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Teaching the DBQ

Students can work on this question alone or may be divided into partnerships or groups of three. As students become more comfortable with the format, they should be encouraged to work alone.

1. Give students 20 minutes to analyze and summarize briefly the important point(s) in each document. Students should make a three-column chart on a separate piece of paper as they examine the documents. In the column on the left they should note the letter of the document and its author or source. They should briefly scan all the documents.
2. Then students should go back and consider the documents more carefully. Questions they should ask themselves in creating their quick summary-analysis of each document are:
 - a. What is the writer saying? What's the point?
 - b. Why is the writer saying this? To whom is (s)he addressing this?
 - c. What is the writer's frame of reference? What do I know about the writer that will help explain what and why this is being written?
 - d. What is the source of this document? Is it from a newspaper? A personal diary? A court proceeding?
 - e. If the document is a chart, graph, or map, or from a secondary source, the student should ask why this information is being included. Again, what's the point?

The answers to these questions are placed in the middle column.

Students will use this essential information later in the context of their essay.

A sample graphic organizer is provided for the teacher to use later in pooling the information from the class as a whole.

3. In the process of analysis, students will recall background information. This factual information can include the names of people, places, and events in colonial history, which help to clarify and understand what the document is saying. This information should be listed in the third column.

Students will use these facts later in constructing their essays.

The teacher will continue to guide the completion of the graphic organizer based on student input.

4. Students will then construct a thesis, which directly and summarily addresses and answers all parts of the question.

This thesis will be contained in the opening paragraph of the student's essay.

A sample thesis is provided below. There is more than one possible answer to this question.

5. After sharing the sample thesis with the class, students will organize their essays by constructing topic sentences for each of three paragraphs, followed by an outline of the factual information and documents that will be contained therein. The teacher can require all students to work with the given thesis or allow more advanced students to work with one of their own creation.

A sample outline of one paragraph is provided below.

Students can then be instructed to write the essay itself in class or as a homework assignment. The work can be divided among individuals in the group or assigned to each individual student to be completed.

DBQ Document Summary

DOCUMENT A. Robert F. Kennedy, statement on the assassination of Martin Luther King, April 4, 1968. On the night of Martin Luther King's assassination, violence erupted in several locations across the country. This speech is often cited for the courage it took for Senator Kennedy to choose to go to an inner city neighborhood to deliver the news of King's death and to call for calm. He spoke of his own brother's assassination, emphasized that people can choose how to react to violence, and suggested how the entire nation might honor King's life and work. That night in Indianapolis, Indiana, there was no rioting.

DOCUMENT B. Justice William Brennan, comments on the Miranda decision, Memorandum, May 11, 1966. Justice Brennan's memo demonstrates the discussions and questions that are raised in the process of authoring Supreme Court decisions. By suggesting that two words of one sentence be changed, he shifts the focus during arrests from the government's action to the government's restraint.

DOCUMENT C. Governor George Wallace, speech delivered at the University of Alabama to block integration of the school, June 11, 1963. Governor Wallace delivered this speech and then stepped aside. In this speech, Wallace questioned whether the federal government had the power to integrate schools or whether this power was given exclusively to the states by the Tenth Amendment.

DOCUMENT D. President John Kennedy, radio address regarding civil rights and the integration of the University of Alabama, June 11, 1963. In this address, Kennedy raises the moral and constitutional questions of civil rights. While in the full text of the speech he praises the final actions of students at the University of Alabama, in this excerpt he specifically raises the difficult and complex issue of how unequal opportunities in education and military service demonstrate the continued inequalities in the United States.

DOCUMENT E. Betty Friedan, National Organization for Women (NOW) 1966 Statement of Purpose. In this Statement of Purpose, Freidan puts forth her belief that women need equal rights and economic opportunity. She also emphasizes the often forgotten fact that a large number of women did work outside the home in the 1960s, although the jobs available for women were limited. Her argument is based on her observations of changes in daily life, specifically noting the technological advancements that shortened chores and the increase in productive years due to lengthening life spans. While she acknowledges the importance of child-rearing, she notes that there is time in a woman's life for additional activities.

DOCUMENT F. Photograph of President Lyndon B. Johnson listening to tape sent from Vietnam by Captain Charles Robb. Captain Charles Robb was President Johnson's son-in-law. He married Lynda Bird Johnson in the White House in 1967. The photograph shows the complexity of Vietnam, even for the President. He faced the personal issue of worrying about a relative in combat and making decisions as Commander-in-Chief.

DOCUMENT G. President Lyndon Johnson, remarks honoring President Truman at the signing of the Medicare Bill, July 30, 1965. In this speech, President Johnson emphasizes the long time span that it can take to bring an idea to legislative fruition. He emphasizes the political work and cost and specifically honors President Truman for having the courage not only to have a vision but also to engage in the work necessary to make the vision a reality.

DOCUMENT H. Jackie Robinson, telegram to President Johnson, March 9, 1965. The civil rights conflict erupted in violence on March 7, 1965, in Selma, Alabama, in what would become known as Bloody Sunday. Over 600 marchers were walking to Birmingham to petition for a redress of grievances over the issue of voting rights in Alabama. They were stopped by police using tear gas and billy clubs. Robinson minces no words in his order to the president to intervene on behalf of the protestors and in calling out the shame of racism in the U.S. one hundred years after the end of slavery.

DOCUMENT I. Barry Goldwater, acceptance speech as the Republican candidate for President, 1964. Goldwater raises questions about the moral direction of the current democratic leadership. The philosophical issues of the role of man and his destiny are also raised. Questions about the separation of church and state are also addressed when he discusses Divine Will.

DOCUMENT J. *Hosea Williams, John Lewis and Amelia Boynton, on behalf of themselves and others similarly situated v. Honorable George C. Wallace, as Governor of the State of Alabama, et al.* 1965 Case No. 2181-N A. This case provided the legal protection of the Constitution for those who had attempted to march on Bloody Sunday to again assemble, march, and petition for a redress of grievances. The argument that the cost of protection would be too high for the state to handle was countered with the offer of federal troops.

Sample DBQ Document Summary Chart

Document	Summary	Notes
(A) Robert F. Kennedy Statement on the assassination of Martin Luther King, 1968		
(B) William Brennan Comments on Miranda Decision, 1966		
(C) George Wallace Speech at the University of Alabama, 1963		

Document	Summary	Notes
<p>(D) John F. Kennedy Radio address on civil rights, 1963</p>		
<p>(E) Betty Freidan NOW Statement of Purpose, 1966</p>		
<p>(F) Photograph of President Johnson listening to a tape from a soldier, 1968</p>		
<p>(G) Lyndon Johnson Medicare speech honoring President Truman, 1965</p>		

Document	Summary	Notes
<p>(H) Jackie Robinson Telegram to President Johnson, 1965</p>		
<p>(I) Barry Goldwater Acceptance speech for Republican nomination for President, 1964</p>		
<p>(J) <i>Williams, Lewis, Boynton</i> v. <i>George Wallace and the State of Alabama</i> 1965</p>		

Sample DBQ Document Summary Chart

Document	Summary	Notes
(A) Robert F. Kennedy Statement on the assassination of Martin Luther King, 1968	<p>Kennedy announces King’s death and anticipates the angry, even violent reaction that black Americans are bound to have.</p> <p>He urges them not to let the assassination further polarize the white and black races in America; he urges them to be like King by trying to comprehend the violence and overcome it with compassion and love.</p> <p>He refers to his brother John’s assassination four years earlier.</p>	<p>Kennedy was on the campaign trail, and knew that his response to the assassination would be covered by every news outlet.</p> <p>He was personally horrified by the assassination, and angry at the white racism behind it.</p> <p>He faced his black audience and asked for patience in part because he knew that they were aware of his record of fighting racism—he had the authority to ask them not to respond in kind to violence.</p>
(B) William Brennan Comments on Miranda Decision, 1966	<p>Suggests edits that change the basis of the argument from the power to prosecute to restraints on that power.</p>	<p>The ruling in this case led to the creation of what are called “Miranda rights” for people accused of a crime. They must be allowed to talk to an attorney, and cannot be forced to say anything to police without an attorney present. They must also be informed of this “right to remain silent” by the police who arrest and question them.</p> <p>Brennan knows that the case will be groundbreaking if it ends up creating rights for people accused of a crime.</p> <p>His edit changes the focus of the ruling from basically affirming the right to prosecute crime (perhaps by any means necessary) to emphasizing the rights of the accused to get fair treatment by the police.</p>
(C) George Wallace Speech at the University of Alabama, 1963	<p>Wallace describes the attempt to end racial discrimination as “unwarranted” and a “frightful example of oppression.”</p> <p>Federal law is an “intrusion” on the rights of the states that is explicitly condemned by the Constitution.</p>	<p>Wallace famously stood in the doorway of the school to prevent its integration.</p> <p>His argument that only the states have the right to make laws regarding state-funded education was clearly overturned by the clear mission of state segregation laws, which was to oppress minorities and refuse to let them exercise rights given to them in the Reconstruction Amendments.</p> <p>Wallace was an early claimant for “reverse discrimination,” the idea that giving equal rights to non-whites was discrimination against whites.</p>

Document	Summary	Notes
<p>(D) John F. Kennedy Radio Address on civil rights, 1963</p>	<p>Kennedy claims that the Constitution included non-whites in its statement that all men are created equal.</p> <p>He says that if black Americans are drafted to fight U.S. wars, they are entitled to get an education in any U.S. school.</p> <p>The fundamental hypocrisy of white racism is exposed.</p>	<p>Kennedy ends his remarks here by saying that white people who say there is nothing wrong with the status quo undermine their position by admitting that they would never want to be black.</p> <p>Racism is immoral: this is a challenge to those who defend racism by saying God made blacks inferior to whites.</p>
<p>(E) Betty Freidan NOW Statement of Purpose, 1966</p>	<p>Women are living longer and need meaningful work opportunities.</p> <p>Raising children is not a profession, and it does not represent all that a woman is capable of doing.</p> <p>White women work in menial, low-paying jobs, and black women can only find service jobs as maids or janitors.</p> <p>If this doesn't change, women workers will become a permanent underclass.</p>	<p>Friedan was the author of the groundbreaking study <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>, published in 1963.</p> <p>She challenged the restrictive, oppressive new social norm that women trade an education for marriage and stay within the home as much as possible—a view promoted by male authorities who were invested in presenting the U.S. as a wealthy nation where women did not have to work, as opposed to the Soviet Union.</p> <p>NOW would go on to lead many judicial battles against sex discrimination.</p>
<p>(F) Photograph of President Johnson listening to a tape from a soldier, 1968</p>	<p>Johnson listens to a tape-recorded message from his son-in-law in Vietnam.</p> <p>He is listening intently, looking down, but also seems to be pained by what he hears.</p>	<p>The war was not over in 1968 like most Americans had assumed it would be in 1964 when Johnson made his first promises to win the war against communist North Vietnam.</p> <p>Johnson felt personal responsibility for every soldier drafted to fight in Vietnam. News that they were fighting a hopeless war they could not win put him in a terrible bind: he was committed to win the war so no more Americans had to die, but he could not end it without sending more Americans there to fight and perhaps die.</p>
<p>(G) Lyndon Johnson Medicare speech honoring President Truman, 1965</p>	<p>Johnson praises Truman for focusing not just on the big picture, but on the average Americans who fight for the poor, elderly, and invisible.</p> <p>He honors Truman for valuing the rights of the powerless.</p>	<p>Medicare extended health care coverage to elderly Americans. It was vehemently opposed by conservative politicians as “communism” and big government.</p> <p>Johnson based his Great Society on giving all Americans true equality of opportunity.</p>

Document	Summary	Notes
<p>(H) Jackie Robinson Telegram to President Johnson, 1965</p>	<p>Robinson tells Johnson to send the National Guard or U.S. Army to Selma, Alabama, to protect the civil rights activists.</p> <p>He refers to white state officials and police as “legalized hatchet men.”</p>	<p>Robinson clearly feels that he has the right to speak plainly to the president, not because he is a baseball star but because he is an American citizen outraged by state officials and police openly breaking the law.</p> <p>Robinson’s anger was felt and expressed by black—and white—Americans across the nation.</p> <p>Johnson responded by sending both the National Guard and the Army to Alabama.</p>
<p>(I) Barry Goldwater Acceptance speech for Republican nomination for President, 1964</p>	<p>It is unclear whom Goldwater is referring to when he says that America is “menaced” by “bullies and marauders.”</p> <p>His reference to “those who elevate the state and downgrade the citizen” could be taken as attacking states’-rights advocates who used violence to stop civil rights enforcement, or as attacking those who try to enforce federal law at the state level.</p>	<p>Goldwater was the Republican candidate for president in 1964, running against Lyndon Johnson.</p> <p>He did not support desegregation or civil rights legislation. He famously said, “You can’t legislate morality.”</p> <p>His speech is deliberately vague, but his supporters knew he was condemning civil rights activists.</p>
<p>(J) <i>Williams, Lewis, Boynton</i> v. <i>George Wallace and the State of Alabama</i> 1965</p>	<p>The finding says that Americans have the constitutional right to freedom of assembly—even in Alabama.</p> <p>The violence done to the marchers—not the march itself—is clearly unconstitutional.</p> <p>People who have violated others’ constitutional right to vote have no justification in calling on the Constitution to protect their actions against people trying to vote.</p>	<p>Segregationists constantly claimed that desegregation was unconstitutional because it enforced federal law in southern states.</p> <p>This finding says that civil rights activists, and average black Americans, have had so many of their fundamental constitutional rights violated by segregationists that it is laughable to have those segregationists then demand that the Constitution be obeyed.</p>

Thesis Construction

How did Americans debate the meaning of Constitutional rights in the 1960s?

Sample Thesis Paragraph:

The questions the United States faced during the 1960s cut to the core of America's identity and exposed deep internal conflicts. The world, America's role in it, and American life at home were changing rapidly. As Americans asked themselves what values they would live by and carry forward into the next stage of their history, they found themselves deep in an identity crisis. Civil rights (Docs A, C, D, and J), women's rights (Doc E), rights while under arrest (Doc B), and the right to be free of poverty (Doc G), were all debated. Did the Constitution really protect all of these categories, or was it being misinterpreted at best, deliberately perverted at worst?

Student DBQ Paragraph Outline Worksheet

First Full-Body Paragraph

- Topic Sentence that supports your thesis.
- Documents that you would use in support of this topic within your thesis.
- Your citation of ONE document (Analyze it using the chart you have created.)

- _____
- _____

- _____

Second Full-Body Paragraph

- Topic Sentence that supports your thesis.
- Documents that you would use in support of this topic within your thesis.
- Your citation of ONE document (Analyze it using the chart you have created.)

- _____
- _____

- _____

Third Full-Body Paragraph

- Topic Sentence that supports your thesis.
- Documents that you would use in support of this topic within your thesis.
- Your citation of ONE document (Analyze it using the chart you have created.)

• _____

•• _____

••• _____

Sample DBQ Paragraph Outline

SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH OUTLINE

• While the documents provided show a diverse array of events, a common theme emerges. As America matured as a country, she grappled with a difficult question: What should the role of the federal government, its responsibilities, and its limits be? For example, the correspondence between the Justices emphasizes their examination of the limits versus the responsibilities of the government during an arrest (Doc B). George Wallace and Robert Kennedy each offered statements on the integration of the University of Alabama. Both speak of values and beliefs and yet offer a different role for the federal government. Wallace suggests the role of the federal government is limited because this issue is a state issue (Doc C). Kennedy argues that the rights of individuals are being unfairly restricted in certain situations (education) and unfairly applied in others (the draft), and therefore the use of federal troops is necessary (Doc D).

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THESIS

•• George Wallace and his discussion of states' rights at the door of the University of Alabama (Doc C). John Kennedy discussing the integration of the University of Alabama (Doc D). Jackie Robinson's response to the 1965 events (Doc H). Court decision to allow marches in Selma, Alabama (Doc J).

SAMPLE DOCUMENT CITATION

••• The civil rights marchers in Alabama chose to exercise their First Amendment right to gather and march to express their grievances about their lack of access to the right to vote. Representatives of the State of Alabama felt the marchers were a threat to public safety and therefore did not have the right to march. Federal courts examined the Constitution to answer the questions (Doc J).