

Unit 2

Regional and Interregional Interactions: Trade, Islam, and Christendom

Composing an Introduction

Writing an effective introduction for a social science essay is an essential skill that requires the compounding abilities of analyzing (filtering), synthesizing (editing), and organizing one's thoughts into a defensible argument. A strong introduction will paraphrase the original question, provide essential background information for context, and indicate all major points to be thoroughly addressed in the body paragraphs through an all-encompassing thesis that presents the writer's main argument.

Compose an original introduction from the following sample question (be sure to complete *all* of the tasks):
Using the documents, discuss differences between the attitudes of Christianity and Islam toward merchants and trade from the religions' origins until about 1450. Are there indications of change over time in either case, or both?

The essential elements of an introduction:

- Contextualization:** describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt. Think of this as a "V" formation where you go from the broad to the specific.
 - The first sentence should be a BROAD STATEMENT about the historical events, developments, or processes that occurred BEFORE the topic of the prompt.
 - The successive sentences should offer more detail, BUT not too specific. Provide BACKGROUND INFORMATION (who?, what?, when?, where?).
 - The information included in the contextualization, CANNOT be repeated later in the essay for credit.
 - You must use at least ONE specific example (i.e., person, place, event), not to be repeated in the essay.
 - DO NOT DISCUSS THE DOCUMENTS in the contextualization.
 - Remember to think of this like the *Star Wars Crawl*.
- Thesis:** responds to the prompt with a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning. Points of contention include "A, B".
 - State your defensible, all-encompassing THESIS that RESPONDS TO THE PROMPT rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. However, use the LANGUAGE of the prompt.
 - Consider how you will GROUP YOUR DOCUMENTS: which ones work best together to make your argument?
 - CONNECT ALL MAJOR POINTS to be discussed in the body paragraphs in one-to-three sentences (do not just simply list the points, but develop them sufficiently).
 - For each MAJOR POINT, parenthetically list which docs will be used to defend it. Ex - (1, 2, 5, 6)
 - Underline your thesis statement.

World History: Introduction Rubric

Score	Mastery	Exceeding	Reinforcing	Developing	Nonexistent	Total
Opening (2)	Solid opening sentence; prior to the time of the prompt 2	Good opening sentence; prior to the time of the prompt 1.5	Decent opening; prior to the time of the prompt 1	Some topic reference; prior to the time of the prompt 0.5	No opening statement or wrong time period 0	
Context (3)	Precise setting of topic; relevant background information w/ S.H.E. & exact date(s) (as needed) 3	Effective setting of topic; some background facts mentioned; time within the decade (if needed) 2-2.5	General setting of topic; one or two brief background facts; correct era 1-1.5	Some setting of topic; little background information; wrong date(s) 0.5	No topic or background information 0	
Thesis (3)	Strong original & analytical thesis; answers all parts of the prompt; two or more claims 3	Effective & analytical thesis; addresses all parts of the prompt; two or more claims 2-2.5	Decent thesis; attempts to answer the prompt; underdeveloped claim(s) 1-1.5	Ineffective thesis; doesn't completely address the prompt; vague claim(s) 0.5	No thesis 0	
Organization (2)	Thoughtful progression of ideas; good spelling & grammar; good handwriting 2	Good progression of ideas; minor spelling or grammatical errors; legible 1.5	Main points tied to thesis with little commonality; several spelling & grammatical errors; readable 1	Main points tied to thesis with no commonality; many spelling & grammatical errors; difficult to read 0.5	No true introduction; -1 if the thesis is not <u>underlined</u> 0	
Total possible (10)						