

Thesis Writing in AP World History

Writing: Part I

“*Has acceptable thesis...*”

- Acceptable is a *SUBJECTIVE* term!
- What is **NOT** acceptable?
 - A restatement of the prompt into a statement rather than a question.
 - A split thesis.
 - Example: The prompt asks you to compare and contrast. You write a two-paragraph essay where the first paragraph is about comparison and the second is about contrast. If you were to take the first sentence from each paragraph and put them together, you might have a decent thesis. The *readers* are not allowed to do that. **The thesis has to be a stand alone paragraph.**
 - A non continuous thesis.
 - Example: a sentence at the beginning of the first paragraph and a sentence at the end of the paragraph with examples or information in between.

What should a thesis *be*?

- **A specific argument that answer the question. Nothing more, nothing less.**

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND THESIS

Compare and contrast the Han Empire during 206 B.C.E.-220 C.E. with the Spanish empire of the sixteenth century.

- The specific argument here would include at least one comparison and one contrast and reference to both the empires and the time frames.
- Many students may write:
 - “There were many similarities and differences between the Han Empire during 206 B.C.E. and 22 B.C.E. and the Spanish empire of the sixteenth century.”
 - **Unfortunately, this is not good enough for the AP World exam. It is too general and more or less repeats the prompt.**
- With a simple addition and a bit of tweaking, you can make this thesis work:
 - “There were many similarities and differences between the Han Empire during 206 B.C.E.- 220 B.C.E. and the Spanish empire of the sixteenth century. One was land-based and the other sea-based yet they both grew rich from conquest of territory outside their boundaries.”
- You can make two sentences instead of one from the second sentence:
 - “There were many similarities and differences between the Han Empire during 206 B.C.E.-220 B.C.E. and the Spanish empire of the sixteenth century. One was land-based and the other sea-based. They both grew rich from conquest of territory outside their boundaries.”

The Confusing Part about Scoring

- The thesis is worth one point according to all writing rubrics, **BUT** not getting the point for the thesis actually means that you have lost more than one point.
- This happens for all points in the basic core, but since thesis is the item that students miss the most, it is the most important.
- Essays are scored on a 0-9 scale, but they are actually worth 20 points each.
- Each essay score is multiplied by 2.22. If you miss a point for the essay, you could end up with a 6 instead of a 9. Those three points now become 6.6 points.
- See, it's complicated!

Interesting AP Tip

- Grammar does not count → It may help, but it doesn't count!
- All you have to do is make your argument.
- The thesis may be two or more contiguous sentences.
- A short thesis is better than a long one.
- A thesis that is too long will cost points on the exam.

Scoring... *Why* are we doing math in AP World History?

Basic Core	Points
Is the thesis acceptable?	1
Does the students address all parts of the question? (This is typically where the discussion of similarities and differences is scored.)	2
Has the students addressed <i>most</i> parts of the question?	(1)
Has the student substantiated the thesis with appropriate historical evidence?	2
Has the student done so <i>partially</i> ?	(1)
Has the student shown at least one relevant, direct comparison (similarity and/or difference) between or among the societies?	1
Has the student analyzed at least one reason for a similarity or difference identified in a direct comparison?	1
Total	7

Expanded Core

Expanded Core	Points
<p>Does the student have a clear, analytical, and comprehensive thesis?</p> <p>Has the student addressed all parts of the question thoroughly: comparisons, chronology, causation, connections, themes, interactions, and content?</p> <p>Has the student given ample historical evidence to substantiate his or her thesis?</p> <p>Has the student related comparisons to a larger global context?</p> <p>Has the student made direct comparisons consistently between and among societies?</p> <p>Has the student consistently analyzed the causes and effects of relevant similarities and differences</p>	0-2
Total	2

Tried and True Methods

- PRACTICE!
- Peer review