



# AMERICA: THE LAST BEST HOPE

## Examples of Classroom Strategies for AP Classrooms

### DBQ Preparation

1. It is important that students practice reading and analyzing primary source documents on a regular basis. I like to use the *American Spirit* primary source book for this reason. It not only contains primary sources but also provides thought provoker questions to help students practice their analysis of the documents.
2. Other DBQ practice books can be helpful because they break the DBQ process down into worksheets.  
The books that I use are:
  - a. Fraker, Alan & Spoehr, Luther. *Doing the DBQ: Teaching & Learning with Document Based Questions*. College Examination Board and Educational Testing Service, 1995.
  - b. Hilton, Kenneth. *Document-Based Assessment Activities for U.S. History Classes*. Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch, 1999.
3. It is good to expose students to the DBQ early in the school year and have them break down the documents, practice making their prior knowledge lists and work on organizing their essay. One method that I use is to distribute an actual DBQ from a previous AP US History Exam and have the students analyze it using the worksheet that I wrote below. Please see "AP US HISTORY DBQ WORKSHEET" on pages 3-5.
4. I also recommend that students write at least one timed DBQ essay during class. This simulates the testing experience and gives them the chance to write with the time constraints.

### Essay Writing

1. Students frequently need assistance organizing their essays so it's a good idea to review basic essay writing techniques early in the year. One source is the "Five Paragraph Essay Model" even though it may be more rigid than the essays that they will have to write. Nevertheless, the basics of a solid introduction, determining main points/sub-topics, writing a solid thesis and then using solid evidence in the body paragraphs to help support the thesis is necessary for any essay. As a result, using the five paragraph model as a foundation can be very helpful for students.
2. Since the AP US History Exam is timed, make sure to time the students so they are comfortable with the time limits.

### Timed Tests and Quizzes

1. The Multiple-Choice portion of the AP US History Exam is 80 questions long with 55 minutes to complete the answers. Therefore, once again, provide students with a number of timed tests.



# AMERICA: THE LAST BEST HOPE

## Multiple Choice

1. The multiple-choice questions on the AP US History Exam are harder than most multiple choice exams. In fact, there are often more than one right answer given for each multiple choice question. As a result, students must choose the “most right” answer instead of just a correct answer. In order to help students with this process, include a number of multiple-multiple choice questions on every test. These questions could have anywhere from one to five correct answers which makes the students read every option instead of just finding a right answer and then moving on quickly. Students may complain about these questions but they seem to help them focus and take the time to read each multiple choice option.
2. Since there is a time limit on the AP US History Exam, the students must keep moving through the questions and can't get bogged down on one or two questions. Teachers can review how long to stay on each question and what steps to take so that they can move on (make a mark by the question, make sure to skip the question on the answer sheet to leave a blank, make good use of extra time at the end to re-visit these questions).

## Vocabulary Development

1. Many students struggle with some of the college level vocabulary that is used on the AP US History Exam. As a result, teachers can help them develop basic vocabulary throughout the year.
2. Reading Logs – For each chapter that they read in their textbooks, students can complete a reading log. One of the components of the reading log is finding three vocabulary words and defining them.
3. Vocabulary Chart – This is a basic two-column chart where the students write down new vocabulary in the left column and the definition on the right. Please see the “VOCABULARY CHART” on page 6.
4. Word Wall – This is a wall in the classroom where students can display new words for all to see. By seeing the words on a regular basis, students gain more comfort using and working with each of the words. It can also teachers to use the words and refer to them so that students truly learn how to apply them.



# AMERICA: THE LAST BEST HOPE

## AP US HISTORY DBQ WORKSHEET

STUDY PARTNERS \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the main parts of the question?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Write your PK (Prior Knowledge) list. You need PK infused into your essay so you might want to pull from this list later.:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What documents will you use (remember  $\frac{1}{2} + 1$ )? Why?

DOC LTR	MAIN POINT(S)



# AMERICA: THE LAST BEST HOPE

4. Review the question. Look at your PK and the Document information. Do you see any relationship/connection? What ideas does it give you? Now, write your thesis statement.  
THESIS STATEMENT:

5. Now, what are the main support points/sub-topics that you will focus on to prove your thesis? Make sure that you have PK and Document facts to support each of the ST's (sub-topics).

SUB-TOPIC #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Document Support Information	Prior Knowledge Support Information

SUB-TOPIC #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Document Support Information	Prior Knowledge Support Information

SUB-TOPIC #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Document Support Information	Prior Knowledge Support Information



# AMERICA : THE LAST BEST HOPE

SUB-TOPIC #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Document Support Information	Prior Knowledge Support Information

**INTRODUCTION:** Write your Introduction in essay form. Remember to have a little background/context, a solid thesis and the main points/sub-topics that you outlined to prove your thesis) **UNDERLINE** or **HIGHLIGHT** your thesis. Use a separate piece of paper.

