Document Analysis

The ability to analyze primary and secondary sources is a key component of the AP World History course.

It is necessary for responding appropriately to short-answer questions and multiple-choice questions, and also accounts for three of the seven points earned on the document-based question (DBQ).

One of the key aspects of the DBQ is the recognition that the document is not neutral information. Students MUST evaluate the reliability and credibility of the resources.

KEY MISTAKES

1) Not going BEYOND what is already given in the document’s attribute when explaining who the speaker is, the historical occasion, etc.
   ○ Students do not earn any credit for simply repeating what is already provided.

2) Quoting the documents directly.
   ○ The key skill here is in analysis, not in re-writing the document. In order to reinforce this skill, assignments/assessments that include quotes of a document will not earn any credit in grading.

POINT OF VIEW

A person’s POV is made up of their personal frame of reference and the historical context in which they live.

**Frame of Reference:** This is influenced by a person’s gender, occupation, class, education, religion, personal interests and other aspects of their beings.

*Examples:* supporting the Dodgers baseball team, being a Wisconsin Badger alumni, being a lawyer, being an only child, being male or female, growing up wealthy/poor, etc.

**Historical Context:** This is made up of the society’s influences on a person. It can be societal values, economic pressures, political conditions or other things which influence the society.

*Examples:* gas prices, war, theocratic government, revolution, etc.
The SOAP Method of Document Analysis

S = Speaker  Who is the speaker? CORNPEG - class, occupation, religion, nationality, political position, ethnic identity, gender. Are they an insider or an outsider?

O = Occasion  Is there a current situation of importance (revolution, famine, prison, etc.)

A = Audience  To whom is the piece addressed? It may be a large or small group or one person.

P = Purpose  What is the reason for the text, cartoon, graph, etc.? Why was it created?

By applying the SOAP formula to each document, you will quickly learn to consider the POV of the author and assess the document for its reliability and credibility as a source.

Not every document will encompass every category.

NOTE: The act of seeing something first-hand, by itself, does not make one credible to write/speak about that event.

A speaker’s POV influences their writing/speaking about an event.

POV Statements: Summary + SOAP

Sentence 1: Summarize the document in a sentence that contains one or two facts and specifically refers to the author by name.

Sentence 2: S + O

It is important to EXPAND on the information given in the attribution. If all you do is reiterate the attribution given, you have not gone far enough.

Occasion provides the context of where it is and what is going on at that time.

Sentence 3: A + P
Example 1

Seneca, upper-class Roman philosopher and adviser to Emperor Nero, 1st century CE.

I do not believe that tools for the crafts were invented by wise men. The question of whether the hammer or the tongs came first does not seem important to me. Both were invented by someone with a mind that was nimble and sharp, but not great or elevated.

S = Seneca, philosopher, wealthy
0 = a time of oft-changing rulers
A = the elite classes, perhaps Nero
P = to elevate those who think, and downplay those who work

Summary & POV Statement: Seneca states that working with your mind is superior to working with your hands. Seneca is an educated member of the court of a powerful Roman emperor at a time when there had been years of instability in the Roman Empire after a series of weak emperors. He aims his words at the men of power in an attempt to justify their position in society and safeguard his own.

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Example 2

A rock carving from Mahabalipuram, southern India, ca. 600 C.E.

S = stone-cutters, most likely commissioned by Brahmin
0 = Hindu religion has spread throughout India by this time
A = illiterate population
P = illustrate stories of Hinduism, glorify the religion

Summary & POV Statement: The rock carving from Mahabalipuram depicts a scene featuring many Hindu deities. The carving was created by stone-cutters in India, most likely commissioned by Brahmin, at a time when the Hindu religion had spread throughout India and most of the population was illiterate. The work is designed to illustrate stories of the Hindu religion, and to glorify the religion.
Document 1

Sima Qian, historian of the Han 2nd century B.C.E., from his book *The Annals of Qin* - an account of the first emperor of the earlier Qin Dynasty.

When the august [wise] Emperor came to the throne, he created regulations and made the laws intelligent, and his subjects cherished his instructions. In the 26th year of his rule, he, for the first time, unified all under Heaven, and there were none who did not submit.

S =
O =
A =
P =

Summary & POV Statement:

Document 2

Plato, Greek philosopher, student of Socrates, from his book *Republic*, ca. 360 B.C.E.

Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings ... that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide ... cities will have no rest from evils ... nor, I think, will the human race.

S =
O =
A =
P =

Summary & POV Statement:
Document 3

Tyrtaeus, Spartan Greek poet who wrote at a time of war and slave rebellion during the seventh century B.C.E.

Apollo's mandate was which they brought from Pytho [a religious center]
Voicing the will of the God, nor were his words unfulfilled:
Authority in the Boule [council] and divine honors belong to the Kings
Under whose care has been set Sparta's city of charm

Summary & POV Statement:

Document 4

Detail of the Alexander Sarcophagus, Lebanon, ca. 350 BCE

Summary & POV Statement:
Xun Kuang (Xun Zi), Chinese Confucian philosopher during the Warring States Period, 250 B.C.E.

People are born with natural tendencies toward "waywardness": that is, a taste for profit and beauty and a susceptibility to jealousy and hate, all of which, if indulged in, would lead to disorder and criminality. In order to attain a oneness with the Way, and a dedication to morality, one needs the guidance of a proper teacher: only this would allow one to become morally upright. A proper teacher would have been trained in the teachings of the ancient sage kings who saw that human nature was inherently immoral and thus wrong. From this realization, the sage kings developed rituals and regulations to shape people toward morality.

Summary & POV Statement: