Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

THE COMPARATIVE ESSAY PACKET

UNDERSTANDING THE TASK

Before students plan and write essays, they must understand the tasks that the prompts ask them to perform. This begins with understanding the words that prompts use.

A COMPARATIVE prompt requires students to compare AND contrast (similarities and differences). In order to fully demonstrate understanding a student must be able to show both elements although not to an equal degree.

COMPARE: A student must find common elements between the chosen or designated regions or cultural areas. These elements will likely be included in the essay prompt (i.e. Social, Political). The level to which the elements are similar may vary from being slightly similar to identical.

CONTRAST: A student must find distinguishable elements between the chosen or designated regions or cultural areas. These elements will likely be included in the essay prompt (i.e. Social, Political). The level to which the elements are different may vary from being slightly different to completely different.

PARTS OF A PROMPT

Compare and contrast essays begin with a prompt. The prompt will specify the actions a student is required to perform. It will also specify a definite chronological period from World History and provide two to three geographical or cultural regions from which a student may choose. All compare and contrast essays will follow this format. It will also designate a specific historical theme used within the AP World History course guide.

*In their essays, student must address all parts of the prompt.* This means that in the course of the essay, a student has to have a comparison, a contrast, mention both regions/countries, and the time period. If the prompt specifies themes to discuss, then students will also have to discuss each of the themes at least once. There is a higher and lower standard on the rubric.

Use the following Compare and Contrast essay prompt to assist with these exercises.

*Compare and contrast the POLITICAL and SOCIAL structures in any TWO civilizations in the period 3000 BCE – 600 BCE.*

1. *Southwest Asia (Mesopotamia)*
2. *North Africa (Egypt)*
3. *South Asia (India)*

**UNDERSTANDING THE PARTS OF THE PROMPT**

* + - 1. What are the elements of POLITICAL STRUCTURES one should consider? What are you looking to compare?
      2. What are the elements of SOCIAL STRUCTURES one should consider? What are you looking to compare?

The Time Period

Compare and Contrast Essays for AP World History will specify a time period. Students are expected to not only recognize the time periods, which are based on the chronological parameters of the AP World History Course Guide but major developments within each period.

1. What time period does the prompt specify?

2. Summarize any developments during this time period that you can remember.

**themes**

Prompts will also identify one or more of the FIVE overarching themes used in the AP World History course guide. Two acronyms or pneumonic devices (GSPRITE or PERSIAG) help students remember these themes – you should use one or both. The prompt may specify only one theme or it may specify two or three. If the prompt specifies a theme, a student must address that in his or her essay. However, if the prompt does not specify a theme it is a good idea for students to utilize the themes to demonstrate their understanding of the historical relevance.

**Based on the prompt, what themes are students required to discuss?**

In the above prompt, there are two broad themes. To fully discuss each theme it is best if you break it down into two or three sub-topics.

Social: What sub-themes or specific elements of social structures are best suited to analyzing this region in the time period 3000 BCE – 600 CE?

Political: What sub-themes or specific elements of political structures are best suited to analyzing this region in the time period 3000 BCE – 600 CE?

WRITING A THESIS

***All essays must have an acceptable thesis, which address the issues and themes specified in the prompt*. One of the simplest and most successful ways is to use a format called WAHP3 – “What is it about, how will you prove it - give me three ways?”**

**For instance if the prompt was “Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia” an acceptable thesis sentence would look something like this: *While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism*. The “WA” part of the thesis is empire formation in Rome and Han China while the “HP3” includes (1) both centralized power and (2) both used militaries to expand; and one difference (3) different political philosophies. Please note that this thesis contains themes specified in the prompt (empire building), two regions (Rome and Han China), at least one comparison (there are two) and at least one difference, and the time period. Please note that is critical to include the time period because without it an essay might not be historical valid.**

**It is best in the thesis statement to make at least two significant and direct comparisons – one should be a similarity and one a difference (if the prompt asks you to compare). It is NOT acceptable to simply say “the two civilizations were similar and different.” This is paraphrasing or copying the prompt. A student must qualify the prompt by fleshing it out in detail.**

**A thesis may constitute two sentences but they must be next to each other. Many of my students will separate “WA” and “HP3” sentences.**

*Compare and contrast the POLITICAL and SOCIAL structures in any TWO civilizations in the period 3000 BCE – 600 BCE.*

1. *Southwest Asia (Mesopotamia)*
2. *North Africa (Egypt)*
3. *South Asia (India)*

**WRITE A THESIS**

**Based on the prompt, write a thesis using Egypt and Mesopotamia.**

THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

**As are the Document Based Question and Change and Continuity over Time essays, the Comparative essay in AP World History is graded through a process called Core Scoring. Students must earn all points of the Basic Core before earning points of the Expanded Core. *No matter how sophisticated an essay is if a student misses on indicator of the Basic Core, he or she cannot earn points of the Expanded Core*.**

**Some teachers teach students to write a simple thesis sentence. While it is true that a single sentence can earn the thesis indicator point on the rubric, good teachers and good students demand a higher level or performance. In AP World History, teach the student to write a thesis or introduction paragraph.**

The introduction paragraph is the single most important paragraph you will write; the second most important is the first body paragraph. These two contain the first ideas and proofs a grader will read. The quality or lack of quality of these sentences can prejudice a reader about your whole essay. Introduction paragraphs need contain only two sentences – a hook and a thesis sentence. But hook sentences or historical introductions add color and are the attention grabbers that start an essay. They most resemble newspaper headlines. *The best hooks tell the history of the essay prompt’s topic leading up to that essay prompt.* A thesis paragraph usually begins with a historical introduction. Students should tell the history of the topic and region leading up to their thesis statement.

One student in particular, in her essay on who would win a war between Sparta and Athens used this hook and thesis:

*Once upon a time two boys were born in Ancient Greece*. *One was born in Athens and given a quill, a scroll and sent off to gymnasium; the other born in Sparta was given a sword and shield and sent off to army camp. While some dreamers argue that the pen is mightier than the sword, in the Peloponnesian War, Sparta’s sword defeated Athen’s pen for military, social, and economic reasons.*

Based on the prompt *“Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia”* a thesis paragraph would look something like this:

***Both the Roman Empire and Han China were the products of processes and historical states which preceded them. After 509 BCE the Roman Republic began the imperial process by conquering neighboring lands and peoples and settling colonies across the Mediterranean; on the other hand, the Han Chinese inherited the ruling philosophy of Legalism and borders of China from the Qin Dynasty. While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism*.**

WRITING HOOK SENTENCES OR HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS

*Compare and contrast the POLITICAL and SOCIAL structures in any TWO civilizations in the period 3000 BCE – 600 BCE.*

1. *Southwest Asia (Mesopotamia)*
2. *North Africa (Egypt)*
3. *South Asia (India)*

Based on the essay prompt, can you think of some creative and interesting hooks or historical introductions about the worlds first civilizations? Please write two below.

1.

2.

**ORGANIZING OF YOUR ESSAY**

**The body paragraphs that follow should compare and contrast three themes or groups. Do not create two paragraphs solely on the two geographic regions. Nor is it quality writing to create one paragraph on similarities and one on differences. Create paragraphs using themes from the College Board Course Guide (see SCRIPTED or PERSIAN) and within each compare and contrast your two regions or states. Maintain parallel order as articulated in your thesis sentence. And each paragraph should have a detailed and specific topic sentence.**

Based on the prompt *“Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia”* our thesis paragraph was:

***Both the Roman Empire and Han China were the products of processes and historical states which preceded them. After 509 BCE the Roman Republic began the imperial process by conquering neighboring lands and peoples and settling colonies across the Mediterranean; on the other hand, the Han Chinese inherited the ruling philosophy of Legalism and borders of China from the Qin Dynasty. While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism*.**

**The second paragraph or first body paragraph would discuss the similarities of centralized power in the Roman and Han Empires; the third paragraph would discuss the similarities of military expansion; and the last paragraph would deal with the differences between Han and Roman political philosophies.**

***Students must substantiate the thesis with appropriate historical evidence*. It is not sufficient to make a statement without use of proof or evidence. Students should use evidence, which is clear and detailed. In each paragraph, students should cite include key vocabulary, dates, historical events, persons, trends, and occurrences. The simplest formula is to have one fact per comparison category; if the paragraph is on centralized power in the Roman and Han Empires, your paragraph should have at least one piece of evidence on Roman and one on Han. More is always warranted AND use comparative vocabulary. An example is**

**“*In* *Classical Rome Augustus Caesar attempted to centralize power through the creation of an emperor. He controlled the military, oversaw the appointment of governors and their operations and appointed members to the Senate. Similarly, Han China’s emperors also oversaw the bureaucracy and centralized all functions within the state under his control*. *Both dispatched embassies and received ambassadors, and commanded armies in battle. However, the Han centralization differed from the Romans in that the Han had a professional bureaucracy answerable to the emperor and a more secure idea of dynastic succession; in Rome bureaucrats often came from the Roman elite or the military and their loyalty was questionable. Their primary concerns were not to the state or emperor but personal aggrandizement or future glory and rank*. *Additionally, for the 400 years of Han rule with the single exception of the rule of Wang Mang, all emperors came from the same dynasty unlike Rome where Augustus and his successors never clearly established a method for picking the next emperor and dynasties changed regularly. Emperors were often made by the revolt of legions or through complex deals between contenders.*”**

###### MAKING COMPARISONS

***Students must make two or more relevant, direct comparisons between or among societies*. Students should organize their essays by grouping in a relevant manner. The acronym P.E.R.S.I.A.G. or G.S.P.R.I.T.E. will suffice, and they should use three major groups. Within the groups, the student should compare and contrast the two civilizations. They set up directed comparisons. Often students fail to make direct comparisons or contrasts. One of the simplest ways is to use vocabulary which sets it up. Listed below are words denoting “similar” and “different.” There are variations based on word combinations and tenses but this list should provide some assistance in making directed comparisons.**

**SIMILARITY**

SIMILAR SIMILARLY THE SAME AS IN COMPARISON LIKE

EQUAL PARALLEL CORRESPONDING COMPARATIVELY BOTH

**DIFFERENCES**

IN CONTRAST BUT ALTHOUGH DISSIMILAR

EVEN THOUGH DISTINCT WHEREAS ON THE OTHER HAND

OPPOSE VARIES UNLIKE CONTRARY

INCOMPARABLE OTHERWISE DISPARITY DISTINCTIVE

**USE OF COMPARATIVE VOCABULARY**

**In the passage below, circle or underline words which set up a compare and contrast.**

**“*In* *Classical Rome Augustus Caesar attempted to centralize power through the creation of an emperor. He controlled the military, oversaw the appointment of governors and their operations and appointed members to the Senate. Similarly, Han China’s emperors also oversaw the bureaucracy and centralized all functions within the state under his control*. *Both dispatched embassies and received ambassadors, and commanded armies in battle. However, the Han centralization differed from the Romans in that the Han had a professional bureaucracy answerable to the emperor and a more secure idea of dynastic succession; in Rome bureaucrats often came from the Roman elite or the military and their loyalty was questionable. Their primary concerns were not to the state or emperor but personal aggrandizement or future glory and rank*. *Additionally, for the 400 years of Han rule with the single exception of the rule of Wang Mang, all emperors came from the same dynasty unlike Rome where Augustus and his successors never clearly established a method for picking the next emperor and dynasties changed regularly. Roman emperors were often made by the revolt of legions or through complex deals between contenders.*”**

CHART: COMPARE & CONTRAST TWO CIVILIZATIONS

**COMPARISON REGIONS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**COMPARISON THEMES (2): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

***(For themes, use GSPRITE)***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **THESIS** | | | | |
|  | **1ST POINT OF COMPARISON** | **2ND POINT OF COMPARISON** | Key **Similarities and Differences** | **Analyze one reason**  **why each theme is similar/different** |
| **1st Topic Sentence** |  |  |  |  |
| **2nd Topic**  **Sentence** |  |  |  |  |
| **3rd Topic Sentence** |  |  |  |  |
| **CONCLUSION** | | | | |