal especially with changing colonial attitudes about the British, about liberty, and about the nature of government.

The overall goal of this lesson is to teach students to pay close attention to all the nuances of the question they are asked when doing a DBQ essay. It is not uncommon for students to give an acceptable answer to a DBQ that was not in fact the one actually asked. Students are generally in a hurry to start writing, especially when they are under the intense time pressures of a testing situation. It is crucial to convince them to take the time to read and think carefully about each key part of the DBQ.

A broader goal of this lesson is to help students see that learning history will generally be more rewarding if done with an active, questioning mindset. If the student simply tries to absorb information as it is presented, passively and without a clear focus, the materials will be harder to master. Questions are what drive the historian, and they can enliven history for students as well.

## **KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES**

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. The concepts and strategies include the need for students to

1. Actively question all sources,
2. Use questions to help them compare sources,
3. Become familiar with typical DBQ question formats, and
4. Read and reflect on all key aspects of the question asked.

## **THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS**

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *Colonial America in the 18th Century*, *The American Revolution*, and *“A Republic, If You Can Keep It.”*

# Exercise 1

## Questioning the Documents—1

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students to question each individual document thoroughly as a way to determine its value in relation to the DBQ.

### Points to Make with Students

In answering any document-based question, students need to **adopt a questioning attitude toward the entire set of primary sources provided**. This will aid them as they analyze the sources and organize their thoughts to answer the main DBQ. In addition, some tests using DBQs also ask students to answer an initial set of questions about each document. This exercise (and others you may want to create yourself) will give students practice in doing this. It should also help them to see the general value of always questioning all the sources as thoroughly as possible.

### Evaluating Student Responses

#### 1. Doc. 5

Paul Revere's illustration clearly generates sympathy for the colonists, as one would expect from any image created by this patriot. This image suggests, for example, that the crowd was much more respectful and well-behaved than most reports indicate.

#### 2. Doc. 2

This representative assembly began meeting in 1619. Document 1 might also be acceptable here. The Mayflower Compact did not explicitly establish a representative government. It did, however, establish the idea of a body of citizens agreeing in a somewhat democratic way to live under a certain governmental system.

#### 3. Doc. 10

This statement by a man who at least appears to be an ordinary farmer suggests support for the Constitution up and down the socioeconomic scale.

#### 4. Doc. 3

This newspaper front page is angry in tone, and its design—with skull and crossbones, for example—is clearly defiant in its attitude toward the British authorities. The other 1765 document here is Franklin's cartoon (Document 4). His cartoon is actually more moderate, appealing basically to British self-interest.

#### 5. Doc. 6

This painting is from 1897 and is therefore not a primary source for the Revolutionary era. It pictures the signing of the Constitution as a solemn and dramatic moment.

#### 6. Doc. 7

Madison and Hamilton are the only two actual delegates to the Constitutional Convention whose words appear in these documents. Hamilton clearly distrusts the people and wants a government that limits their power. Madison accepts the people as the "primary control on the government," while merely seeing other internal controls on it as also necessary.

## Exercise 2

### Questioning the Documents—2

#### Objective for the Exercise

To give students practice in questioning pairs of documents in order to learn to identify meaningful links among the sources for any DBQ.

#### Points to Make with Students

**Not all of the primary sources for any DBQ are likely to agree with one another.** This can make it hard for students who want to refer to most of the documents as they write their DBQ essay. If they learn to look for meaningful ways to group documents that are similar, their task may be easier. To help familiarize them with this idea, we take the first exercise for this lesson a step further. Here, students will find meaningful linkages among the lesson's sources by choosing two documents to help answer each of four questions.

(In this exercise, more than one correct pair of documents may be possible for some of the questions. Our view of the best pairings is presented below.)

#### Evaluating Student Responses

**1. Best Answer: Doc. 1 & Doc. 2**

Both of these documents suggest that a long tradition of self-government existed in the colonies by the mid-1700s.

**2. Best Answer: Doc. 3 & Doc. 5**

Clearly, these are the two documents out of the entire group that most directly express colonial anger toward the British and the various policies by which the British tried to impose greater control on the colonies. Franklin's cartoon (Document 4) also suggests how British policies such as excessive taxation were alienating the colonies, though it is less specific on this score.

**3. Best Answer: Doc. 7 & Doc. 8**

Both Madison and Hamilton are "realists" about human nature. Madison speaks of people as not being angels. Hamilton speaks of the people as "turbulent" and even the rich as needing some self-interested stake in the government. These views translate for them into a government able to exercise control both over the governed and over itself and its leaders.

**4. Best Answer: Doc. 3 & Doc. 4**

Neither of these two protests against British control calls for independence. The newspaper front page, as defiant as it is, still only protests against one act by the British, the Stamp Act. Franklin's cartoon actually warns of the dire consequences of a break-up of the empire.

## Exercise 3

### Types of DBQs

#### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students to recognize several standard question formats often encountered in writing DBQs.

To teach them the need to read every part of a DBQ thoroughly.

#### Points to Make with Students

This two-page exercise involves a good deal of careful reading. Its main purpose, however, is very simple. **Students must learn to think carefully about the exact wording and format of each DBQ** they are asked to answer. There are a number of common patterns for DBQs. We have presented four of them here. These are certainly not the only four ways in which DBQs are worded or framed, but these four formats do cover most of the major types students will encounter. The exact wording of a DBQ may differ from these patterns, yet it can still conform to one or another of them. For example, questions beginning with “Why . . . ,” “What caused . . . ,” “How did . . . ,” might all be variants of the question type we have labeled “Explain Why.”

You should stress to students that these formats are not the only ones used, and that they are not worded rigidly in only one way whenever they are used. The reason for looking at them here is to **help students think strategically about the questions they are asked**. Think, that is, about the underlying logic of a question and what it suggests about how best to organize an answer. Therefore, **students must pay close attention, above all, to all the key defining terms and phrases and directives in the question**. The question should then become their guide in deciding how to organize their use of the documents.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

1. Question Format 4
2. Question Format 1
3. Question Format 2
4. Question Format 3

For the most part, the four DBQs fit the four question types in a fairly obvious way. However, in a few cases they use somewhat different terminology or they combine elements of more than one of the types. Question 2, for example, ends with the phrase “explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.” Superficially, this sounds like an “Explain Why” question. In fact, it is asking students to assess the validity, in their opinion, of the prior statement. The confusion here is intentional. Students should use the formats as strategic concepts; they should not regard them as simple formulas that automatically unlock every DBQ. Moreover, the real heart of the exercise is the discussion you will have about their follow-up comments on each question. Do students see clearly the need to pay attention to all the key phrases of each question and use them to organize their thoughts about their essay? Do they offer good reasons for choosing three documents to stress with each question? These are the issues on which you should focus in evaluating their responses.

## Exercise 4

### Choosing DBQs

**Objective for the Exercise**

To help students see that the format and details of a DBQ can guide them in using the primary sources and organizing their essay.

**Points to Make with Students**

This exercise is a direct follow-up to the previous one. It will give students a chance to think about the previous four DBQs in relation to the primary sources provided with this lesson. In a sense, the students get a chance to look at DBQs from the point of view of a teacher who has to select or create one to use with a given set of sources.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

There really are no correct or even best answers for this exercise. Any of the four DBQs can be answered using this lesson's documents and applying some basic background knowledge of the time period. The value of the lesson is that it forces students to think rigorously about the relationship of the documents to the DBQs. Your evaluation of student responses should be based on how thoughtfully they do this in explaining their choices.

# Exercise 5

## Answering a DBQ

### Objective for the Exercise

To give students some initial practice in writing a complete DBQ essay.

### Points to Make with Students

The aim here is to give the student a chance to write a brief but complete essay answering a DBQ. Many students will still need the remaining lessons in this program to develop a full understanding of what such essays require. However, there is no real substitute for practice. Further, you can use the results to get a sense of student strengths and weaknesses.

### Evaluating Student Responses

The Advanced Placement U.S. History Examination includes a DBQ, and the AP Program has developed its own scoring guide for DBQ essays. However, that and similar guides may not be appropriate for judging an initial essay-writing exercise such as this one. We have developed a somewhat simplified scoring guide for this exercise. A more complex guide for the last few exercises will be provided later.

#### Simplified DBQ Scoring Guide

##### Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis statement explicitly addressing the essay question.
- Does a good job of interpreting at least some of the documents and relating them meaningfully to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Uses details and examples to support the thesis and other main ideas.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is clearly written. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

##### Acceptable Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the basics of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

##### Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in "laundry list" style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand a variety of question formats commonly used in DBQs and other history essays.
  2. To understand how important it is to study *all* aspects of the question and use that question as a guide in planning the essay.
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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES**

# Analyzing the Question

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

Ten primary sources are provided for this lesson, including political cartoons, newspaper pages, letters, and speeches. The sources are all from the time of the American Revolution and the framing of the U.S. Constitution. They deal especially with changing colonial attitudes about the British, about liberty, and about the nature of government.

The primary sources for the lesson will be used to help you think about the types of questions that make up most DBQs. One of the most common mistakes students make in answering a DBQ is failing to read the question carefully. In fact, it is not unusual for a student to give a good answer to a question that was not asked! No advice is more important than the following: Pay close attention to each phrase and every key part of any DBQ you are given. Do not start writing until you have done this thoroughly.

**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Basically, the exercises will focus your attention on the following broad concepts and strategies for dealing with DBQ questions:

1. You need to see the primary source documents as useful mainly in terms of the specific question or questions you have about them.  
**Actively question your sources.**
2. Also, **use questions to help you compare the various sources.** See the sources in relationship to one another, to your own questions and to the DBQ you are to answer.
3. Be aware of the typical **question formats** most commonly used for DBQs and for other kinds of history essays.
4. Become accustomed to **studying all parts of the question.** Be sure you understand exactly what is asked of you before you begin to organize and write your essay.

## The Documents

### The Founding of the Nation

#### Document 1

#### The Mayflower Compact

“We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

“Having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and honour of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620.”

*The Mayflower Compact, signed by 41 Pilgrim settlers in the cabin of the “Mayflower,” November 1620, at Cape Cod.*

#### Document 2

The “House of Burgesses,” the representative legislature for the Virginia colony. It met for the first time at Jamestown in 1619.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 3

The front page of *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser* for October 31, 1765. The page has been designed as a protest against the Stamp Act of 1765.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents



### Document 4

A 1765 editorial cartoon by Ben Franklin opposing British taxation and warning that such taxation could hurt England itself. England is shown as a dismembered figure, with the colonies as its detached limbs. The Latin words translate as “Give a dime to Belasarius.” Belasarius was an ancient general later dismissed and forced to live as a beggar.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

### Document 5

This engraving by American patriot Paul Revere offers his version of the Boston Massacre of 1770.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 6

Artist Henry Hintermeister’s 1897 painting showing Franklin, Washington, and others signing the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia on September 17, 1787.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



## The Documents

### Document 7

“It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.”

*James Madison, delegate to the Constitutional Convention and author of many of the essays in “The Federalist.” These words are from “Federalist No. 51.”*

### Document 8

“All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well-born; the other the mass of the people. The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and, however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct permanent share in the Government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second, and, as they cannot receive any advantage by a change, they therefore will ever maintain good government. . . . Nothing but a permanent body can check the imprudence of democracy. Their turbulent and uncontrollable disposition requires checks.”

*Alexander Hamilton in a speech to the Constitutional Conventions meeting in Philadelphia, 1787.*

### Document 9

“[The people are] the most certain, and the most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is in their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty. After all, it is my principle that the will of the majority should prevail. If they approve the proposed constitution in all its parts, I shall concur in it cheerfully, in hopes they will amend it, whenever they shall find it works wrong.”

*Thomas Jefferson in a letter to James Madison, December 20, 1787, on the U.S. Constitution then being debated in the states.*

### Document 10

“I am a plain man, and get my living by the plough. I am not used to speak in public, but I beg your leave to say a few words to my brother ploughjoggers in this house . . .

“I formed my own opinion, and was pleased with this Constitution. . . . I never had any post, nor do I want one. But I don’t think the worse of the Constitution because lawyers, and men of learning, and moneyed men, are fond of it. I don’t suspect they want to get into Congress and abuse their power. I am not of such a jealous make. They that are honest men themselves are not apt to suspect other people. . . . I think those gentlemen, who are so very suspicious that as soon as a man gets into power he turns rogue, had better look at home.”

*A “Mr. Smith” speaking to the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention sometime in early 1788.*

## Exercise 1

### Questioning the Documents—1

Every DBQ asks you to write an essay using your own knowledge of history and your ideas about a group of primary source documents. Some DBQs also first ask you to answer questions about EACH source in turn. This helps you to think more clearly about what the sources actually say or show before you use them in a longer essay. It also helps you to **think carefully about the questions themselves, how they are worded, and what they really ask**. This is a very important skill to develop in dealing with DBQs. It's not always as easy as you may think to fully understand what a question is asking.

In this exercise, you need to decide which of the primary source documents for this lesson best matches each of the six questions below. Choose just ONE document for each question and write its number in the space provided. Then write a single-sentence answer to the question itself. (It may help to read ALL six questions before answering any of them.)

1. This document is about an incident that sparked colonial anger. But information about its “author, audience, and purpose” may lead you to have doubts about how accurate its view of the incident is. Can you explain?  
Doc. \_\_\_ Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. By 1763, the colonists had already lived for over a century with representative government. This document backs up this statement. Can you explain how?  
Doc. \_\_\_ Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Some historians say the U.S. Constitution was favored by the wealthy. How does this document prove that support for the Constitution was more widespread than that?  
Doc. \_\_\_ Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Even as early as 1765, the colonists showed a strong spirit of rebelliousness toward British authority. How does this document make that clear?  
Doc. \_\_\_ Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. This document is not really a primary source for the framing of the Constitution. However, it does give us a sense of how Americans later came to view that important turning point. Can you explain?  
Doc. \_\_\_ Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. At least one framer of the Constitution thought government based on the rule of the people could work well even though the people were not always pure and good. Using this document, explain why he felt that way.  
Doc. \_\_\_ Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Exercise 2

## Questioning the Documents—2

Most DBQs ask you to write about seven, eight, or more primary source documents. However, these documents will not always agree with one another. They may not even be closely related, though they will all be about one broad topic. **Before answering a DBQ, try to see which documents are connected most closely.** This can make it easier for you to plan your use of the documents in answering the DBQ.

This exercise should help you see the value of doing this. The exercise asks you to link TWO primary source documents to a single question. This will give you practice in thinking about how one document connects up with another. Choose the two documents you think would best help to answer each of the following questions. Then write a one-sentence or two-sentence answer to each question. As a class, discuss your answers for Exercises 1 and 2.

- 1. "The American Revolution was a huge turning point in our history. However, in fighting for the idea of representative government, the colonists did not feel they were fighting for anything new or revolutionary." Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

Docs. \_\_\_ & \_\_\_ These documents help show that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Why, after 1763, did growing numbers of colonial Americans come to view British authority as unfair, cruel, and oppressive?

Docs. \_\_\_ & \_\_\_ These documents help show that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. The key framers of the U.S. Constitution had a somewhat skeptical view of human nature. How did this view influence them in forming the kind of government they did in 1787?

Docs. \_\_\_ & \_\_\_ These documents help show that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. "As angry as the Stamp Act made them, many colonists in 1765 were still not in favor of separating from the British empire." Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

Docs. \_\_\_ & \_\_\_ These documents help show that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 3

### Types of DBQs

In answering a DBQ, one of the most common mistakes is failing to read the question carefully. **It is not unusual for a student to give a good answer to a question that was NOT even asked!** Below are descriptions of four typical DBQ question formats. These four formats describe some of the most commonly asked DBQs. Of course, all DBQs actually have a great deal in common. All of them expect you to state a clear thesis, or answer, to a question. All of them expect you to back up your thesis using primary sources and your background history knowledge. And no matter what the question format, you must always **pay close attention to each phrase and ALL parts of the question.** Never start to write until you have done this thoroughly.

Read the four question format descriptions on this page. Then complete the exercise on the next page.

#### Question Format 1

##### “Assess the Validity”

As in this question: “*The colonists could not have won the Revolutionary War without the leadership of General Washington.*”  
Assess the validity of this statement.

This question usually calls on you to respond to a firm conclusion about an historical event, problem, trend, group, or personality. You do not have to agree with that conclusion. What is important is that you state clearly your own opinion about it and that you back that opinion up with your own history knowledge and with comments about the documents. In your answer, use the primary sources to support your view. However, also try to account for sources that seem to go against your view.

#### Question Format 2

##### “Compare and Contrast”

As in: *Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the colonists and the British in the American Revolution.*

Questions of this type ask you to describe similarities and differences between two trends or sets of events in the same historical time period or in two different time periods. Try to group the documents into those that clarify one of the two things being compared and those that clarify the other thing being compared. The goal is to describe a broad pattern, but usually you will have to try to explain it as well.

#### Question Format 3

##### “Explain Why” or “Explain to What Extent”

As in: *Explain why the colonists won the Revolution in spite of Great Britain’s superior numbers and military strength.*

This type of question asks you to come up with your own explanation for some historical trend, development or event. Your focus will usually be on causes and effects. Complicated historical events almost always have many causes. A handful of primary sources will not be enough to prove your explanation completely. Look to the sources only for partial proof of your thesis. State your case clearly but cautiously. A variation on this question type singles out one factor and asks you to decide “**to what extent**” it was important as compared with other possible factors. Again, be cautious about making sweeping claims either for or against the importance of the factor singled out.

#### Question Format 4

##### “Describe the Changes,” or “Describe and Explain”

As in: *Describe how colonial attitudes toward the British shifted from 1763 to 1776, and explain why these changes took place.*

Here the emphasis seems to be on description more than explanation. But don’t describe just anything and everything. You probably ARE also supposed to explain something—by suggesting what factors caused some trend or historical pattern. In describing a process of change, pay attention to chronology, the flow of events over time. Notice carefully what the dates of primary sources tell you about how events unfolded.

## Exercise 3 (Continued)

### Types of DBQs

Below are four DBQs that could be used with the primary sources for this lesson. Read these DBQs and re-read the four question formats described on the previous page. For each DBQ below, write the number of its correct question format in the space labeled "Question Format." Then, under the DBQ itself, write all the words and phrases in it that are key to understand it fully. Finally, choose the three primary source documents you think would be best to use in answering each DBQ. As a class, discuss the choices you have made here.

**Question Format** \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Describe how American attitudes about government changed from the colonial period, through the Revolution, to the framing of the U.S. Constitution. Explain some of the factors causing these changes.

**Key phrases to know in this DBQ** \_\_\_\_\_

**The 3 best documents to use are** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question Format** \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "The framers of the U.S. Constitution merely carried out the promise of the American Revolution. They did this by creating a government based on the Revolution's complete faith in the will of all the people." Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

**Key phrases to know in this DBQ** \_\_\_\_\_

**The 3 best documents to use are** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question Format** \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Compare and contrast the views of the American colonists toward their place in the British empire before 1763 and after 1763.

**Key phrases to know in this DBQ** \_\_\_\_\_

**The 3 best documents to use are** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question Format** \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The federal government defined by the U.S. Constitution had more powers than the one it replaced. But its powers were also strictly limited. Explain why the framers of the Constitution so strongly supported a government with real yet clearly limited powers?

**Key phrases to know in this DBQ** \_\_\_\_\_

**The 3 best documents to use are** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_.

## Exercise 4

### Choosing DBQs

The four DBQs in Exercise 3 may not necessarily all be good ones to use with the ten primary sources for this lesson. Which DBQs do you think are the best? Which are the worst? This exercise asks you to decide this as if you were a teacher making up your mind about which DBQ to assign. The goal of the exercise is to help you think further about the nature of the question and how a question’s format can affect the way you use the primary sources.

Of the four DBQs listed on the previous page, choose the two you think would be best to use with this lesson’s primary source documents. In the spaces provided below, identify these two questions and explain your choices. Then choose the two DBQs you would least want to use with this lesson’s documents. Identify them and explain your choices.

The Two BEST DBQs Are \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your choices

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The Two WORST DBQs Are \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your choices

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# Exercise 5

## Answering a DBQ

In the last exercise, you chose what you felt were the two best DBQs out of the four presented in Exercise 3. Now pick one of those two DBQs and write an answer to it on this page. Usually a DBQ is presented with introductory comments such as those in the box below. After those comments, write in the DBQ you have chosen. Then on the rest of this page, write a brief essay answering that DBQ.

**Instructions: Document-Based Essay**

This question is based on the ten documents for this lesson. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and any point of view presented in it. Using information from the documents, and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay answering the following DBQ.

**The DBQ You Have Chosen**

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# Developing a Thesis Statement

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS

The primary sources for this lesson all have to do with the changing nature of work in America from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s. Together, they help to illustrate the shift from an economy based mainly on farming and household production to an early industrial society. Were the changes involved in this shift positive and good for the majority of people? Or, did they actually make life harder in one way or another? The DBQ used in the lesson will focus on this.

The key objective of the exercises is to help students see the central role played by the thesis statement in a DBQ essay and to learn to write effective thesis statements. The thesis statement is the writer's overall response or answer to the DBQ. It is an answer presented as an assertion that can be proved or backed up with facts. To be effective, the thesis must respond to all parts of the DBQ, not just some of them. It must also be a statement that writers can support by using their background knowledge and by making meaningful references to the primary source documents.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

A number of key concepts and strategies having to do with thesis statements will be presented in this lesson. The concepts and strategies include the need for students to understand that

1. A thesis is a clear statement of what the essay will try to prove,
2. The thesis statement must respond to all key aspects of the question,
3. The thesis must be supportable with evidence from the sources and with references to other background knowledge, and
4. A good thesis statement will be a helpful guide for organizing the entire DBQ essay.

## THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *Daily Life in Colonial America*, *Colonial America in the 18th Century*, *The Industrial Revolution in the Early Republic*, *Lowell*, and *The Abolitionist Movement*.

# Exercise 1

## Choosing Thesis Statements

### Objective for the Exercise

To define the crucial role of the thesis statement in a DBQ and enable students to make some initial judgments about a group of sample thesis statements.

### Points to Make with Students

Exercises 1 and 2 together give students practice in distinguishing between good and bad thesis statements. Five thesis statements are presented in Exercise 1 and used again in Exercise 2. All five are in response to a single DBQ.

Some of these thesis statements are fine. Others are flawed in ways typical of what many students do wrong when answering DBQs. **A workable thesis statement should first of all be a clear and direct answer to the DBQ.** That is, it should address all key aspects of the DBQ. This may take more than a single sentence, since it often helps to reword the question or problem posed before presenting the thesis itself. The thesis should not be just any opinion; it should be one the student knows to be supportable. **A thesis is an opinion that students know they can support with references to the sources and to other background knowledge.**

### Evaluating Student Responses

Here students choose what they see as the two best thesis statements and discuss the reasons for their choices. The aim is to give students time to think about and discuss their own criteria for judging among those statements. Therefore, rather than evaluating their comments in detail, simply encourage them to talk. By committing themselves this way, they should be more motivated and thoughtful in doing Exercise 2. In that exercise, they will have to make more systematic distinctions among these same five thesis statements.

## Exercise 2

### Classifying Thesis Statements

#### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students that a thesis statement must provide a brief answer to the DBQ, one they will then be able to back up or support in the rest of the DBQ essay.

#### Points to Make with Students

This exercise extends the analysis of the five thesis statements presented in Exercise 1. Here, students match up five descriptions with those five thesis statements. In the list of correct match-ups below, two thesis statements are indicated as “acceptable.” The follow-up discussion should focus on exactly what is right about these two thesis statements and what is wrong with the three “unacceptable” statements. The unacceptable statements each make a typical kind of error that students need to guard against.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

Here are the correct match-ups between the descriptions and the thesis statements. Also, “acceptable” and “unacceptable” thesis statements are indicated.

##### **Description A matches with Thesis Statement 3**

*Unacceptable:* A thesis is presented, but it is only about a part of the DBQ statement. It is common for students to answer only part of the question or a slightly different question from the one actually asked. This mistake comes from not paying close attention to all key phrases and qualifiers in the DBQ.

##### **Description B matches with Thesis Statement 5**

*Unacceptable:* Here an entire paragraph of quick references to primary sources is made without ever relating any of them to a clear thesis. This entails two mistakes: (1) no thesis is stated, and (2) a great deal of detail is presented that should go into the body of the essay to support a thesis statement. The introductory paragraph is not the place for this detail.

##### **Description C matches with Thesis Statement 4**

*Acceptable:* This statement consists of four separate sentences. Every one of them is necessary to respond to the DBQ statement and clarify the overall position that the writer will seek to prove. The thesis denies the validity of the DBQ statement, which is perfectly acceptable as long as the body of the essay provides the supporting evidence.

##### **Description D matches with Thesis Statement 1**

*Unacceptable:* No thesis at all is provided. There are a great many details here, and they may even imply a thesis, since most of them seem to back up the DBQ statement. But whatever the thesis is, it is never made clear.

##### **Description E matches with Thesis Statement 2**

*Acceptable:* This statement agrees with the DBQ statement and it reveals just enough detail to suggest the kind of evidence it will have to provide to support the claim it makes.

## Exercise 3

### The Thesis Statement and the Sources

#### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students that a thesis statement should be an effective guide for organizing the entire essay and determining how the primary source documents will be used.

#### Points to Make with Students

To back up a thesis, students must use their background history knowledge in writing the essay. They must also make meaningful references to the primary sources. In this case, a “meaningful” reference is one that shows the relationship of a document to the thesis and the DBQ. **To avoid the “laundry list” style of referring to sources, students should use the thesis to guide their decisions about which sources to use and how to use them.** In this exercise, students can work with either of the two “acceptable” thesis statements from Exercise 2. They then choose the five sources they would most want to use to support this thesis. The aim is to help them see the need to analyze the sources carefully with their thesis in mind. Comments on each primary source document are provided below.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

##### Documents 1, 2, and 4

Useful to support the idea that eighteenth century America was made up of smaller, more independent farmers and crafts workers. Could help with Thesis A, especially, but also with Thesis B if the stress is on the confining, isolating nature of the work and the low level of subsistence it often provided.

##### Documents 3 and 5

These call attention to the fact that one large group, African slaves, enjoyed no freedom at all and benefited very little from the Industrial Revolution. Also, the cotton gin calls attention to the fact that some industrial breakthroughs actually extended and deepened the slave system. Mainly a support for Thesis A.

##### Documents 6, 7, 9, and 11

Each of these could be used for either Thesis A or Thesis B. Documents 6 and 7 suggest, on the one hand, the greater freedom and opportunity some female workers at Lowell experienced. On the other, they also indicate the intense pace and unhealthy nature of the work. Document 9 suggests the enormous productive capacity unleashed by the Industrial Revolution, as well as the impersonal nature of the workplaces it fashioned. Document 11 illustrates the hostility encountered by Irish and other immigrants, but it also hints at the upward mobility some of them experienced.

##### Documents 8 and 10

These two documents are supportive mainly of Thesis A, since they describe the harsh conditions and lack of independence of the industrial workers in stark terms.

# Exercise 4

## Write a Three-Paragraph Essay

**Objective for the Exercise**

To give students some practice at writing a complete essay based on a clearly stated thesis.

**Points to Make with Students**

As at the end of Lesson 3, students here are again given a chance to write a brief but complete essay answering a DBQ. This time, they get slightly more structured guidance in doing this. First, they will use the thesis statement they chose in the previous exercise. Second, a few tips for writing a brief three-paragraph essay will give them a better sense of the basic structure such an essay should have. Later lessons will develop this idea of essay structure in more detail.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

You may wish to use the simplified DBQ scoring guide again from Lesson 3, Exercise 5 in judging the quality of the brief essays students do in this exercise.



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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand that a thesis statement is the main opinion or idea that your entire essay will try to support or prove.
  2. To see that the thesis must respond to all parts of the DBQ and must also be a guide for using the primary sources.
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# Developing a Thesis Statement

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES**

**INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

Eleven primary sources are provided for this lesson, including political cartoons, drawings, letters, articles, and a poem. The sources all have to do with the changing nature of work in America from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s. Together, they help to illustrate many aspects of the way work changed and of the way this affected millions of Americans. Were the changes mainly positive and good for the majority of people? Or did they actually make life harder in one way or another? The DBQ used in the lesson will focus on this, as will a series of possible thesis statements answering that DBQ.

**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will be used to help you think about what is perhaps the most important single part of any DBQ essay, the thesis statement.

1. A **thesis statement** is the main idea or viewpoint you will develop in your answer to the DBQ. That is, the thesis is a clear statement of what you hope to prove in your essay.
2. Your thesis statement should **respond directly to all aspects of the question** asked. Be sure your thesis is not about just one part of the question—or about a question that was not asked at all.
3. Your thesis statement should make a claim or state an opinion that you can back up in part with **evidence from the primary sources** and in part with your own **background knowledge**.
4. Think of **the thesis statement as a guide** for you in how to interpret and use the primary sources as evidence in your essay. That is, all your references to sources and other information should help in some way to support the thesis statement.

## The Documents

### The Changing Nature of Work in Early America

#### Document 1

An eighteenth-century drawing of a farm family at work in colonial America.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*



#### Document 2

These eighteenth-century engravings are of two colonial crafts workers. On the left, a man hammers a brass vessel into shape. On the right, a woman uses a machine that makes pins.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 3

Many Americans in the late 1700s thought slavery would die out. But Eli Whitney's cotton gin, shown here, made it vastly quicker and cheaper to produce and process raw cotton. As a result, slavery spread throughout the U.S. South.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 4

“His accommodations were here limited to two small rooms, half-buried, dimly lighted, and furnished with a rude bench or two, whereon to cut his stock. A small closet or two furnished him with shoe rooms and, when found not capacious enough, his shoes would be carried home. His clicking and leather cutting were all done by his own hands, and, when his shoes were to be marketed, he would take a horse and wagon and do his own selling, either in Boston or the surrounding country.”

*Description of the working conditions of “shoe boss” Thomas Radden, Jr., of Lynn, Massachusetts, in the early 1800s. This was before much larger shoe manufacturing businesses developed there. Even after that happened, these more powerful shoe manufacturers still relied on the putting-out system in which bosses supplied workers at home or in smaller shops with materials and returned later to collect and sell finished products. This putting-out system lasted in the shoe business until after the Civil War.*

## The Documents



### Document 5

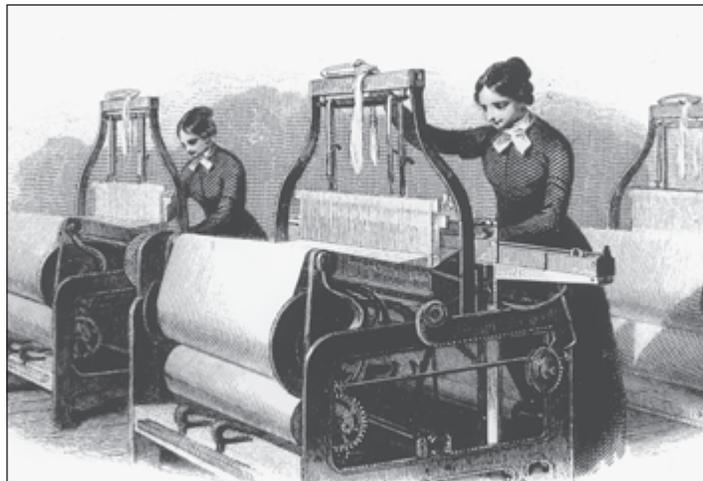
A group of slaves in chains being marched through the streets of Washington D.C. in the early 1800s. The nation's capitol was a key center of slave auctioning and the internal slave trade.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

### Document 6

Two female weavers in a textile mill in the experimental factory town of Lowell in the 1830s or 1840s. For a time, Lowell relied on female workers from surrounding New England towns who lived in supervised dorms while working in the Lowell mills.

*American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA*



### Document 7

Dear Cousin Hannah,

“Please forgive me for not writing to you since I left home six months ago. Never in my fifteen years has the time seemed to pass so swiftly, Whenever I can, I write to my folks since I am the oldest and the first to leave home to work in the mills.

“I feel so proud that I now support myself. I am also able to save money toward my dowry and still have some left for an occasional luxury. I now have a sense of being on my own that I never had on the farm, and as you will see I have learned many things. [a long description follows of work, dorm life, lectures, church activities and shopping at Lowell.]

“Our working conditions, however, are less than ideal and it has led to public debate over more than one issue. Some of the operatives (which is what mill workers are

called) are trying to get our working day cut to ten hours. They are also asking for better wages, more time for meals and a healthier working environment. These requests have not yet been answered by the management.

“There is also a growing concern over excessive illness among the workers and available health care. The Lowell Corporation Hospital will be open in several months to respond to the health needs of mill workers.

“As you can tell, there are some changes taking place. There are so many new and interesting things to learn about that I have never been sorry I came....”

*Letter to a cousin by Adeleen Blake, a young worker in the innovative textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1840, as reproduced in The Lowell Mill Girls: Life in the Factory, edited by Joanne Weisman Dietch (Discovery Enterprises, 1998).*

## The Documents

### Document 8

“After thirteen hours unremitting toil, day after day and week after week, how much energy and life would remain to nerve on the once vigorous mind in the path of wisdom. . . . Let us look forward into the future, and what does the picture present to our imagination! Methinks I behold the self same females [workers in the Lowell mills] occupying new and responsible stations in society. They are now wives and mothers! But oh! How deficient in everything pertaining to those holy, sacred names! Behold what disorder, confusion and disquietude reigns, where quiet, neatness and calm serenity should sanctify and render almost like heaven the home of domestic union and love! Instead of being qualified to rear a family . . . they, themselves, have need to be instructed in the very first principles of living well and thinking right. Incarcerated with the walls of a factory, while as yet mere children—drilled there from five to seven o’clock, year after year—thrown into company with all sorts and descriptions of minds, dispositions and intellects, without councillor or friend to advise—far away from a watchful mother’s tender care, or father’s kind instruction—surrounded on all sides with vain orientation of fashion, vanity and light frivolity—beset with temptations without, and the carnal propensities of nature within, what must, what will be the natural, rational result? What but ignorance, misery, and premature decay of both body and intellect?”

*From “Factory Tract Number 1,” by the Female Labor Reform Association in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1845, as reproduced in The Lowell Mill Girls: Life in the Factory, edited by Joanne Weisman Dietch (Discovery Enterprises, 1998).*

### Document 10

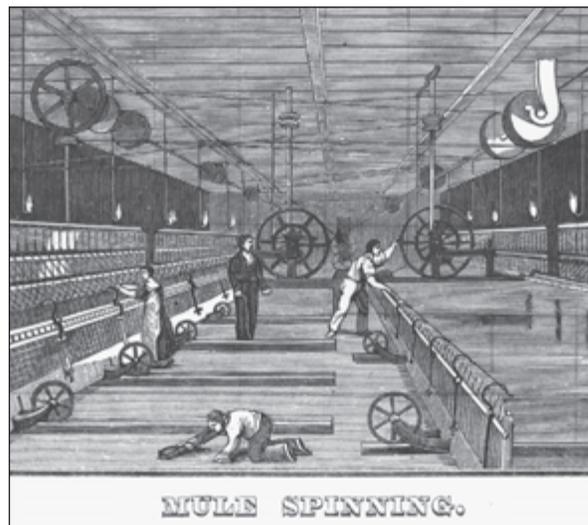
The bosses here have many forms  
By which to oppress their men;  
For they are beasts of many horns  
And ever thus have been.  
For there’s orders and trash  
Low wages, no cash,  
And fraud of every hue;  
Oh, are they not a tyrant crew  
As ever a mortal knew?  
The bosses, too, are very sly,  
Deceivers from the first;  
They’ll crush you down until you die,  
Then cry because you’re crushed.

*Poem from “The Awl,” July 31, 1844. “The Awl” was a workingman’s newspaper in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1844-45.*

### Document 9

An engraving of a room full of spinning machinery in one of the factories at Lowell in the 1840s.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 11

Cartoon of an Irish worker. In the 1840s and 1850s, more than a million poor Irish immigrants arrived, took low-paying jobs, and faced a good deal of prejudice and outright hatred. But many also did “climb a ladder” to success.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



## Exercise 1

### Choosing Thesis Statements

Your thesis is the main idea or viewpoint you will develop in your DBQ essay. That is, **the thesis is a clear answer to the DBQ or statement of what you hope to prove in your essay**. It should respond directly to the question asked, and it should make a claim you can back up at least in part with evidence from the primary sources provided. You usually state the thesis in the introductory paragraph of the essay.

In the box is a DBQ along with typical instructions often provided with DBQs. This DBQ is based on the primary source documents for this lesson. Below it are **five thesis statements**, all responding to this DBQ. Of these five statements, check the *two* you think are best. Then complete Exercise 2 for this lesson.

#### **Instructions: Document-Based Essay**

This question is based on the eleven documents for this lesson. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and any point of view presented in it. Using information from the documents, and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay answering the following DBQ.

#### **Historical Context**

New production methods, new sources of power, and an expanding market system changed American life drastically between 1750 and 1865. This “Industrial Revolution” also altered the nature of work and the lives of American workers in many ways.

#### **The Question**

“The early Industrial Revolution in America did produce greater wealth and a chance for success for some. But mainly it reduced worker independence and caused great misery for most American workers.” Assess the validity of this statement.

#### **Check the TWO best thesis statements of the five listed here.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Some workers had to take jobs in huge, impersonal factories. Farm girls left home to work in places like Lowell, hoping to find money or a more exciting life. Instead, they often worked thirteen hours a day and went home broken in health. They weren’t much better off than the slaves. Meanwhile millions of immigrants faced insulting prejudice, though many did climb the ladder of success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the early 1800s, a few Americans succeeded. But for most American workers, it is true, the Industrial Revolution meant a miserable life on the job earning low wages for long hours in factories, or even worse as slaves producing the cotton to supply those factories.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Industrial Revolution brought new machinery powered by steam, which vastly increased the amount of goods that could be produced. It changed workplaces from small shops to huge factories. It led to canals, roads, and railroads that tied the nation together, making it one huge national economy. The Industrial Revolution changed America forever.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The statement is too extreme. The Industrial Revolution in America did cause older craft workers to lose some independence. Also, conditions in many factories were often terrible. However, jobs in factories and the cities meant, if anything, more freedom and more income for millions leaving rural family farms—as well as for millions of desperate immigrants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Crafts workers such as those shown in Document 2 often worked at home in the late 1700s and early 1800s. By mid-century, huge factories such the Lowell mill in Document 9 were becoming more common. Slavery spread because of the cotton gin, as Document 3 makes clear. Millions of poor Irish immigrants entered the nation facing cruel prejudices such as those expressed in the cartoon in Document 11.

## Exercise 2

### Classifying Thesis Statements

The same five thesis statements you worked with in Exercise 1 are listed on the left below. On the right are five descriptions. Each is a description of one of the thesis statements on the left. In the spaces provided write the number of the thesis statement on the left that matches with its description on the right. Then as a class, discuss the reasons for the choices you make.

#### The Question

“The early Industrial Revolution in America did produce greater wealth and a chance for success for some. But mainly it reduced worker independence and caused great misery for most American workers.” Assess the validity of this statement.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Some workers had to take jobs in huge, impersonal factories. Farm girls left home to work in places like Lowell, hoping to find money or a more exciting life. Instead, they often worked thirteen hours a day and went home broken in health. They weren't much better off than the slaves. Meanwhile millions of immigrants faced insulting prejudice, though many did climb the ladder of success.</p> <p>2. In the early 1800s, a few Americans succeeded. But for most American workers, it is true, the Industrial Revolution meant a miserable life on the job earning low wages for long hours in factories, or even worse as slaves producing the cotton to supply those factories.</p> <p>3. The Industrial Revolution brought new machinery powered by steam, which vastly increased the amount of goods that could be produced. It changed workplaces from small shops to huge factories. It led to canals, roads, and railroads that tied the nation together, making it one huge national economy. The Industrial Revolution changed America forever.</p> <p>4. The statement is too extreme. The Industrial Revolution in America did cause older craft workers to lose some independence. Also, conditions in many factories were often terrible. However, jobs in factories and the cities meant, if anything, more freedom and more income for millions leaving rural family farms—as well as for millions of desperate immigrants.</p> <p>5. Crafts workers such as those shown in Document 2 often worked at home in the late 1700s and early 1800s. By mid-century, huge factories such the Lowell mill in Document 9 were becoming more common. Slavery spread because of the cotton gin, as Document 3 makes clear. Millions of poor Irish immigrants entered the nation facing cruel prejudices such as those expressed in the cartoon in Document 11.</p> | <p>A. A thesis is stated, but it is about the Industrial Revolution in general and the overall changes it brought. This thesis does NOT respond to or assess the specific statement made in the DBQ.<br/><b>Best Describes Thesis Statement</b> _____</p> <p>B. Many of the primary sources are identified specifically, and details in them are described. But since no clear thesis is presented, these details are wasted. That is, they are not used as evidence to “assess the validity” of the statement in the DBQ.<br/><b>Best Describes Thesis Statement</b> _____</p> <p>C. A clear thesis is provided. It mainly denies the validity of the statement in the DBQ as too one-sided.<br/><b>Best Describes Thesis Statement</b> _____</p> <p>D. No clear thesis is given. That is, there is no direct response agreeing or disagreeing with the DBQ statement. Instead a great many facts are stated. These might be true, but they are not used to support any clear answer to the DBQ.<br/><b>Best Describes Thesis Statement</b> _____</p> <p>E. A clear thesis is provided basically supporting the validity of the statement in the DBQ.<br/><b>Best Describes Thesis Statement</b> _____</p> |
|--|---|

## Exercise 3

### The Thesis Statement and the Sources

**If your thesis statement is a good one, you will be able to use it to organize your entire essay.**

It should also help you decide how to use the primary source documents provided along with the DBQ. This exercise gives you a chance to see how a thesis statement can help you in this way.

Below are two of the five thesis statements used in both Exercise 1 and Exercise 2. Your task is to see if these thesis statements do provide a good guide for deciding how to use the primary sources for this lesson. Of the two thesis statements, choose the one you agree with most. Then pick out five primary sources to support this thesis statement, using the primary sources for this lesson. In the spaces provided, identify your choices and write brief explanations of why you chose them. Discuss these choices in class.

**A.** *In the early 1800s, a few Americans succeeded. But for most American workers, it is true, the Industrial Revolution meant a miserable life on the job earning low wages for long hours in factories, or even worse as slaves producing the cotton to supply those factories.*

**B.** *The statement is too extreme. The Industrial Revolution in America did cause older craft workers to lose some independence. And conditions in many factories were often terrible. However, jobs in factories and the cities meant, if anything, more freedom and more income for millions leaving rural family farms—as well as for millions of desperate immigrants.*

**QUESTION A OR B (CIRCLE YOUR CHOICE)**

Doc. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Exercise 4

### Write a Three-Paragraph Essay

In this exercise you will write a complete essay using the thesis statement you chose for Exercise 3. Most effective DBQ essays will take more than three paragraphs, but this one is just for practice. It will start to give you an idea of how a full DBQ essay is organized. On the left are some guidelines for your three paragraphs. Follow these guidelines and use your notes from Exercise 3 to write this brief essay.

#### **Introductory Paragraph**

Include the thesis statement and any other ideas needed to clarify it.

#### **Middle Paragraph**

Use the most important ideas from your notes in Exercise 3 to back up the thesis statement here with evidence and reasons for your views.

#### **Concluding Paragraph**

Sum up the main points you have made and show how they back up the thesis statement you chose to use.

# Outlining and Planning the Essay Structure

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS

The sources for this lesson all focus on the more democratic spirit spreading in America after around 1820. This celebration of the common man, liberty, and opportunity crossed party lines and affected many areas of social life. The central figure symbolizing this shift in awareness was Andrew Jackson. The DBQ used in this lesson focuses on Jackson as president and as a symbol for a new era in American history.

The goal of the lesson is to provide students with some helpful strategies for taking notes and creating an outline for a DBQ essay. The time limits of a testing situation make this an especially difficult task. Students are usually anxious to begin writing and are nervous about devoting time to outlining. This is understandable, and it will rarely make sense to try to outline an essay in any elaborate way under such time constraints. Nevertheless, the tips provided in this lesson should help students take notes and sketch out an outline in an effective manner. If students do this, they are likely to find that the effort actually saves time when it comes to writing the essay itself.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. These should help students think more effectively about note taking and outlining. The concepts and strategies include the need to

1. Take notes quickly in “brainstorming” fashion,
2. Try to group or classify these notes as (1) main ideas, (2) details, facts or examples, or (3) explanations of details, facts and examples,
3. Become familiar with some typical essay-structure formats, and
4. Use these essay formats flexibly and adapt them to the specific DBQ and to the nature of the thesis to be developed.

## THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under “*A Republic, If You Can Keep It*,” *From Jackson to Lincoln*, and *Manifest Destiny*.

# Exercise 1

## Brainstorming Main Ideas, Details, and Explanations

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach a simple method for taking and organizing notes quickly in the few minutes normally available in a DBQ testing situation.

### Points to Make with Students

Normally during an exam with a DBQ essay, students have only a short time in which to read the question and the primary sources and to take a few notes. Not all students like taking notes in this setting. Some may not even need to. However, **a few notes and an outline of ideas can actually help save time during the actual writing.** In this exercise we focus on taking notes. In Exercise 2, students will use these notes to develop a simple outline.

These exercises present a three-part classification system for note taking, identified by the shorthand label of “**M-D-E.**” The core of any DBQ essay will be a few key subtopics or main ideas (**M**) that explain the essay’s thesis. Each main idea must be supported by details, facts, or examples (**D**). In turn, it is usually necessary to explain (**E**) how these details, facts, and examples contribute to each main idea or to the thesis.

The notes along the left side of the exercise sheet are already identified using this system, with the main ideas also indicated in bold. It’s unlikely anyone can take notes rapidly in as organized a fashion as this. We show the notes here this way simply to illustrate the classification system. You, however, should **stress that this system should be used flexibly as time permits.** The goal with such a system is to save time, not waste it. Encourage students to add as many notes as they can in the blank space on the right in just a few minutes. Urge them to think of a wide variety of other ideas, such as “Battle of New Orleans,” “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too,” “white manhood suffrage,” “Irish immigrants and foreign voters,” etc.

### Evaluating Student Responses

No evaluation of student notes is needed at this point. In Exercise 2, students will have more time to arrange their notes in an outline form.

## Exercise 2

### Organizing Your Notes

#### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students a simple method for organizing notes and outlining ideas quickly before writing a DBQ essay.

#### Points to Make with Students

This exercise shows students how to create a more organized outline using their notes from the brief brainstorming session in Exercise 1. That exercise's DBQ is again provided here. All the student has to do is come up with a thesis statement and an outline of two internal paragraphs supporting that thesis. The same **Main Idea-Details-Explanations** scheme is followed here. Guidelines based on it are provided along the left side of the exercise sheet. This outlining framework is certainly not the only one students might use. What is important is that they **get a sense of how to outline quickly and of how an outline of this sort can vastly simplify the task of actually writing the essay**. In other words, if done quickly and simply, note-taking and outlining can save time, not waste it.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

Students will continue to use their notes and their outline in later exercises for this lesson. For now, evaluate them simply on how many other notes they came up with in Exercise 1 and how logically they group all the notes into the outline headings provided in this exercise.

## Exercise 3

### Essay Structure: Some Typical Formats

#### Objectives for the Exercise

To teach students some standard formats for structuring a DBQ essay.

To teach them that the format they use must follow logically from the DBQ question type and the thesis statement.

#### Points to Make with Students

In the first two exercises, students worked with a very general and schematic outlining method. In answering any actual DBQ, this method obviously must be adapted in all kinds of ways. It is important to stress to students that **this outlining method should be an aid to them in organizing details, not a strict formula to be followed rigidly.**

**In varying the outlining for any essay, the most important factor to consider is the DBQ question type.** To make this clear, this exercise lists the same four question types as they were presented in Lesson 3. The question types are on the left. On the right, in boxes, are four possible outline formats for an entire DBQ essay. Each format fits best with one of the four question types. Students should match up each question type with its most suitable format.

All four formats begin with an introductory paragraph, which always includes the thesis, and end with a concluding paragraph. In between are several internal paragraphs that have the job of backing up the thesis with main ideas and details. It is these internal paragraphs that the formats describe in more detail. The formats are meant to describe basic patterns in the internal paragraphs of the essay, not their exact number.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

The match-ups of question type and essay format are as follows:

**Format A Question Type 3**

**Format B Question Type 4**

**Format C Question Type 2**

**Format D Question Type 1**

Discuss the match-ups with students. What is important is not simply for students to make these match-ups correctly but to see the logic of adapting the essay's structure in these ways to fit the DBQ.

# Exercise 4

## Using Your Outlining Skills

**Objective for the Exercise**

To give students a chance to use their notes and essay outlines to write part of a DBQ essay.

**Points to Make with Students**

All students need to do here is use their work from the first three exercises to help them construct a partial essay made up of an introductory paragraph (with a thesis statement) and two internal paragraphs. These should be based on the outlining done in Exercise 2. Stress to students that they should be able to write these paragraphs simply by elaborating each outline point with complete sentences. They should not need to come up with completely new concepts or explanations.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

These partial essays should be evaluated on the basis of how complete their Exercise 2 outlines were and how thoroughly they flesh out the ideas in those outlines. The next two lessons will elaborate on such things as the introductory paragraph, the use of transitional phrases and other ways to link ideas together logically, effective ways to refer to primary sources, etc. The goal with this exercise is simply to enable students to see how an effective outline can simplify the writing task.



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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand a few strategies for taking notes quickly to use in answering a DBQ.
  2. To see the value of deciding on a DBQ essay structure and to learn about a few typical formats for the essay's structure.
- 

# Outlining and Planning the Essay Structure

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES AND THE EXERCISES**

**INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

Ten primary sources are provided for this lesson, including cartoons, drawings, a song sheet, a poem, a journal entry, and a passage from a book. All touch on the development of the more democratic spirit spreading in America after around 1820. This celebration of the common man, liberty, and opportunity crossed party lines and affected many areas of social life. The DBQ for the lesson focuses on Andrew Jackson and why he was such a symbol for this new democratic spirit.

**PUTTING TOGETHER A COMPLETE ESSAY**

The first four lessons in this program focused on strategies and concepts that can help you interpret primary sources, understand what DBQs are, and help you get ready to write an essay answering a DBQ. The final four lessons will focus on the key tasks you face in organizing and writing your entire essay. These are:

- Lesson 5*     *Taking notes and creating a clear essay organization.*
- Lesson 6     Writing an effective introductory paragraph based on your thesis statement.
- Lesson 7     Writing the internal paragraphs of your essay and using transitions to link them together effectively.
- Lesson 8     Writing a strong conclusion.

**KEY CONCEPTS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will help you think about how to take notes and organize your essay.

1. Take notes quickly. If possible, identify them as **(1) main ideas or subtopics**, each of which supports your thesis; **(2) details, facts, or examples** that support one or another main idea or subtopic; and **(3) explanations** of the details, facts, or examples.
2. Learn a variety of **formats of different essay structures**. You should use the format that fits best with the type of DBQ you are asked. However, you should feel free to **alter or adapt the format** flexibly depending on the specific topic, facts, and sources.

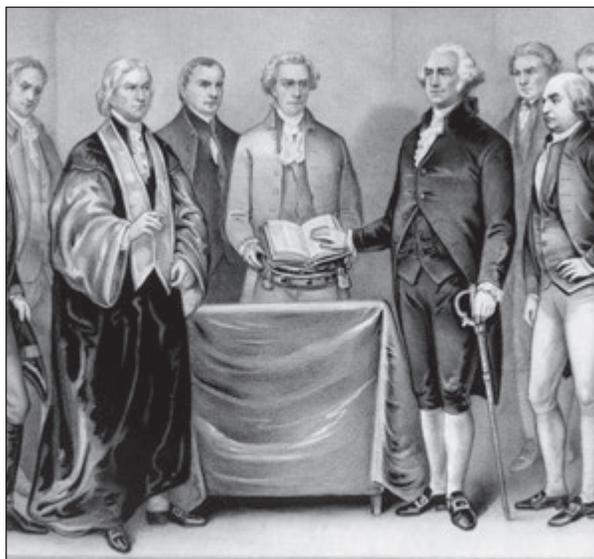
## The Documents

### Jackson and the Spirit of the “Common Man”

#### Document 1

George Washington being sworn in as president in 1792, from a *Currier and Ives* print of the mid-1800s.

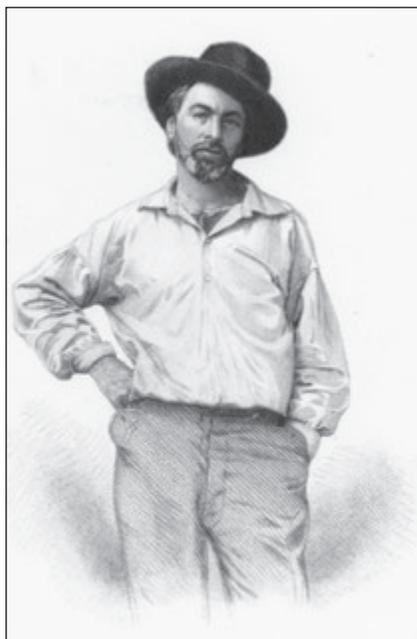
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 3

Poet Walt Whitman. This illustration appears in *Leaves of Grass* (1855).

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 2

Two caricatures of newly wealthy New Yorkers in the 1850s striving to appear and act like members of upper class society. The phrase “Upper Ten Thousand” jokingly echoes the phrase “Upper 400,” which was used then for New York’s actual upper class elite.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 4

I hear America Singing, the varied carols I hear,  
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe  
 and strong.  
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand  
 singing on the steamboat deck,  
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as  
 he stands,  
 The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the morning, or  
 at noon intermission or at sundown,  
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of  
 the girl sewing and washing,  
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
 The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows,  
 robust, friendly,  
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

*“I Hear America Singing,” by Walt Whitman, 1860.*

## The Documents



### Document 5

A famous 1876 *Currier & Ives* print showing how President Andrew Jackson as a young boy stood up to a British soldier during the Revolutionary War. The soldier had attacked young Andrew for refusing to clean his boots.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 7

Jackson rewarded many members of his political party with government jobs, a practice known as the spoils system. This cartoon criticizes the practice. Jackson defended it by claiming ordinary party members could easily do many government jobs.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 6

An editorial cartoon showing Jackson battling the Bank of the United States, which fought back against his refusal to support its recharter. Whatever the merits of the battle, Jackson came to be pictured as the champion of the common man and the West against wealthy Easterners, such as the bank's president Nicholas Biddle. Biddle is pictured here in a top hat as one of the bank monster's many heads.

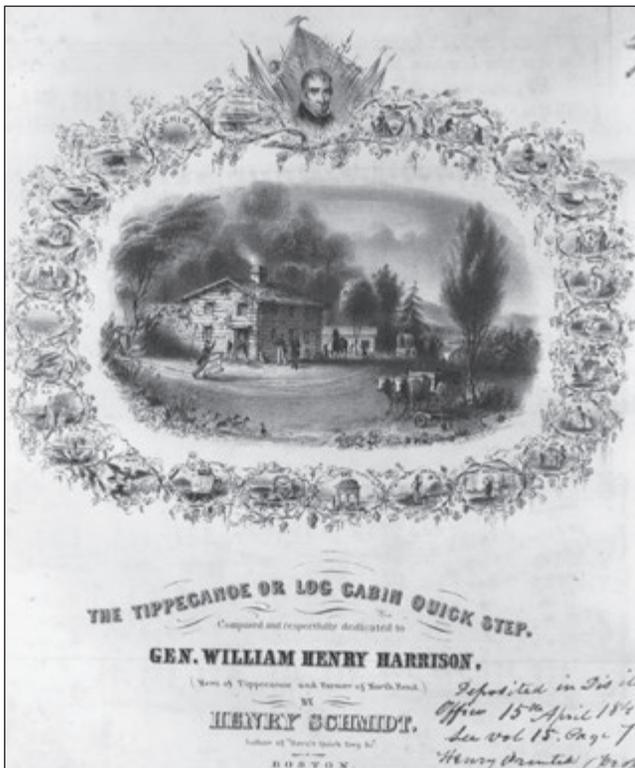
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents

### Document 8

Jackson's political party, the Democrats, held the presidency for his two terms (1829-1837) and for the one term of his vice president Martin Van Buren (1837-1841). In 1840, the opposing Whig Party finally won the presidency with candidate William Henry Harrison. They did this in part by taking over the Democrats' "common man" appeal—as in this song sheet picturing Harrison's supposed simple log cabin origins.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 10

"[The Whigs], the real life and strength of the American people, find themselves paralyzed and defeated everywhere by the hordes of ignorant and deceivable natives and the armies of foreign voters who fill Pennsylvania, New York and New Orleans. . . . The creators of wealth, and conscientious, rational and responsible persons, . . . find themselves degraded into observers, and violently turned out of all share in the actions and counsels of the nation."

*Ralph Waldo Emerson commenting in his Journal in 1845 on the dominance of the Democratic Party over the Whigs.*

### Document 9

"It is not impossible to conceive the surpassing liberty which the Americans enjoy; some idea may likewise be formed of the extreme equality which subsists among them; but the political activity which pervades the United States must be seen in order to be understood. No sooner do you set foot upon the American soil than you are stunned by a kind of tumult; a confused clamor is heard on every side; a thousand simultaneous voices demand the immediate satisfaction of their social wants. Everything is in motion around you; here, the people of one quarter of a town are met to decide upon the building of a church; there, the election of a representative is going on; a little farther, the delegates of a district are posting to the town in order to consult upon some local improvements; or, in another place, the laborers of a village quit their ploughs to deliberate upon the project of a road or a public school. Meetings are called for the sole purpose of declaring their disapprobation of the line of conduct pursued by the Government; while in other assemblies the citizens salute the authorities of the day as the fathers of their country. Societies are formed which regard drunkenness as the principal cause of the evils under which the State labors, and which solemnly bind themselves to give a constant example of temperance.

"The great political agitation of the American legislative bodies, which is the only kind of excitement that attracts the attention of foreign countries, is a mere episode or a sort of continuation of that universal movement which originates in the lowest classes of the people and extends successively to all the ranks of society. It is impossible to spend more efforts in the pursuit of enjoyment."

*French author Alexis de Tocqueville. The passage is from Democracy in America, 1835, a book based on de Tocqueville's travels in America in the early 1830s.*

## Exercise 1

### Brainstorming Main Ideas, Details, and Explanations

Before you start to write a DBQ essay, you need to look over the primary sources. As you do, it helps to take notes. You only have minutes to do this, but it can actually SAVE you time. Do it in a “brainstorming” fashion, jotting down words and phrases as you think of them. As you take notes, keep this in mind: A good DBQ essay includes your thesis as well as paragraphs with the following three kinds of statements:

- (M) A few main ideas or subtopics supporting the thesis.**
- (D) Details, facts, or examples supporting the main ideas or subtopics.**
- (E) Explanations or general statements about the details, facts, or examples.**

In the box is a DBQ based on the sources for this lesson. Below it are a few notes about the DBQ and the primary sources. Each note is labeled as either **(M)** for “main idea or subtopic,” **(D)** for a “detail, fact, or example,” or **(E)** for “explanation of a detail, fact, or example.” They’ve been arranged in order here and labeled. We realize that in a test situation, you can’t jot notes quickly in this organized way. We only show them this way here so that you can see how this **M-D-E** system looks in practice.

Now, for about ten minutes, add as many notes as you can in the blank area provided on the right. Then see how many of your own notes you can label using this same **M-D-E** lettering system.

**You will use all of these notes in Exercise 2**

**The Question:**  
 “Andrew Jackson’s popularity was due less to what he did as president than to his image as a ‘man of the people’ at a time when democracy and the common man were being celebrated as never before.” Assess the validity of this statement.

Add some notes of your own here . . .

**Ideas about leadership (M)**  
 Virginia Dynasty ends (D)  
 Whitman celebrates common people (D)      poking fun at newly rich dandies (D)  
 Older aristocratic elites now disliked (E)

**Jackson’s image as dem. leader (M)**  
 military hero (D)      bravery even as boy (D)  
    takes on bank, wealthy. (D)  
 adds up to Jackson’s image as hero and man of the people (E)

General spirit of the age (M)  
 Tocqueville’s views (D)      Transcendentalists (D)  
 Even Whigs use common man image (D)      spoils -- ordinary people in politics (D)  
 Great faith in abilities of ordinary citizens (E)

## Exercise 2

### Organizing Your Notes

Use your notes from Exercise 1 for this activity to create a more organized outline for part of an essay on the DBQ from that exercise. The DBQ is repeated here. All you need to do is come up with a brief thesis statement (see Lesson 4) and an outline of TWO main ideas supporting your thesis statement. Along the left side of the sheet below are guidelines based on the three-part classification system presented in Exercise 1 (**Main Idea-Details-Explanations**). Follow these guidelines in creating your partial outline.

**In Exercise 4, you will have a chance to write a partial essay based on this outline.**

**The Question:**

“Andrew Jackson’s popularity was due less to what he did as president than to his image as a ‘man of the people’ at a time when democracy and the common man were being celebrated as never before.” Assess the validity of this statement.

**Use this space to fill in your outline.**

**Thesis Statement:****1. Main Idea or Subtopic**

Should be a key idea that you think helps to prove the thesis.

**Details, Facts, or Examples**

Details or primary sources that prove or support the main idea or subtopic listed above.

**Explanations of Details or Facts**

Brief ideas showing why the details, facts, examples, or primary sources back up the main idea listed above.

**2. Main Idea or Subtopic**

Should be a key idea that you think helps to prove the thesis.

**Details, Facts, or Examples**

Details or primary sources that prove or support the main idea or subtopic listed above.

**Explanations of Details or Facts**

Brief ideas showing why the details, facts, examples, or primary sources back up the main idea listed above.

## Exercise 3

### Essay Structure: Some Typical Formats

As you take notes for a DBQ, you should also think about the overall structure of your essay. By **“structure,” we mean the way all the paragraphs in your essay are organized.** Four essay-structure formats are summarized in the boxes below. All of them follow this basic pattern: (1) an introductory paragraph presents the thesis, (2) two or more internal paragraphs present the main ideas and key points, and (3) a final paragraph concludes. The only thing that changes is how the internal paragraphs are organized.

**Which essay format you choose depends on the type of question you have been asked.** On the left are the four question types you studied in Lesson 3. In the spaces provided in the boxes on the right, indicate the question type best suited to the essay format described. As a class, discuss your choices.

#### QUESTION TYPES

##### 1. “Assess the Validity”

As in this question: *“The colonists could not have won the Revolutionary War without the leadership of General Washington.” Assess the validity of this statement.*

##### 2. “Compare and Contrast”

As in: *Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the colonists and the British in the American Revolution.*

##### 3. “Explain Why” or “Explain to What Extent”

As in: *Explain why the colonists won the Revolution in spite of Great Britain’s superior numbers and military strength.*

##### 4. “Describe the Changes” or “Describe and Explain”

As in: *Describe how colonial attitudes toward the British shifted from 1763 to 1776, and explain why these changes took place.*

#### Essay-Structure Formats

##### Format A Question Type \_\_\_\_\_

##### Introductory Paragraph - Thesis

##### Internal Paragraphs:

- “One reason or factor . . .” (back with details and explanations).
- “Another reason or factor . . .” (back with details and explanations).
- “Perhaps the most important reason or factor . . .” (back with details and explanations).

##### Concluding Paragraph

##### Format B Question Type \_\_\_\_\_

##### Introductory Paragraph - Thesis

##### Internal Paragraphs:

- “First this key event or development took place . . .” (back with details and explanations).
- “Then this occurred . . .” (back with details and explanations).
- “Finally this happened, . . .” (back with details and explanations).

##### Concluding Paragraph

##### Format C Question Type \_\_\_\_\_

##### Introductory Paragraph - Thesis

##### Internal Paragraphs:

- Similarities between two things . . . (back with details and explanations).
- Differences between two things . . . (back with details and explanations).

##### Concluding Paragraph

##### Format D Question Type \_\_\_\_\_

##### Introductory Paragraph - Thesis

##### Internal Paragraphs:

- “I disagree (or agree) because . . .” (back with details and explanations).
- “On the other hand, it is true that . . .” (back with details and explanations).

##### Concluding Paragraph

## Exercise 4

### Using Your Outlining Skills

Here is a chance to use the work you have done in all three previous exercises. Look back over your notes from Exercise 1 and Exercise 2. Re-read the DBQ (it is presented here again). Also, look over Exercise 3 and think about the essay format that would be best given the DBQ and your thesis statement. Now, write a partial DBQ essay made up of one introductory paragraph (this is where your thesis statement goes) and the two internal paragraphs you outlined in Exercise 2.

**The Question:**

“Andrew Jackson’s popularity was due less to what he did as president than to his image as a ‘man of the people’ at a time when democracy and the common man were being celebrated as never before.” Assess the validity of this statement.

# Writing the Introductory Paragraph

## **INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS**

The primary source documents for this lesson all deal with changes in women’s actual roles and changing ideas about women’s proper role from around 1750 to 1850. They focus on women in the emerging factory system and the strains that economic and social change placed on domestic life and on traditional notions of women’s place in the family.

The purpose of the lesson is to teach students a set of guidelines for constructing an effective introductory paragraph. It is this paragraph above all that gives overall direction to a DBQ essay—or any other history essay. The introductory paragraph should help the reader anticipate the entire pattern of the essay and the line of argument it will present. A well-constructed introductory paragraph should also help guide the student writers as they work on the rest of the essay.

## **KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES**

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. These should help students understand the basic purpose of the introductory paragraph. The concepts and strategies stress that an introductory paragraph should

1. Restate the topic or DBQ and set it in context,
2. State a clear thesis in direct response to the entire DBQ,
3. Perhaps hint at the essay’s overall plan for supporting the thesis, and
4. AVOID going into details or explanations that belong in the body of the essay.

## **THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS**

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *Colonial America in the 18th Century*, *The Witches of Salem*, *Lowell*, *The Industrial Revolution in the Early Republic*, and “*A Complete Emancipation*.”

# Exercise 1

## Analyzing Introductory Paragraphs

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students that the introductory paragraph of the DBQ essay basically presents and clarifies the thesis statement.

### Points to Make with Students

The typical DBQ essay consists of an introductory paragraph, several internal paragraphs, and a conclusion. The internal paragraphs provide the detailed evidence and arguments supporting the thesis. But sometimes students plunge ahead with the details immediately in the first paragraph. They need to see how confusing this can be—and how writing generally has to be much more explicit than speech. The introductory paragraph is a place where writers must be VERY explicit about the topic and their stance on it.

This means **the central task of the introductory paragraph is to present and clarify the thesis statement.** In some cases, the thesis statement alone may be all that is needed—for example, when the thesis itself adequately identifies the time period, the topic and the question asked. Otherwise, **it may help to reword the topic or DBQ, provide background context for it, state the thesis, and then hint at the main points backing up that thesis.** We say “hint” since students should NOT go into detail or tell us what they will be telling us later (as in such infamous phrases as, “I will now prove that. . .,” etc.).

### Evaluating Student Responses

In this exercise, five introductory paragraphs are provided as models, both good and bad. All of the paragraphs respond to the same DBQ, which is shown in the box on the exercise worksheet. Warn students that some of the paragraphs may not even have a clear thesis statement or any hints as to how that thesis will be proved. Students should use their notes and answers to discuss the paragraphs and make their own judgments about them. Just let them express their ideas. There is no need to evaluate their responses rigorously. You’ll have a chance to do that in the next exercise, where the same five paragraphs are used again.

## Exercise 2

### Choosing an Introductory Paragraph

#### Objective for the Exercise

To give students a chance to analyze several introductory paragraphs and judge them according to a simple set of standards.

#### Points to Make with Students

Having read and discussed the five paragraphs for Exercise 1, students are now asked to choose the best and the worst of them. Urge students to make this choice using the standards highlighted in bold in the instructions for Exercise 1. Those standards suggest that students do the following in the introductory paragraph:

- **Describe the overall topic, or reword the DBQ and give it context.**
- **State their thesis clearly as an answer or direct response to the DBQ.**
- **Perhaps hint at their main points or their approach in backing up the thesis.**
- **Do NOT go into details and explanations that will be used to support the thesis.**

Using these standards, students should choose what they regard as the single best and single worst of the five introductory paragraphs and defend their choices in writing.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

##### **Introductory Paragraph 1** (Unacceptable)

Several primary sources are described, but they deal only with the first part of the DBQ, about the way women's lives were changing. They do not deal with attitudes about women's proper role. At the end of the paragraph, a promise to do this is made, but this is not itself a thesis statement. The details about sources should have been saved for the essay's internal paragraphs. Finally, phrases about what will be shown later are just distracting.

##### **Introductory Paragraph 2** (Acceptable)

The first three sentences clarify and provide context for the entire DBQ. The next three sentences together make up a complex thesis statement that also hints at three main ideas to be developed in the body of the essay.

##### **Introductory Paragraph 3** (Unacceptable)

Vague references are made to changing attitudes about women's proper role, but not to what the changes were. Instead, the paragraph mainly describes in detail a single event, perhaps because the student knows a good deal about it.

##### **Introductory Paragraph 4** (Unacceptable)

A thesis is presented. However, it seems related only to the first part of the DBQ. That is, it is a thesis about why women's lives were changing so rapidly in the early 1800s. No mention is made of the impact of those changes on views about women's proper role.

##### **Introductory Paragraph 5** (Acceptable)

The first two sentences provide context for the first part of the DBQ, about how and why women's lives were changing. The next four sentences together are a thesis addressing the DBQ question itself. The thesis differs from the one in Paragraph 2, but it also hints at how the thesis will be supported (by looking at women's attitudes and then at men's).

## Exercise 3

### Completing an Essay Using One Introductory Paragraph

**Objective for the Exercise**

To give students additional practice at writing a complete essay based on a clearly stated thesis and an effective introductory paragraph.

**Points to Make with Students**

Students are again given a chance here to write a brief essay answering a DBQ. This time, they can use the introductory paragraph they chose in the previous exercise. If they did not choose either Paragraph 2 or Paragraph 5, you might want to urge them to do so for this exercise, since those are clearly the best paragraphs to use.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

We recommend that you continue to use the simplified DBQ scoring guide from Lesson 3, Exercise 5 in judging the quality of the brief essays students do in this exercise. A more complete scoring guide will be provided in the next lesson.

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the key role played by the introductory paragraph in giving direction and focus to your essay.
  2. To focus on a few key elements that go into writing an effective introductory paragraph.
- 

# Writing the Introductory Paragraph

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES**
**INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

The ten primary source documents for this lesson all deal with the changing roles women played in American life from late colonial times to the Civil War. The sources include book covers, drawings, cartoons, advertisements, speeches, and letters. They deal with actual changes in women's roles as well as with changing ideas about what women's proper role should be. Therefore, the DBQ used in the exercises will also focus on both of these themes.

**PUTTING TOGETHER  
A COMPLETE ESSAY**

Keep in mind that the final four lessons in this program are the ones that focus on the key tasks in organizing and writing an entire essay. Here is where you are in this sequence of lessons:

- Lesson 5      Taking notes and creating a clear essay organization.
- Lesson 6      Writing an effective introductory paragraph based on your thesis statement.*
- Lesson 7      Writing the internal paragraphs of your essay and using transitions to link them together effectively.
- Lesson 8      Writing a strong conclusion.

**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will help you think about how to write the most important paragraph of your DBQ essay, the introductory paragraph.

1. The introductory paragraph should **restate the topic or DBQ in your own words**; it should **present your thesis** simply and clearly; and it may also **hint at the few key ideas or points you will develop** in detail in the rest of the essay.
2. **The introductory paragraph should NOT develop in detail your main ideas or supporting details or explanations.** Save these for the internal paragraphs of the essay. Make few if any specific references to the primary sources. Your goal should be to set the scene and introduce the main themes in your essay.

## The Documents

### The Changing Role of Women in Early American Life



#### Document 1

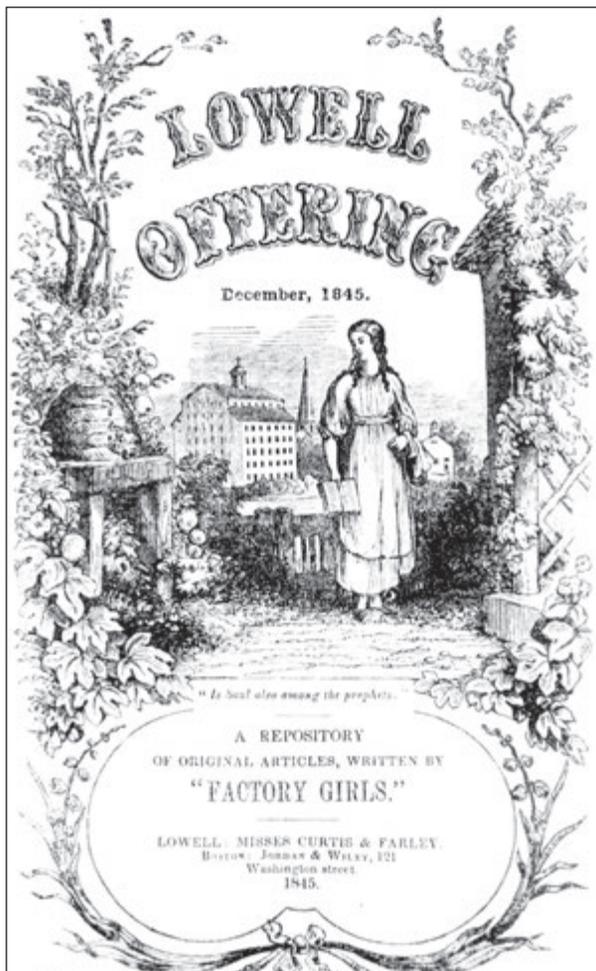
Women sharing the demanding duties of home life, and overcoming isolation as well, in a quilting bee in colonial America sometime in the 1700s.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*

#### Document 2

The position of single women and elderly widows in colonial times could be uncertain. Such women were often objects of both pity and fear.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 3

The *Lowell Offering*, a literary magazine in the 1840s, published stories, articles, and poems by the factory girls of Lowell, Massachusetts. The girls worked in Lowell's textile mills and lived in the supervised dorms of this planned industrial community.

*American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA*

## The Documents

### Document 4

“That nature designed for our sex the care of children, she has made manifest by mental as well as physical indications. She has given us, in a greater degree than men, the gentle arts of insinuation to soften their minds and fit them to receive impressions; a greater quickness of invention to vary modes of teaching to different dispositions; and more patience to make repeated efforts. . . . If, then, women were properly fitted by instruction, they would be likely to teach children better than the other sex; they could afford to do it cheaper; and those men who would otherwise be engaged in this employment might be at liberty to add to the wealth of the nation, by any of those thousand occupations from which women are necessarily debarred. . . .

“In those great republics which have fallen of themselves, the loss of republican manners and virtues has been the invariable precursor of their loss of the republican form of government. But is it not the power of our sex to give society its tone, both as to manners and morals? And if such is the extent of female influence, is it wonderful that republics have failed when they calmly suffered that influence to become enlisted in favor of luxuries and follies wholly incompatible with the existence of freedom?”

*Emma Hart Willard in her “Address to the Public; Particularly to the Members of the Legislature of New York, Proposing a Plan for Improving Female Education in 1819.” Willard later became head of the Troy Female Seminary.*

### Document 6

A mid-1800s ad for soap. It appeals to women by contrasting home life during “Old Washing Day” with an ideal of home life once “New Washing Day” arrives.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

### Document 5

For a while, Elias Howe’s new sewing machine (patented 1846) was used within the “putting out” system by (mainly female) workers in their homes. But soon they were working with it in factory settings as well.

*Courtesy of Dover Publications*



**AMERICAN SOAP COMPANY**  
 DEPOT  
 284 Washington-street,  
 Between Warren and Chambers Street,  
 NEW YORK.

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE! THEN ON THIS!

**THE OLD WASHING DAY**      **THE NEW WASHING DAY**

AMERICAN LAUNDRY SOAP, MANUFACTURER'S SOAP, CREAM SOAP, PREPARATION.

MANUFACTURERS OF **AMERICAN CREAM SOAP**

AMERICAN TOILET SOAP, SHAVING SOAP, IMPROVED TRANSPARENT SOAP.

**FOR WASHING, BLEACHING AND CLEANSING.**

And is decidedly the best article for *Labour Saving, Time Saving & Clothes Saving ever discovered* so presented to the public as an article without competition. It saves in time in the first instance, by simply *Soaking* the Clothes for a short time (Without Boiling) in a *Hot* of Cold Water, (either Boiling, Warm or Hot) with a *Small* quantity of this Preparation, with an *invaluable* small amount of Lye.

**FUEL IS ENTIRELY DISPENSED WITH.**

It cleans and softens the fabric as usually obtained, and is equally *Softening* in its action. It does not change the color of the fabric, and it will not injure any *Fine* fabric. It is the *only* article that does not *stain* the fabric. It will remove all spots from *Wool, Silks, Linens, or Flax*, and make them bright as new.

For Sale by Grocers generally in City & Country. All orders must be addressed to  
 Premium Awarded at the late Fair of the American Institute, N. Y.  
**COWLES & CO. Proprietors.**  
 284 WASHINGTON STREET,  
 COPYRIGHT SECURED, A. D. 1861.

## The Documents

### Document 7

“We invite your attention to the dangers which at present seem to threaten the female character with wide-spread and permanent injury.

“The appropriate duties and influence of woman are clearly stated in the New Testament. Those duties and that influence are unobtrusive and private, but the sources of mighty power. When the mild, dependent, softening influences of woman upon the sternness of man’s opinions is fully exercised, society feels the effects of it in a thousands forms. The power of woman is her dependence, flowing from the consciousness of that weakness which God has given her for her protection, and which keeps her in those departments of life that form the character of individuals and of the nation. These are social influences which females use in promoting piety and the great objects of Christian benevolence which we can not too highly commend.

“ . . . But when she assumes the place and tone of man as a public reformer, our care and protection of her seem unnecessary; we put ourselves in self-defense against her; she yields the power which God has given her for her protection, and her character becomes unnatural.”

*Part of an 1837 “Pastoral Letter” by Reverend Dr. Nehemiah Adams of Boston, Massachusetts objecting to women speaking at anti-slavery meetings attended by mixed audiences of men and women.*

### Document 9

“That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any place! And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm. I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?”

*Freed slave Sojourner Truth as recorded addressing the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention in Akron in 1851.*

### Document 8

An editorial cartoon captioned “The Age of Brass.” It is a critic’s view of the women’s rights movement in the years just after its famous meeting at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. At that meeting, women called for equal rights, including the right to vote.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 10

A delegate with a group of female suffragists addresses the House Judiciary Committee in 1871. The group was urging the Congressmen to support women’s voting rights.

*Courtesy of the National Archives*



## Exercise 1

### Analyzing Introductory Paragraphs

The introductory paragraph is often the most important part of a DBQ essay. In it, you should re-state the DBQ topic or question in your own words and offer any background information needed to clarify it. You must present a clear thesis or answer to the DBQ. And you may want to hint at how you will back up your thesis. But if you do, avoid phrases such as, “I will prove that . . .,” etc. Usually such sentences just repeat details that will appear later in the essay as well. Your goal instead should only be to suggest broadly how you will support your thesis. To sum up, do the following in your introductory paragraph:

- **Describe the overall topic, or reword the DBQ, and give it context.**
- **State the thesis clearly as an answer or direct response to the DBQ.**
- **Perhaps hint at your main points or your approach in backing up the thesis.**
- **Do NOT go into details and explanations that will be used to support the thesis.**

For this two-page exercise, you will evaluate five introductory paragraphs. Each responds to the DBQ presented in the box. Read the DBQ and each introductory paragraph carefully. Then answer the questions following each paragraph. In class, discuss your answers.

**You will use these same five introductory paragraphs in Exercise 2.**

#### **Instructions: Document-Based Essay**

This question is based on the ten documents for this lesson. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and any point of view presented in it. Using information from the documents, and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay answering the following DBQ.

#### **Historical Context**

Sweeping political, social, and economic changes took place in the United States from the mid-1700s into the mid-1800s. These changes affected all sorts of people in many different ways. Women’s lives changed as did views about women’s proper role.

#### **The Question**

Women’s lives in America changed in many ways from the mid-1700s up until the mid-1800s. Explain how these changes affected views about the proper role of women in society.

#### **Introductory Paragraph 1**

Women in colonial times were mainly at home doing chores. The community sometimes helped them, as the quilting bee illustration in Document 1 shows. However, “The Old Maid” of Document 2 was the fate of all too many women late in life. Life changed rapidly between the mid-1700s and the mid-1800s, as the rest of this essay will make very clear. Factories and cities grew rapidly. At Lowell, girls worked long hours, but, as Document 3 shows, they at least had a chance to learn and express themselves creatively. The long dull hours of sewing in the factory shown in Document 5 were probably more commonly what female workers faced. For women at home, new products may have made life better, although the advertisement in Document 6 probably exaggerates this. Now let’s see how people felt about these changes.

**1. Can you find a thesis statement here? If so, underline the sentence or key phrases in it.**

**2. What phrases or sentences, if any, show how the writer of the paragraph will prove a thesis?**

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## Exercise 1 (Continued)

### Analyzing Introductory Paragraphs

#### Introductory Paragraph 2

From 1750 to 1850, America went from a group of colonies to an expanding and increasingly democratic nation. Also, the beginning of the Industrial Revolution transformed work life and family life. These changes presented problems and opportunities to both men and women, and these in turn affected views about women's proper role in varying ways. Some people came to support a more independent role for women outside the home as well as in it. Others feared and resisted this idea. And still others sought a middle way—to give women more liberty while preserving her unique nature or special role in the family.

1. Can you find a thesis statement? If so, underline the sentence or key phrases in it.
2. What phrases or sentences, if any, show how the writer of the paragraph will prove a thesis?

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#### Introductory Paragraph 3

By the mid-1800s, attitudes about the proper role of women in American life were changing. The famous women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 was a key turning point in this. There, the delegates called for women to have more economic rights over their lives and property as well as equal political rights—including the right to vote. Not everyone there supported this last one, however. And this shows that while attitudes were changing, a lot of doubts about women's proper role in society remained.

1. Can you find a thesis statement? If so, underline the sentence or key phrases in it.
2. What phrases or sentences, if any, show how the writer of the paragraph will prove a thesis?

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#### Introductory Paragraph 4

In the late 1700s, the colonies won their independence and created a new democratic nation. These political changes had a big effect on women. In time, they led women to demand their own equal rights. But there were other big factors changing women's lives. Among them were the Industrial Revolution and the growth of the nation. Cities, new technology, and factories changed the way millions of women lived, even those who did not work outside the home directly.

1. Can you find a thesis statement? If so, underline the sentence or key phrases in it.
2. What phrases or sentences, if any, show how the writer of the paragraph will prove a thesis?

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#### Introductory Paragraph 5

By the early 1800s, social and economic changes were causing new tensions between men and women. The changes had to do with politics (democracy) and economics (factories and cities). These changes gave women new ideas about their role in society, and they began fighting for more rights inside and outside the home. But many men reacted against these changes. They still saw women as uniquely domestic creatures. Each of these opposing viewpoints were reactions to the rapid changes taking place.

1. Can you find a thesis statement? If so, underline the sentence or key phrases in it.
2. What phrases or sentences, if any, show how the writer of the paragraph will prove a thesis?

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## Exercise 3

### Completing an Essay Using One Introductory Paragraph

In Exercise 2, you chose what you saw as the best introductory paragraph from a group of five. Are you still satisfied with your choice? If so, copy that paragraph in the space below and complete an entire DBQ essay supporting the ideas in that introductory paragraph. If you have changed your mind, choose one of the other four introductory paragraphs and use it as the start of a complete DBQ essay of your own. (Use additional sheets for your essay if you need to.)

**The Question**

Women's lives in America changed in many ways from the mid-1700s up until the mid-1800s. Explain how these changes affected views about the proper role of women in society.

# Writing and Linking Support Paragraphs

## **INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS**

The primary sources for this lesson all have to do with the way Americans in the early nineteenth century thought about the western lands beyond the Mississippi River. A key focus is on the growing spirit of “Manifest Destiny” that gripped the nation in the mid-1800s, especially in connection with the Mexican War and the territorial expansion to which it led.

The purpose of the lesson is to focus student attention on the internal paragraphs of the various history essays they will be called on to write. Special attention is given to various ways of linking ideas within and between paragraphs, including the use of transitional words and phrases. The goal is to help students see that the logic of their argument must be made explicit and easy to follow. Simple sentences, clear organization, and a careful use of transitional phrases and other linking words are the key to doing this effectively.

The internal paragraphs are where the bulk of the references to the primary sources will be made in any effective DBQ essay. Some time is devoted here to looking at acceptable and unacceptable ways of using the primary sources.

## **KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES**

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. These should help students think more effectively about the internal paragraphs of the essay. These internal paragraphs are the place to make the detailed case in support of the thesis. The concepts and strategies include the need to

1. Link details logically within and between paragraphs,
2. Use transition phrases effectively,
3. Use primary sources to support the thesis or other main ideas (avoid a “laundry list” manner of referring to the sources), and
4. Keep sentence and paragraph structure simple, in part by using the “Main Ideas-Details-Explanations” system presented in Lesson 5.

## **THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS**

Images for the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *The Journey of Lewis and Clark* and *Manifest Destiny*.

# Exercise 1

## Using Transitional Phrases

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students to recognize the importance of transitional phrases and other linking words as tools for connecting ideas within and between paragraphs.

### Points to Make with Students

The focus of this exercise is on the use of certain transitional words and phrases in linking together sentences and paragraphs. But the goal is not to have students memorize a master list of these words and phrases. It is more important that they see how transitional words work as markers indicating the logical connections between ideas. **What makes transitional phrases important is their role in making the logic of an argument clear.**

The paragraph for this exercise, for example, is based on a “compare and contrast” type of logic. That is, the jumbled paragraph (see the corrected version below) basically compares and contrasts two groups, those favoring and those opposing the idea of “Manifest Destiny.” A close attention to transitional phrases should help students unravel the paragraph, though doing so will still be a challenge. Phrases such as, “On the one hand,” “In general,” “For example,” “On the other hand,” or “Another group,” help indicate which of the two sides is being described. Students should also pay attention to pronouns (“They,” “Others,” “Those who,” etc.) linking one sentence with a previous one. The point to stress is that the logic of the paragraph can only be made clear through the careful use of these transitional markers.

### Evaluating Student Responses

#### Sample Paragraph: Correct Order

In 1845, John Louis O’Sullivan wrote, “Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” In general, Sullivan’s concept of manifest destiny was very popular. For example, it was certainly popular with those who favored the annexation of Texas that year. Others likely to favor it were the many settlers heading west. And also there were the idealists who saw the United States as a uniquely free nation whose growth would be good for all of humanity. On the other hand, not everyone liked the idea of Manifest Destiny. One group with doubts about it were the abolitionists opposed to slavery. They opposed the annexation of Texas, a slave state, as a boon to slave owners, not ordinary settlers. Another group opposed to Manifest Destiny, obviously, were the native tribes. They were often seen merely as obstacles to be overcome in the grand march westward. For indigenous people and African Americans, therefore, the reality of Manifest Destiny offered little hope.

## Exercise 2

### Types of Transitional Links

#### Objective for the Exercise

To give students further insight into the relationship between transitional phrases and the logic of the argument the essay seeks to make.

#### Points to Make with Students

This exercise further develops the ideas from Exercise 1. It does this by presenting the student with four sets of transitional words and phrases. Each set has to do with one particular kind of logical structure common in a DBQ or other history essay.

These are not the only ways such transitional phrases could be classified. They are only offered here to help students see that **transitional phrases are important tools for making the logic of the essay's argument clear**. Students can learn two important strategies from this insight. First, the need to think about the types of logical arguments that various DBQs will require. Secondly, the need to see how vital it is for the logical connections in an essay to be clear. Transitional words and phrases are a key tool in accomplishing this latter task.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

Below are suggested solutions to the four paragraphs (other solutions are possible).

##### Sample Paragraph 1 (Chronological)

Throughout the 19th century, the lands west of the Mississippi fascinated Americans.

At First, trappers and mountain men were a source of tiny scraps of information. Next, explorers such as Lewis and Clark provided rich and detailed reports. After that, a small trickle of pioneers grew into a mighty flood along the Oregon Trail and other routes west.

Then finally, with the Mexican War and the Oregon settlement, the United States took control of the entire region all the way to the Pacific.

##### Sample Paragraph 2 (Cause and Effect)

The 1840s were a time when support for manifest destiny seemed to reach a high point. Why the 1840s? To begin with, before the 1840s, plenty of room east of Mississippi remained to be settled. Also, the economic hard times of the 1830s kept expansion fever down. But then, in the 1840s, interest in the West soared. One factor explaining this was population growth, which led more and more Americans to head west. Also, overland routes such as the Oregon Trail made the trip west easier. Finally, troubles with Mexico led to a growing drum beat for war and conquest. Together, all these factors combined to bring about a huge demand to spread the flag from shore to shore.

## Exercise 2 (Continued)

### Types of Transitional Links

#### Sample Paragraph 3 (Order of Importance)

The Lewis and Clark expedition is still regarded as a major event in our history. For one thing, it was an amazing feat of planning and sheer physical endurance, and the account of it made a dramatic and entertaining story. More important, it finally mapped in fairly good detail an overland route west to the Pacific. This would prove valuable to many who would follow later. Most important of all, it resulted in endless discoveries about the flora and fauna, topographical features, and the many native cultures inhabiting these regions, all reported in detail in the amazing journals of Meriwether Lewis.

#### Sample Paragraph 4 (Compare and Contrast)

Was the idea of Manifest Destiny an expression of greed and arrogance? Or was it a more idealistic desire to spread the benefits of liberty and civilization across the land? On the one hand, those who backed the idea rarely cared much about those standing in their way, such as the native people of the plains and mountains. Moreover, they were not bothered by the fact that the annexation of Texas and the conquests of the Mexican War allowed slavery to expand. Finally, what about the way the Mexicans themselves were treated? How much idealism was shown toward them, even by such “idealists” as Walt Whitman? On the other hand, supporters of Manifest Destiny did believe they were spreading “liberty, civilization, and refinements,” as John L. O’Sullivan put it. Also, they saw thousands of immigrants arriving in search of a better life, escaping what seemed to be dying aristocratic societies. To them, the West was a vast, empty region divinely given to help raise up a better and nobler civilization. And finally, as harsh as Walt Whitman’s words sound, he was right that Mexico was not as free a nation. At least that was what he and many other Americans sincerely believed. And that is why they believed as well that God was behind them and America’s “Manifest Destiny.”

## Exercise 3

### Dealing with Primary Source Documents

#### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students to think carefully about the way they use primary source documents to support their thesis and the main ideas in their essays.

#### Points to Make with Students

**Students should refer to the primary sources almost entirely in the internal paragraphs of their essays.** That is where they will present detailed evidence for their thesis and the main ideas supporting it. A common mistake students make is to mention sources carelessly, with little effort to explain their connection to the thesis or any major idea. This exercise offers students contrasting models of correct and incorrect ways of referring to primary sources. With these models in mind, students should have a better sense of how to use primary sources effectively.

#### Evaluating Student Responses

##### Paragraph 1 A Poor Use of the Sources

This paragraph is mainly a string of references to the sources, with little detail as to their actual content and almost no explanation of how they help to answer the question. Eight documents in all are referred to superficially and quickly. The writer only relates three of these (Documents 6, 9, and 10) even vaguely to the question the paragraph is supposed to address. Even with these, there is no real analysis of the content of the documents. In general, all of these many references to the documents only leave the reader confused as to what the paragraph's main point is.

##### Paragraph 2 A Good Use of the Sources

This paragraph clearly addresses the question. Since this question calls for a comparison of two broad views, the paragraph is organized with this requirement in mind. Here, only three documents are referred to directly. But in this case, their meaning is carefully analyzed with the specific question in mind. That is, the focus is on the aspects of the documents that help to clarify the "views" of those who were for or against Manifest Destiny. In this way, both the logical organization of the paragraph and the references to primary sources are designed solely to help answer the question.

# Exercise 4

## Keep the Essay Simple and Direct

### Objective for the Exercise

To give students a chance to complete a DBQ essay using a set of simple guidelines for writing and linking the internal paragraphs of the essay.

### Points to Make with Students

By now, students should be familiar with most of the features of a good DBQ essay. The guidelines on the exercise sheet will help them stay on track as they complete this essay. Use the more complete DBQ scoring guide below to evaluate these essays.

### Evaluating Student Responses

#### DBQ Scoring Guide

#### Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear and defensible answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a very careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is very well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

#### Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable and defensible thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

#### Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

#### Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in "laundry list" style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand various ways of linking ideas within and between paragraphs, including the use of transitional words and phrases.
  2. To adopt a simple and direct way of presenting ideas within the internal paragraphs of the essay.
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# Writing and Linking Support Paragraphs

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES**

The eleven primary source documents for this lesson all deal with the American West. The drawings, paintings, journal entries, speeches, and other documents focus on the exploration and settlement of the West and the effect it had on the thoughts and imaginations of Americans in the early and mid-1800s. A special focus of this lesson's exercises will be on the concept of "Manifest Destiny" and its impact in those decades.

**PUTTING TOGETHER  
A COMPLETE ESSAY**

Keep in mind that the final four lessons in this program are the ones that focus on the key tasks in organizing and writing an entire essay. Once again, here is where you are in this sequence of lessons:

- Lesson 5      Taking notes and creating a clear essay organization.
- Lesson 6      Writing an effective introductory paragraph based on your thesis statement.
- Lesson 7      Writing the internal paragraphs of your essay and using transitions to link them together effectively.*
- Lesson 8      Writing a strong conclusion.

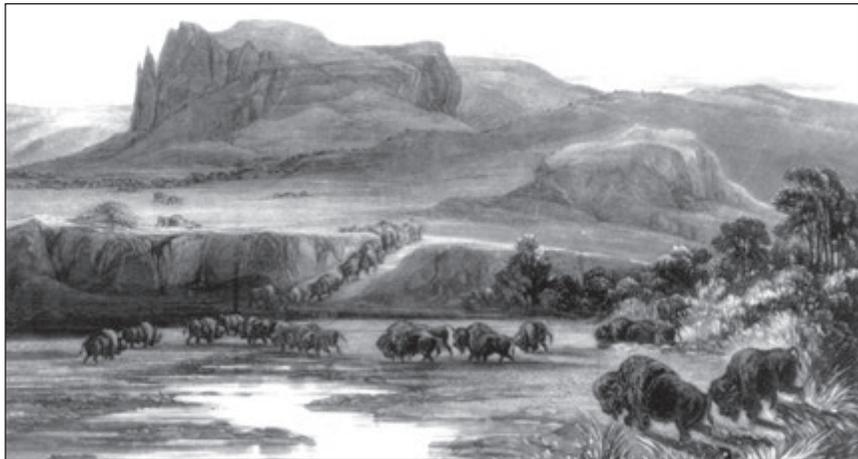
**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will help you see how to link the paragraphs of your essay together logically.

1. Keep in mind the need to **link details logically** within and between the paragraphs of the essay.
2. **Use transition phrases** effectively.
3. Use the primary source documents to support your argument or thesis. Do not simply list documents "laundry list" style.
4. **Aim for clarity and simplicity** in the way you write your sentences. In most cases, try to organize paragraphs into three-part units using the **Main Idea-Details-Explanations** system presented in Lesson 5.

# The Documents

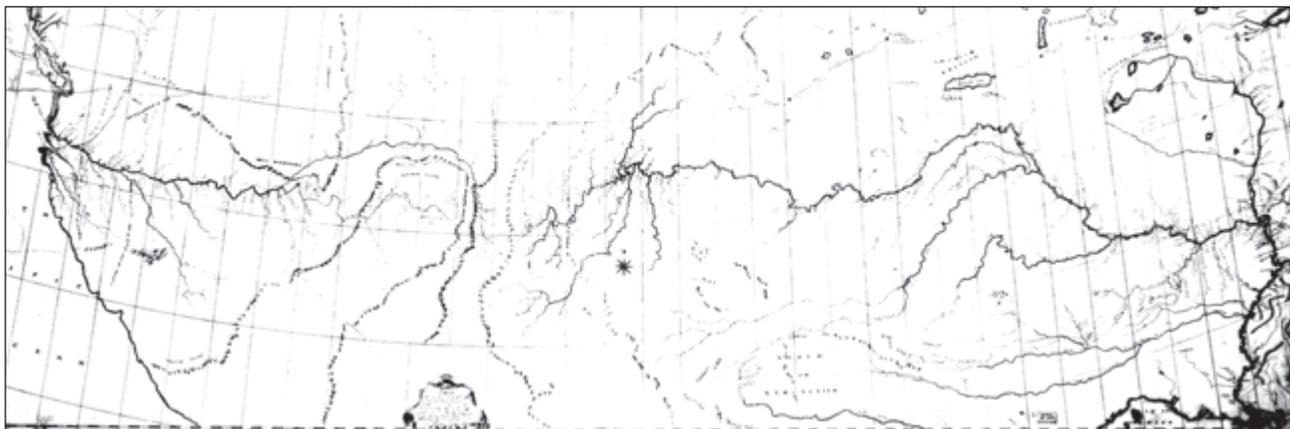
## The American West and the Spirit of Manifest Destiny



### Document 1

A herd of bison on the upper Missouri River in a painting done in the 1840s.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 2

An 1807 map based on the findings of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expedition up the Missouri River, across the Rocky Mountains, down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean and back, 1804–1806.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 3

Sketch of a trout, one of many species Lewis sketched and described in the journals he kept during his trip across the continent.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents

### Document 4

An illustration from the 1840s of pioneers heading west along the Oregon trail, which followed the Platte River, crossed the Rockies at South Pass and wound northwest to Oregon country.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 5

The discovery of gold in California drew thousands west in hopes of striking it rich. Several other regions briefly boomed as mining towns and then declined almost as quickly.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 6

“The American people having derived their origin from many other nations, and the Declaration of National Independence being entirely based on the great principle of human equality, these facts demonstrate at once our disconnected position as regards any other nation; that we have, in reality, but little connection with the past history of any of them, and still less with all antiquity, its glories, or its crimes. On the contrary, our national birth was the beginning of a new history, the formation and progress of an untried political system, which separates us from the past and connects us with the future only; and so far as regards the entire development of the natural rights of man, in moral, political, and national life, we may confidently assume that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity.

“What friend of human liberty, civilization, and refinement, can cast his view over the past history of the monarchies and aristocracies of antiquity, and not deplore that they ever existed? What philanthropist can contemplate the oppressions, the cruelties, and injustice inflicted by them on the masses of mankind, and not turn with moral horror from the retrospect? . . .

“America is destined for better deeds. . . . The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High—the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere—its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation an Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God’s natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood—of “peace and good will amongst men.”

*John L. O’Sullivan on the idea of Manifest Destiny, 1839.*

## The Documents

### Document 7

“American Progress,” a painting by John Gast, 1871.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 10

Instead of hunting buffalo on the open Great Plains, these American Indians are shooting cows on the reservation to which they have been confined.

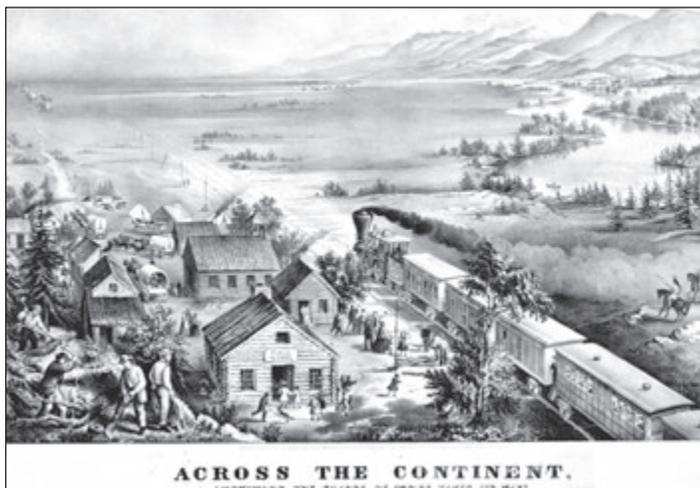
*Courtesy of Dover Publications*



### Document 11

“Across the Continent: Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way,” a painting by Frances F. Palmer, 1868.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 8

“What has miserable, inefficient Mexico—with her superstition, her burlesque upon freedom, her actual tyranny by the few over the many—what has she to do with the great mission of peopling the new world with a noble race? Be it ours, to achieve that mission!”

*Poet Walt Whitman on the Mexican War.*

### Document 9

“Should we prosecute this war another moment, or expend one dollar in the purchase or conquest of a single acre of Mexican land, the North and the South are brought into collision on a point where neither will yield. Who can foresee the result! Who so bold or reckless as to look such a conflict in the face unmoved! I do not envy the heart of him who can realize the possibility of such a conflict without emotions too painful to be endured. Why, then, shall we, the representatives of the sovereign states of the Union—the chosen guardians of this confederated Republic, why should we precipitate this fearful struggle, by continuing a war the result of which must be to force us at once upon a civil conflict? . . . We stand this day on the crumbling brink of that gulf—we see its bloody eddies wheeling and boiling before us—shall we not pause before it is too late? How plain again is here the path, I may add the only way, of duty, of prudence, of true patriotism. Let us abandon all idea of acquiring further territory and by consequence cease at once to prosecute this war.”

*Thomas Corwin, a Whig Senator from Ohio, speaking against the Mexican War in the Senate on February 11, 1847.*

## Exercise 1

### Using Transitional Phrases

This exercise will help you see how important “transitional words and phrases” and other linking words can be in connecting sentences within a paragraph. First read the definition of “transitional phrases” in the box and study the examples there. Then read the paragraph below the box. This paragraph is about Manifest Destiny. Its sentences, however, are out of order. In the space below it, copy these sentences in the correct order so that the paragraph makes sense. Then, underline all the transitional phrases or other connecting words that helped you figure out the correct order.

**Transitional Phrases:** Words or phrases that link one sentence or paragraph to the next in some way, or that show the connection between a sentence or paragraph and the one just before it. Here are a few common transitional words or phrases:

In general . . . For example . . . On the other hand . . .

In May . . . That fall . . . In winter . . .

Most important . . . Next in importance . . .

First this happened . . . As a result . . .

One group . . . Another group . . . Finally . . .

Transitions help the reader follow your reasoning or your argument. When speaking, you help your listener do this by your gestures or tone of voice. When you write, you need to work much harder to show clearly how each idea connects to the next idea. In addition to transitional words such as “however,” “but,” “next,” “after that,” etc., pronouns also act as important linking words. That is, words such as “he,” “she,” or “they” always refer back to people named or identified earlier. In this way, they link the ideas in one sentence to those in previous sentences.

#### Sample Paragraph: Jumbled Order

They were often seen merely as obstacles to be overcome in the grand march westward. In general, Sullivan’s concept of Manifest Destiny was very popular. They opposed the annexation of Texas, a slave state, as a boon to slave owners, not ordinary settlers. Another group opposed to Manifest Destiny, obviously, were the native tribes. Others likely to favor it were the many settlers heading west. In 1845, John Louis O’Sullivan wrote, “Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” For indigenous people and African Americans, therefore, the reality of Manifest Destiny offered little hope. For example, it was certainly popular with those who favored the annexation of Texas that year. On the other hand, not everyone liked the idea of Manifest Destiny. And also there were the idealists who saw the United States as a uniquely free nation whose growth would be good for all of humanity. One group with doubts about it were the abolitionists opposed to slavery.

#### Sample Paragraph: Correct Order

## Exercise 2

### Types of Transitional Links

**The way you link ideas within a paragraph depends in part on the kind of question you are answering.** For example, if the question asks you to compare and contrast two developments or trends, you will use transitional phrases that point out similarities and differences. A question about when various trends or events occurred calls for transitional phrases linking events over time.

For this two-page lesson you will work with four separate paragraphs. The paragraphs are not related to one another. Each paragraph links its ideas in a different way, identified as “Chronological” “Cause and Effect,” “Order of Importance,” or “Compare and Contrast.” These terms are explained in each box below, along with some typical transitional phrases of that type. Each sample paragraph has blank spaces where transitional words or phrases should go. Complete these paragraphs. As a class, discuss how transitional words help make clear the different kinds of reasoning in each paragraph.

#### 1. Chronological

Having to do with the order of events over time. Use a chronological organization when you need to describe changes over time carefully.

Examples:     *At first, . . . Next, . . . Then last . . .*  
                   *For years, . . . After that, . . . And then . . .*  
                   *Beginning with . . . Then came . . . This finally led to . . .*

**Complete the Transitions in the Sample Paragraph Below:** You may use the transitional phrases in this box, alter them, or use any others that seem to work.

#### Sample Paragraph 1 (Chronological)

Throughout the 19th century, the lands west of the Mississippi fascinated Americans. \_\_\_\_\_, trappers and mountain men were a source of tiny scraps of information. \_\_\_\_\_, explorers such as Lewis and Clark provided rich and detailed reports. \_\_\_\_\_, a small trickle of pioneers grew into a mighty flood along the Oregon Trail and other routes west. \_\_\_\_\_, with the Mexican War and the Oregon settlement, the United States took control of the entire region all the way to the Pacific.

#### 2. Cause and Effect

When you want to focus on the factors explaining an event or trend, especially with “explain why” or “assess the validity” questions.

Examples:     *One factor explaining . . . Then there was . . . Also . . .*  
                   *To begin with . . . Also . . . Together, all these factors . . .*  
                   *At first . . . Adding to this factor was . . . Finally . . .*

**Complete the Transitions in the Sample Paragraph Below:** You may use the transitional phrases in this box, alter them, or use any others that seem to work.

#### Sample Paragraph 2 (Cause and Effect)

The 1840s were a time when support for Manifest Destiny seemed to reach a high point. Why the 1840s? \_\_\_\_\_, before the 1840s, plenty of room east of Mississippi remained to be settled. \_\_\_\_\_, the economic hard times of the 1830s kept expansion fever down. But then, in the 1840s, interest in the West soared. \_\_\_\_\_ this was population growth, which led more and more Americans to head west. \_\_\_\_\_, overland routes such as the Oregon Trail made the trip west easier. \_\_\_\_\_, troubles with Mexico led to a growing drum beat for war and conquest. \_\_\_\_\_ combined to bring about a huge demand to spread the flag from shore to shore.

## Exercise 2 (Continued)

### Types of Transitional Links

#### 3. Order of Importance

From the most to the least important factors (or the least to the most important) that explain something. Most useful with “explain why” question types.

Examples:     *The most important factor . . . Also significant . . . Then finally . . .*  
                   *First of all . . . Another factor . . . And in addition . . .*  
                   *For one thing . . . More important . . . But most of all . . .*

**Complete the Transitions in the Sample Paragraph Below:** You may use the transitional phrases in this box, alter them, or use any others that seem to work.

#### Sample Paragraph 3 (Order of Importance)

The Lewis and Clark expedition is still regarded as a major event in our history. \_\_\_\_\_, it was an amazing feat of planning and sheer physical endurance, and the account of it made a dramatic and entertaining story. \_\_\_\_\_, it finally mapped in fairly good detail an overland route west to the Pacific. This would prove valuable to many who would follow later. \_\_\_\_\_ it resulted in endless discoveries about the flora and fauna, topographical features, and the many native cultures inhabiting these regions, all reported in detail in the amazing journals of Meriwether Lewis.

#### 4. Compare and Contrast

Use this organization to describe similarities and differences in two separate historical events or trends. It can also be useful with “assess the validity” questions when you agree partly with the DBQ statement but also want to make some qualifications.

Examples:     *On the one hand . . . On the other hand . . .*  
                   *To begin with . . . Moreover . . . However . . . Finally . . .*  
                   *It is true that . . . But nevertheless . . . Also . . .*

**Complete the Transitions in the Sample Paragraph:** You may use the transitional phrases in this box, alter them, or use any others that seem to work.

#### Sample Paragraph 4 (Compare and Contrast)

Was the idea of Manifest Destiny an expression of greed and arrogance? Or was it a more idealistic desire to spread the benefits of liberty and civilization across the land? \_\_\_\_\_, those who backed the idea rarely cared much about those standing in their way, such as the native people of the plains and mountains. \_\_\_\_\_, they were not bothered by the fact that the annexation of Texas and the conquests of the Mexican War allowed slavery to expand. \_\_\_\_\_, what about the way the Mexicans themselves were treated? How much idealism was shown toward them, even by such “idealists” as Walt Whitman? \_\_\_\_\_, supporters of Manifest Destiny did believe they were spreading “liberty, civilization, and refinements,” as John L. O’Sullivan put it. \_\_\_\_\_, they saw thousands of immigrants arriving in search of a better life, escaping what seemed to be dying aristocratic societies. To them, the West was a vast, empty region divinely given to help raise up a better and nobler civilization. \_\_\_\_\_, as harsh as Walt Whitman’s words sound, he was right that Mexico was not as free a nation. At least that was what he and many other Americans sincerely believed. And that is why they believed as well that God was behind them and America’s “Manifest Destiny.”

## **Exercise 3**

### **Dealing with Primary Source Documents**

The first two exercises in this lesson could apply equally to a DBQ essay or to any other kind of history essay. What is unique about a DBQ essay is the need to use primary sources. But what exactly is the best way of using or referring to these sources?

**The right way:** First, focus on the question and think about how the primary sources are related to it. Then decide on your thesis. Use your own history knowledge and the primary sources to support your argument or thesis. Use as many sources as you can. You don't need to mention every source. It is more important that you **always use the sources you do mention to back up your thesis.**

**The wrong way:** A common mistake in writing a DBQ essay is to list primary sources without really connecting them to the thesis. This is referred to as a "laundry list" approach to the sources. Use the sources to prove your thesis, not simply to show that you can list them all.

Below are two paragraphs responding to the same question. Each mentions some of the primary sources for this lesson. Read the paragraphs, answer the questions below them and discuss your answers in class.

**Question:**

Compare and contrast the views of those who supported and those who opposed the idea of Manifest Destiny in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

**Sample Paragraph 1**

Most Americans in the mid-1800s strongly supported Manifest Destiny. By then, many agreed with John O'Sullivan (Document 6), who said, "The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness." This feeling began at least as far back as the Lewis and Clark expedition, which taught Americans a great deal about the West (Documents 1 & 2). Lewis's journals (Document 3) taught them more. Soon thousands of settlers were heading west on the Oregon Trail (Document 4) and even more went to California to strike it rich after gold was discovered there (Document 5). The Mexican War finally gave America the land it wanted. A few feared that Manifest Destiny would pit the North against the South (Document 9), and obviously American Indians resented being forced onto reservations (Document 10).

**Sample Paragraph 2**

Those who supported Manifest Destiny did so because of a powerful sense of America's greatness. And they meant both economic greatness and political and spiritual greatness. John O'Sullivan, for example, stressed the idea of America as a new nation, different from and better than the corrupt monarchies of the past. He shared John Gast's view of westward expansion as the light of civilization and progress banishing darkness and backwardness. On the other hand, critics of Manifest Destiny saw greed at work in it, a greed that might wind up actually destroying the nation's high ideals. Thomas Corwin was not alone in this. Many in the north in particular shared his view of the Mexican War as a land grab by slave-holding states. Rather than bringing progress and refinement, expansion, in their view, would only pit North against South in a bloody civil war.

**Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_ uses the primary sources effectively because . . .** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_ uses the primary sources poorly because . . .** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 4

### Keep the Essay Simple and Direct

There is no one formula for writing an effective DBQ essay. However, there are some useful guidelines. Your introductory paragraph restates the topic and presents your thesis. The paragraphs that follow support that thesis as directly as possible. Usually, each paragraph develops one main idea. All details, examples, primary sources, and explanations follow logically so as to back up the paragraph's main idea and the thesis. Finally, transitions or other phrases clearly connect each paragraph to the next one.

Along the left column below and on the next page is one framework designed to guide you in writing this kind of a DBQ essay. It is again based on the **Main Idea-Details-Explanations** scheme. A DBQ is provided. Your task is to write an introductory paragraph, three internal paragraphs, and a brief conclusion. Try to follow the guidelines on the left for each paragraph. (Notice that you have some leeway as to how many supporting details and explanations you must include.)

**Instructions: Document-Based Essay**

This question is based on the eleven documents for this lesson. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and any point of view presented in it. Using information from the documents, and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay answering the following DBQ.

**The Question**

Was the idea of Manifest Destiny an expression of greed and arrogance? Or was it a more idealistic desire to spread the benefits of liberty and civilization across the land?

**Introductory Paragraph****Internal Paragraph 1**

Transition and Main Idea

1. Detail, fact, or reference to primary source document.

Explanation of the importance of this detail, fact, or source to the paragraph's main idea or the overall thesis.

2. Transition plus possible additional details, facts, or references to primary source documents.

Explanation of the importance of the details, facts, or sources to the paragraph's main idea or the overall thesis.

*(Continue writing on next page)*

## Exercise 4 (Continued)

### Keep the Essay Simple and Direct

#### Internal Paragraph 2

Transition and Main Idea

1. Detail, fact, or reference to primary source document.

Explanation of the importance of this detail, fact, or source to the paragraph's main idea or the overall thesis.

2. Transition plus possible additional details, facts, or references to primary source documents.

Explanation of the importance of the details, facts, or sources to the paragraph's main idea or the overall thesis.

#### Internal Paragraph 3

Transition and Main Idea

1. Detail, fact, or reference to primary source document.

Explanation of the importance of this detail, fact, or source to the paragraph's main idea or the overall thesis.

2. Transition plus possible additional details, facts, or references to primary source documents.

Explanation of the importance of the details, facts, or sources to the paragraph's main idea or the overall thesis.

#### Brief Conclusion

# Writing a Strong Conclusion

## **INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR STUDENTS**

The nine primary source documents for this lesson help illustrate the growing divide in the nation over slavery in the decades just before the Civil War. The stress here is on ideas, specifically ideas for and against slavery. The DBQ used with the exercises deals with the hardening of attitudes and the growing inability of Americans to compromise over this issue.

The essay-writing task for the lesson is to teach students to appreciate the value and importance of a concise and effective conclusion to a DBQ essay. The conclusion should be seen as closing a circle by bringing the essay back to the DBQ and the thesis as stated in the introductory paragraph. However, this does NOT mean mere repetition. The key to a good conclusion is a valid generalization about the evidence presented in the essay, a generalization that will nail down with finality the case the student wishes to make.

## **KEY CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES**

A number of key concepts and strategies will be presented in this lesson. These should help students think about how to write an effective conclusion to their essays. The concepts and strategies include the need to

1. Look back and refocus on the DBQ topic and the thesis,
2. Sum up the way the evidence backs up the thesis,
3. AVOID repeating points already made or adding new evidence or topics, and
4. Find a simple and forceful way to formulate the overall thesis and its significance.

## **THE MINDSPARKS VISUALS**

Images for all the visual sources used in this lesson can be found in the digital files under *The Abolitionist Movement*, *Manifest Destiny*, and *The Civil War*.

# Exercise 1

## Choosing Your Conclusion

### Objective for the Exercise

To teach students to use the concluding paragraph mainly to summarize the way the evidence supports the thesis and answers the DBQ.

### Points to Make with Students

The model essay for this exercise answers a DBQ about two broad and conflicting points of view. Even though the DBQ is an “explain why” question type, it basically calls for a comparison of two incompatible views that finally helped split the nation apart. The essay’s structure reflects this aspect of the DBQ. That is, the introductory paragraph is followed by two internal paragraphs, each focusing on one of the two viewpoints. Students then must choose among three alternative concluding paragraphs for this brief essay.

A conclusion should **refocus attention on the DBQ and the essay’s thesis**. To “refocus” does not mean simply to repeat what was already said. It means to call attention to the DBQ in a way that relates it directly to the thesis and to the essay’s findings. **Mainly, the conclusion should sum up the evidence in support of the thesis**. This should take the form of a broad generalization about that evidence. **Summing up does NOT mean repeating the specifics of the internal paragraphs. Nor does it mean adding new facts or topics**. All the evidence should have been presented in the internal paragraphs. The goal of the conclusion is to clarify for the reader what the entire essay is about.

### Evaluating Student Responses

#### Conclusion 1 (Least Acceptable)

This conclusion mainly just keeps adding new details and new references to the documents. It never really returns to the DBQ and the thesis in order to sum up and indicate how the main body of the essay supports the thesis.

#### Conclusion 2 (Best Conclusion)

In its first two sentences, this conclusion sums up the main point of the internal paragraphs of the essay and relates it back to the DBQ. It also deepens the reader’s understanding of the thesis and adds to its significance (pointing out that “the idea of compromise itself seemed evil” and showing how this attitude spread throughout society). It does this without either repeating what has already been shown in the rest of the essay or without going into an entirely new set of details and explanations.

#### Conclusion 3 (Acceptable, but Flawed)

Except for the last sentence, this conclusion mainly summarizes some of the evidence presented earlier. That is, it repeats points already made. In the last sentence, it does relate this evidence to the thesis (about compromise) very briefly but without really adding anything to clarify that thesis or to indicate what its significance is.

## Exercise 2

### History Unfolding—Review Exercise

**Objective for the Exercise**

To give students a chance to review the key concepts of History Unfolding's DBQ and Essay-Writing Program

**Points to Make with Students**

This exercise will give your students a chance to review the key ideas developed in all eight lessons. Give them time to review the introductory pages for the earlier lessons and think about the central concepts and strategies they have been taught. Then have students jot down notes evaluating the essay presented in this lesson. This essay was NOT actually written by a student. It was purposefully designed to illustrate many of the features described in earlier lessons. However, it is not a perfect essay, and students should be encouraged to evaluate it as critically as you would evaluate their essays.

**Evaluating Student Responses**

You may wish to direct the discussion of the sample essay here by applying the complete DBQ scoring guide from Lesson 7, Exercise 4.

## Some Additional DBQs

Here are a few extra DBQs you may wish to have your students do. Each DBQ pertains to one of the sets of primary source documents connected with the eight lessons of the program. However, please keep in mind that these DBQs also assume students will be able to apply additional background knowledge as they develop answers to these questions.

### Lesson 1

“As the colonies grew and became more prosperous, they also became more tolerant about the place of religion in social life.” Assess the validity of this statement.

### Lesson 2

Describe the way typical images of the ideal leader changed between 1700 and 1865, and explain some reasons for these changes.

### Lesson 3

Describe the views of human nature held by the framers of the Constitution and explain how those ideas about human nature influenced the kind of government they created in 1787.

### Lesson 4

Describe changes in family life in America from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s and explain how the early Industrial Revolution in America may have contributed to those changes.

### Lesson 5

Compare and contrast the way Andrew Jackson and his party used new ideals about democracy and the common man with the way these ideals were used by the opponents of Jackson and his party in the 1830s and 1840s.

### Lesson 6

“The movement in the mid-1800s for women’s rights and more independence mainly reflected the feelings of Northern, middle-class women.” Assess the validity of this statement.

### Lesson 7

“Some groups benefitted from the westward expansion of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century, and some groups were harmed by it.” Assess the validity of this statement.

### Lesson 8

Explain to what extent the Civil War was caused by different views about the morality of slavery as opposed to other intellectual, economic, or geographic factors.

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the value of a concise and effective conclusion to your essay.
  2. To learn to avoid repeating points or adding new ones when concluding your essay.
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# Writing a Strong Conclusion

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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**THE PRIMARY SOURCES  
AND THE EXERCISES**

**INTRODUCING THE LESSON**

The nine primary source documents for this lesson include drawings, cartoons, paintings, and speeches. All of these sources deal with the growing divide in the nation over slavery during the three decades or so before the Civil War. Their focus is not so much on specific political developments or turning points as it is on the way pro-slavery and anti-slavery ideas and feelings hardened over this period.

**PUTTING TOGETHER  
A COMPLETE ESSAY**

As you know, the final four lessons in this program focus on the key tasks in organizing and writing an entire essay. This is the last of these lessons, which have introduced the following key tasks:

- Lesson 5      Taking notes and creating a clear essay organization.
- Lesson 6      Writing an effective introductory paragraph based on your thesis statement.
- Lesson 7      Writing the internal paragraphs of your essay and using transitions to link them together effectively.
- Lesson 8      Writing a strong conclusion.*

**KEY CONCEPTS  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will help you see the importance of an effective conclusion to your DBQ essay.

1. Look back at your introductory paragraph. Your conclusion should **refocus on the DBQ topic and on your thesis** about it.
2. Reword key points in both the DBQ and your thesis and **sum up the way the evidence backs up your thesis**.
3. **Do NOT simply restate points** you have already made. Also, **do NOT add new evidence or specifics** at this point.
4. Try to find a simple and forceful way to call attention to your overall thesis and its significance.

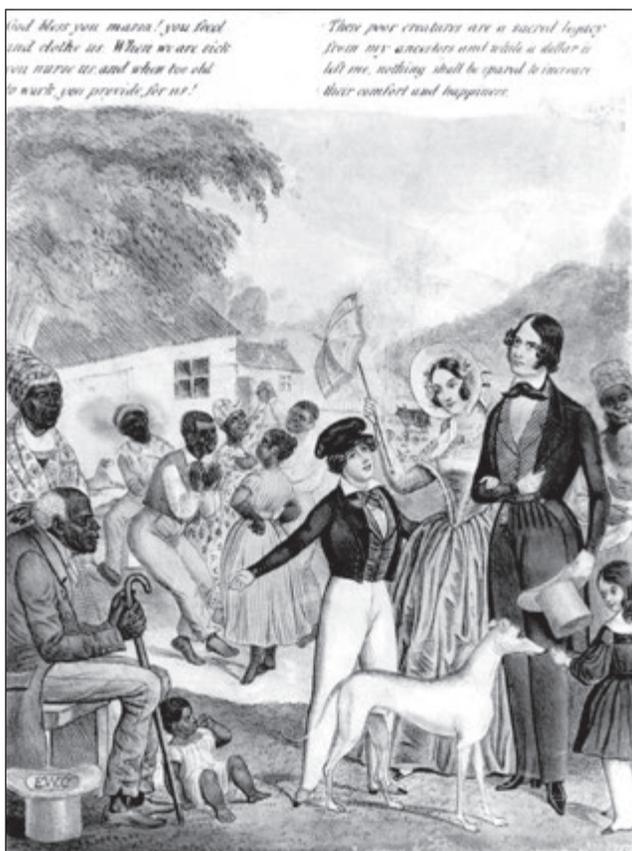
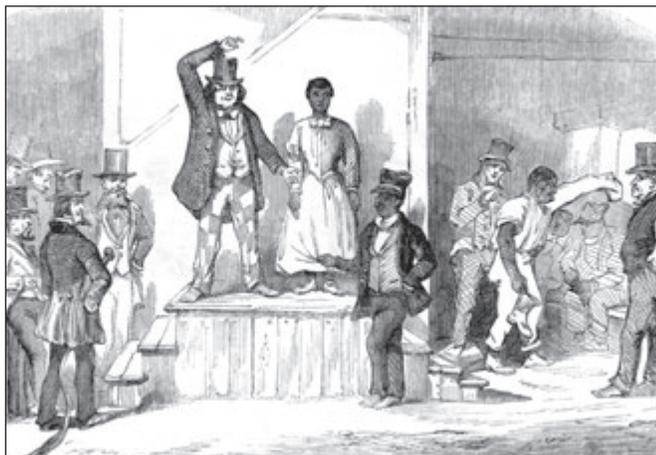
## The Documents

### Slavery and Abolition: 1830-1860

#### Document 1

Engraving of a slave auction in the South.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



#### Document 2

"I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good. . . .

"I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other. . . . I may say with truth, that in few countries [compared with the South] so much is left to the share of the laborer, and so little exacted from him, or where there is more kind attention paid to him in sickness or infirmities of age. Compare his condition with the tenants of the poor houses in the more civilized portions of Europe—look at the sick, and the old and infirm slave, on one hand, in the midst of his family and friends, under the kind superintending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poorhouse.

" . . . I fearlessly assert that the existing relation between the two races in the South, against which these blind fanatics are waging war, forms the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable political institutions. It is useless to disguise the fact. There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which explains why it is that the political condition of the slaveholding States has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North."

*South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun, in a speech delivered in the Senate on February 6, 1837.*

#### Document 3

A mid-1800s Southern view of slavery. In the words on the top, a slave says, "God bless you massa! You feed and clothe us. When we are sick you nurse us, and when too old to work, you provide for us!" The master responds, "These poor creatures are a sacred legacy from my ancestors and while a dollar is left to me, nothing shall be spared to increase their comfort and happiness."

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents

### Document 4

Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster giving his famous reply in 1830 to Robert Hayne of South Carolina in which he said, "When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood!"

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



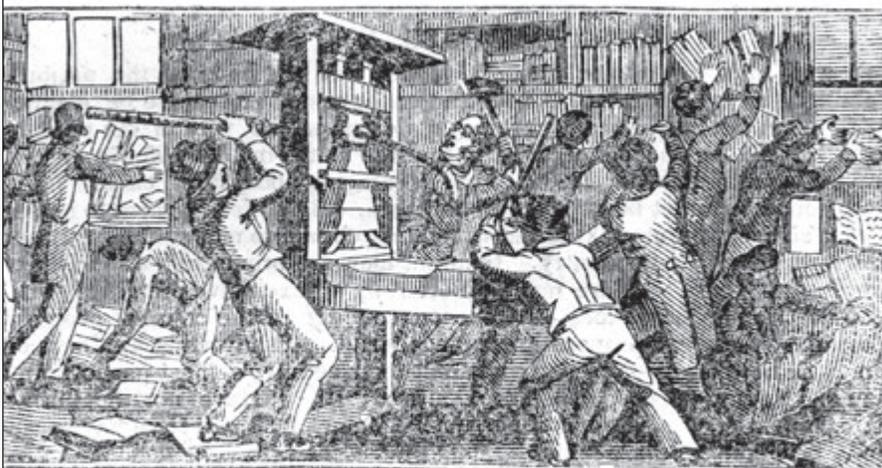
### Document 5

"For the present, it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the Negro race. Is it not astonishing that, while we are plowing, planting and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver and gold; that while we are reading, writing, and ciphering, acting as clerks, merchants, and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, and ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators, and teachers; that while we are engaged in all manner of enterprises common to other men, digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hillside, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives, and children, and, above all, confessing and worshiping the Christian's God, and looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave, we are called upon to prove that we are men. . . .

"What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution is wrong? No, I will not. . . . The time for such argument is past."

*Frederick Douglass, writer, abolitionist and former slave, in an Independence Day speech at Rochester, New York, in 1852.*

### *Anti-Slavery Almanac.*



A PRINTING PRESS DEMOLISHED AT SLAVERY'S BIDDING.

### Document 6

Drawing of a mob in the North destroying an abolitionist printing press.

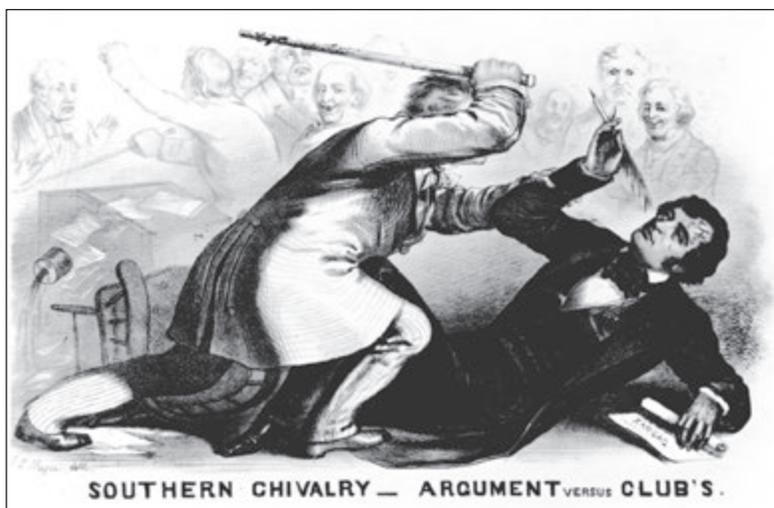
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

## The Documents

### Document 7

An illustration from an early version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1851.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



### Document 8

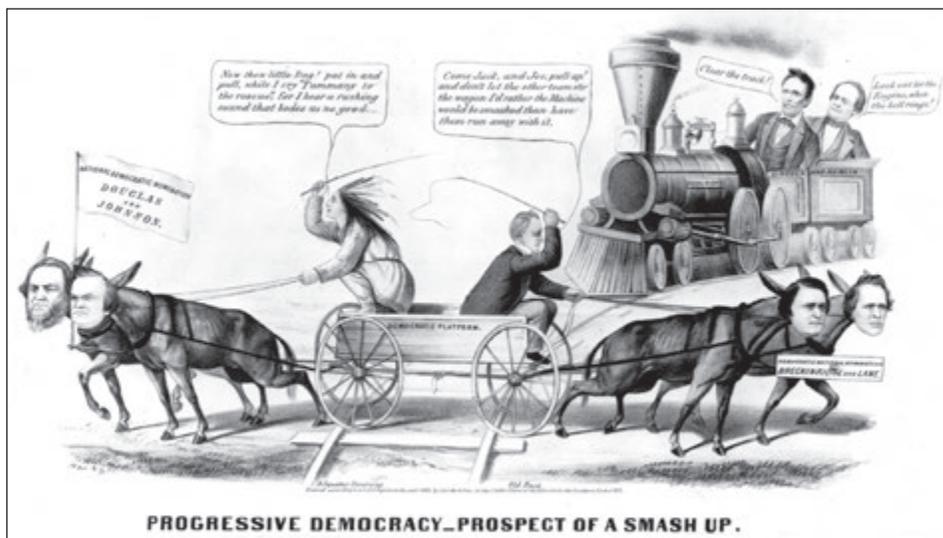
The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 provoked bitter division. Tensions ran high even on the floor of Congress. In 1856, South Carolina Representative Preston S. Brooks attacked anti-slavery Senator Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate. The vicious beating is depicted here.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

### Document 9

In the 1850s, the collapse of the Whigs led to the emergence of the Republican Party. With the Democrats divided over slavery, Republican Abraham Lincoln's unified new party rode the train to victory, as this cartoon suggests. Secession and the Civil War soon followed.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



## Exercise 1

### Choosing Your Conclusion

To write a good conclusion to a DBQ essay, first look back at your introductory paragraph. This will focus you again on the question and your thesis. Your conclusion should refer in some way to both the DBQ and your basic thesis, and it should comment on how the evidence you have presented supports your thesis. **Do NOT simply restate points you have already made. Also do NOT add new evidence or specifics at this point. Try instead to find a simple and forceful way to call attention to your thesis and how you have backed it up.**

In the box is a DBQ based on the documents for this lesson. Below it is an essay minus a conclusion. Normally, a DBQ essay will be longer and a bit more detailed than this one. But this one will be easier to work with for now. On the second page of this exercise are three possible conclusions to the essay. Choose the one you think is best and explain your choices in the space provided.

#### The Question

In the decades before the Civil War, Americans tried to compromise over the issue of slavery. Ultimately, they were unable to do so. Explain why that was so.

In the three decades before the Civil War, arguments over slavery grew more and more bitter. Attempts were made to compromise on this issue. For a while some of them worked. But in the end, all of these efforts failed. One reason was geography—the two sides were also separated physically into two sections of the country. Another reason was economics—the South had a big economic stake in slavery. The main reason, however, was a huge gap in how each side viewed slavery philosophically and morally. This, more than any other factor, was what made compromise impossible.

In the late 1700s, many Southerners believed slavery would die out and probably should die out. But after the invention of the cotton gin, slavery spread rapidly, and Southern attitudes changed. The idea that blacks were inferior to whites deepened. So did the idea that slavery was the best way to deal with the differences between blacks and whites. The Southern view of slavery, illustrated in Document 2, pictured the slave owner as a kindly patriarchal figure and the slaves as docile and grateful. Senator John C. Calhoun developed this defense of slavery in detail. In his view, all societies are divided into rich and poor, and the South's slave system was actually less harsh to the poor than the free labor system in the North. By the 1850s, this slavery defense had hardened Southerners against any and all criticism.

Meanwhile, in the North, abolitionists were pushing attitudes in the opposite direction. Most people at first just wanted to ignore the issue. As Document 6 shows, violence against Northern abolitionists by other Northerners was common. And the most important statesmen, such as Daniel Webster, worked hard to keep the Union together at any cost. But the abolitionists kept pushing the point that slavery was an absolute evil. They also said it was totally at odds with American democratic ideals. The words from Frederick Douglass show how good they were at making this case, and how their patience with any other point of view was running out. Furthermore, events kept helping them. The heartbreaking images in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, only seemed more horrible coming as they did at the time of the Fugitive Slave Law contained in the Compromise of 1850.

*(see second page of this lesson for three alternative conclusions to this essay.)*

## **Exercise 1 (Continued)** **Choosing Your Conclusion**

Below are three conclusions to the DBQ essay found on the first page of this exercise. Read these through and choose the conclusion that you think best completes the essay. Then in the spaces provided, give a brief explanation of your decision about each of the three conclusions.

**Conclusion 1**

Throughout the 1850s other events kept the slavery issue boiling. The Kansas-Nebraska Act led to major outbreaks of real violence. Soon fights were breaking out even on the floor of Congress itself, as Document 8 makes clear. Because of the raid on Harper’s Ferry, the North turned

abolitionist John Brown into a hero and martyr. The South saw him as a wild-eyed madman bent only on destruction. With the Republican Party, the North lined up behind the idea of stopping the spread of slavery. Lincoln’s election, therefore, convinced the South it had no choice but to secede—and take its chances with Civil War.

**Did you choose this conclusion? Why or why not?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion 2**

By the early 1850s, each section had come to view the other as a threat to its most cherished ideals. And as the 1850s unfolded, one crisis after another only convinced each side more of the evil views of the other until the idea of compromise itself seemed evil. At first, only small groups on each side were divided strongly by their pro-slavery and anti-slavery views. But in time, this huge gap in views affected in one way or another millions of others, making it impossible for them to avoid a civil war over slavery.

**Did you choose this conclusion? Why or why not?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion 3**

In the decades before the Civil War, abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass became more determined than ever to end slavery completely and thwart all compromises on it. In the South, Calhoun and others argued just as strongly for the idea that there was nothing wrong with slavery. In fact, they finally came to view it as a good arrangement that had God’s divine approval. These two ideas increasingly separated the two sections of the country, and made compromise impossible.

**Did you choose this conclusion? Why or why not?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2

### History Unfolding—Review Exercise

Here is a chance to apply what you have learned in all eight lessons in this program. Below is a checklist of the basic ideas stressed in these lessons. Use this checklist as a set of guidelines for evaluating the essay in Exercise 1 (including the conclusion you chose for it). Study the checklist. Also, look back at the instructions for some of the past exercises if you need to. Now, next to each item on the checklist, jot down a few notes evaluating the essay in Exercise 1. How well does it do in meeting each standard on the checklist? In class, discuss your notes.

#### **Introductory paragraph**

Does the paragraph clarify the DBQ itself and present a clear thesis, or answer, to that DBQ?

#### **Use of Primary Source Documents**

Are they simply used in a “laundry list” fashion, or are they used thoughtfully to support key ideas and examples?

#### **The Internal Paragraphs—1**

Are these paragraphs organized around main points with supporting details and explanations related to those main points? (Look back at the **M-D-E** system suggested in Lesson 5 and Lesson 7. But *keep in mind that a good paragraph may vary the way it uses these elements.*)

#### **The Internal Paragraphs—2**

Are transitions and other phrases used effectively to connect points in a logical way?

#### **Conclusion**

Does it restate the DBQ and thesis in a way that sums up the main ideas without repeating old information or going into new details?

