

Siobhan Boyle's Guide to AICE A Level American History Studying:

What helped me write successful papers was to answer as many essay questions as possible so I could study the policies related to these questions. I wrote the most successful papers when I followed this study method and then can apply the same evidence to the timed papers. In this document I will walk you through how I studied and how I plan for answering AICE Questions. I also have some sample plans that you can use to help you study on certain topics and at the end, there is an example of plan I actually used on a timed paper, and how the essay turned out! Go to page 3 if you want to look at the sample essay plans, go to page 11 for help turning those plans into essays.

Here are the IN-DEPTH steps I take when studying/planning:

1. Identifying possible questions:

- a. One of the main things I used when studying were the lists of past AICE questions, and I would use those to start out my questions that would lead my studying and research.
- b. Example: If in class we had been talking about the civil rights movement, I would look at all past exam questions on civil rights and then choose a few of the questions. Like:
 - i. **Who did more to help improve the civil rights of African Americans in the 1950s: Chief Justice Warren or Rosa Parks?**
 - ii. **'Totally dominated by Martin Luther King.' How far do you agree with this assessment of the civil rights movement in the 1950s?**
 - iii. **How important was CORE to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s?**
 - iv. **How far do you agree that, by 1960, the Civil Rights Movement had achieved little?**
- c. Once you have these questions, it will give your studying a direction and help you focus your research better.

2. Next step is to identify your claims or reasons to support your paper:

- a. This is probably the most important part of this process because it ensures that your paper answers the question, answers ALL PARTS of the question, and that it HAS AT LEAST TWO SIDES. Paper's can have more than two sides!!! But this can also be one of the hardest parts of the process because if you mess it up, your paper will suffer.
- b. Example: For the question, "**How successful was the presidency of Nixon?**" there are only two sides. Helpful hint: this question may seem very simple since it is so short but this question has a lot of similar questions on this topic that have been asked on previous exams. (I suggest at some point that you answer this question.) Anyway, the two sides for this question would be simply:

- i. The presidency of Nixon was success.
 - ii. The presidency of Nixon was not successful.
 - iii. (don't overthink the reasons! The evidence should be what is in-depth! This is meant to focus your essay and research to make sure you answer the question)
- c. Example: For the question, "**Assess the reasons why, against all expectations, Truman won the 1948 presidential election.**" there should be multiple reasons on your plans. These are harder to plan out than a question with two clear arguments. For these, I often had trouble coming up with actual claims but that is okay in a timed situation. You might need to have an understanding of the evidence you are going to use before you actually formulate your claims and thesis. Here is what I came up with for claims on this question:
- i. Truman's campaign and track record
 - ii. Truman's appearance to the public
 - iii. Truman's difference from Roosevelt and his party
 - iv. (As you can tell, all these claims are based on facts. That is because with these questions, I tend to work backwards and start with the evidence then get the claims from those facts.) In my opinion, 'Assess' questions are the hardest to answer but remember that they are NOT TWO SIDED!!! These questions are almost always asking you why and they have only one claim which means you need to know IN-DEPTH about that one claim.
- d. Example: For the question, "**“By the late 1970s the American people were less united than they had been in the late 1960s” How far do you agree?**" there are more than two sides. Because the question is asking about two different time periods, it will be important to discuss both time periods. Here is how I would structure my plan for this question:
- i. 1960s: People were united
 - ii. 1960s: People were not united
 - iii. 1970s: People were united
 - iv. 1970s: People were not united
 - v. (see how there are actually four claims, two for each time period). Don't freak out about these four-sided questions, they are still rare on AICE exams, but they are EXTREMELY helpful for studying because you can tackle two questions at once!! It is good to try questions like these when you are studying and planning! They are also good on exams because they have so many sides that you can get away with less evidence as long as you address all parts of the question.

3. Finding Evidence to support claims:

- a. This is the most time-consuming step, but it is also the most straight-forward. Once you have both claims, you need to find statistics, policies, or events that will support each claim. This is where the studying comes in because this was the most helpful part of this study process. If you need more evidence, it is critical that you do research and go through your notes to find evidence that support ALL THE CLAIMS!! Doing research on one side, will not help you and your paper will be extremely unbalanced. I am only going to give you one example for this step, but there are a TON of study-plans that I have used after this. These will give you a good idea of what your evidence should look like.
- b. I wanted to address the ‘Assess’ question here since planning for those is more difficult. **“Assess the reasons why, against all expectations, Truman won the 1948 presidential election.”** Our claims are:
 - i. Truman’s campaign and track record
 - ii. Truman’s appearance to the public
 - iii. Truman’s difference from Roosevelt and his party
 - iv. For the first claim the evidence I was using to sum it up was how aggressive Truman’s campaign was, the support of democrats in the presidency, and his experience with WWII. As you can see, not all of this evidence is that specific as long as there is some historical context and ANALYSIS you will get points. For the second claim, my evidence was Truman’s executive orders to please the public like the Truman doctrine and Executive order 9835. These are more specific and there is a solid policy there to support the claim but it still needs analysis when you write your paper.
- c. Evidence can be almost anything within bounds. I found the best thing that worked for me was when I used things like: policies (executive order, new laws, amendments), quotes (from presidents, leaders, or other important figures of the time), and hard statistics that show conditions and attitudes of the time period.

Steps: Identify our question, find ALL the claims, and then find evidence to support each claim.

Examples of Siobhan's plans and study guides:

'There were no great differences of domestic policy between the Democratic and Republican parties in the late 1940s and 1950s.' How far do you agree?

- There were great differences
 - Taft-Hartley act of 1947
 - dealt with labor organizations, contract negotiations and their disputes. Truman vetoed because he was pro-labor, slave labor bill. Truman called it "a dangerous intrusion on free speech", passed anyway and became law. 25% of workforce was unionized about 50 million workers had union contracts. During the war unions agreed not to strike but now war is over. 5 million workers involved in strikes after war ended. The act wanted to take ability to strike away from unions and wanted to get rid of radicals in unions. Federal gov could break a strike if it stopped public health and New Deal democrat. 81,000 union officers had to file as communists after this act was passed, if you were a communist you have to register with the government, 'unionists are just a bunch of communists. was proposed by Fred Harley, a republican, and Truman, a democrat, vetoed it. This shows how Truman was not as hard on communism as he could have been.
 - Housing act of 1959
 - established loans for public housing with the elderly. Public housing is typically supported by democrats because it can increase taxes and government spending. The act was vetoed by republican president Eisenhower.
 - Eisenhower vs. Adlai Stevenson
 - in the election of 1952. Stevenson felt Eisenhower was too soft on the oversight of nuclear testing because it would increase risks of nuclear war.
- There were no great differences
 - St Lawrence seaway act of 1954
 - Dennis Chavez (D), Herbert H. Lehman (D) and Homer Ferguson (R), Alexander Wiley ® all supported the bill showing bipartisan support
 - Interstate Highway act
 - was bipartisan bill only 19 congressmen voted against it so congressman from both parties voted for it.

- Because while was mainly so it was maintained and created by the federal government, it was regulated by states. This made it so republicans who believed in more state rights want to support it.
 - Also, republicans wanted less government spending to lower taxes and the bill returned more than \$6 in economic productivity for every dollar it cost. Therefore, the government would not have to increase taxes high to continue paying for it.
- Eisenhower (republican) continued the Fair Deal ideas of Truman (democrat) with the New deal
 - Both plans supported raising minimum wage, extension of social security.
- Both support Civil rights movement
 - Truman desegregated the army by 1946 and Eisenhower passed civil rights act and helps Little Rock 9. This shows how there were bipartisan efforts to help the Civil rights movement showing no great differences between democratic and republican domestic policies.
- Similarities between Truman and Eisenhower Doctrine
 - Both had end goal of preventing communism and aiding other countries with their fights against communist countries around them especially in Europe. This shows how again the parties had very similar domestic policies because people from both parties supported the fight on communism.

Assess the reasons the fear of communism grew from 1945-1960 in the U.S.

- Reason 1- War had ended so more people didn't want it to expand to America
 - Communism was growing in Korea and America was getting involved in 1950 (Korean War)
 - Communism was expanding in Europe a lot, mainly in the middle east
- Reason 2- Communism in the media
 - 'Invasion of Body Snatchers' 1956
 - Showing of anti-communist videos in schools
 - Duck and Cover video shows fears during cold war about the soviets
 - Hollywood 10, including Charlie Chapman were accused of communism so the fear of communism spreading even in media
- Reason 3- The McCarthy Hearings

- By the end of Truman era, some type of loyalty security check had been conducted on more than 20% of the American workforce, caused people to see it being clearly tested on each other so
- Arthur Miller was accused and then was criticized his entire life for being communist

'Kennedy's achievements while president were not very impactful'. How far do you agree?

- They were impactful
 - Addition of American troops in Vietnam war
 - The number of troops rose from 900 in 1960 to about 23300 by the time Kennedy was assassinated
 - Bay of pig's invasion
 - The achievement resulted in the capture of over 1000 Americans and the death of over 100
 - They were held in Cuba for 20 months
 - Also sparked Cuban Missile Crisis where the issue almost became war involving Soviet Union
- They were not impactful
 - Congress only enacted 304/653 of the bills proposed by the white house
 - Kennedy never passed any laws on civil rights during his presidency yet was known to be a supporter, showing he moved slowly
 - Creation of the peace corps
 - The peace core popularity declined after Kennedy formed it and even lost federal funding in the 70s
 - only volunteers located in two countries
 - The equal pay act of 1963
 - Did not include executives, administrators, outside salespeople, and professionals
 - In 1963 women made 58.9% of a man's earnings and in 1964 that only increased to 59.1%

How successful was the presidency of Johnson?

Similar questions:

- 'Johnson's presidency created great positive change". How far do you agree?
- How far did President Johnson's domestic policies help unite the American people?

It was successful:

- a. Poverty percentage declined from 20 to 12 percent between 1964 and 1974.
- b. Community action programs, still in effect today with Community action agencies. Over 1,000 were in operation by the end of Johnson's presidency (HEAD START, Child nutrition act, higher edu act, upward bound, water quality and clean air act, snap act, animal welfare act, gun control act, bilingual edu act, all Johnson community action programs).
- c. Voting Rights Act of 1965- banned literacy tests. Aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Outlawed literacy tests and provided for the appointment of Federal examiners (with the power to register qualified citizens to vote) in those jurisdictions that were "covered" according to a formula provided in the statute.
- d. Fair Housing Act of 1968: prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability. This was under Johnson

It was not successful:

- e. Johnsons approval rating steadily dropped over his presidency with a starting approval rating of about 75% to under 40%.
- f. Overall government funding devoted to the poor increased greatly. Between 1965 and 1968, expenditures targeted at the poor doubled, from \$6 billion to \$12 billion, and then doubled again to \$24.5 billion by 1974.
- g. Between 1964 and 1968, race riots shattered many American cities, with federal troops deployed in the Watts Riots in Los Angeles as well as in the Detroit and Washington, D.C., riots. (ROCHESTER RACE RIOTS, 4 DEATHS, 350 INJURIES, 1000 ARRESTED, NY national guard, Rochester PD)
- h. The continuation of the Vietnam War caused a lot of turmoil in America. (counterculture movement against war and for peace)

How successful was the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s?

In the 1960s

- It was not successful

- In 1960 women made 61 cents to every man's dollar and by 1970 they made 59 cents which shows it did not improve at all and lowered a bit from what it was.
 - The feminine mystique started up a lot of the feminist movement and did not include minority women at all, only middle class white women.
 - Ladies Home Journal strike- in 1960 100 women sat in for 11 hours. Biggest magazines for women of its time. Editorial staff is all male. Demanded all female editorial staff, nonwhite women according to percentage of minority population affirmative action, raise women's salary. Editor refuses to resign and only agreed to allow feminist portion in one version. Eventually a woman did become editor in 1973.
 - In 1960 there were 17,190 cases of rape in America and by 1970 there were over 37,990 cases of rape.
- It was successful
 - Civil Rights act of 1964- Prohibits employment discriminations based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Starts to include women in the mix
 - However, this act had good intentions, it really only made large strides toward equal rights since it was still the first of its kind.
 - By 1965, one out of every four married women in America under 45 had used the pill. This shows that the use of contraceptives was normalized.
 - EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION IN 1968, RULED BEING FEMALE WAS NOT AN OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR BEING A FLIGHT ATTENDANT, SO NOW A MAN CAN SERVE DRINKS IN THE SKY. IT BECAME LETTER CARRIER, NOW NOT CONGRESSMAN, NOT HISPANIC TRY LATINX OR CHICANO, NOT INDIAN BUT NATIVE AMERICAN.
 - The Equal Pay Act of 1963 is a United States labor law amending the Fair Labor Standards Act, aimed at abolishing wage disparity based on sex (see Gender pay gap). This is the first of its kind but shows women are starting to get that legislation and impact started.
 - Kennedy quote, “much remains to be done to achieve full equality of economic opportunity for women”

In the 1970s

- It was successful
 - Ms. Magazine- 1971 first editor was Letty Cottin, and Gloria Steinam is founder, first magazine to feature prominent American women and advocate for equal rights

amendment, put domestic violence and sexual harassment on its cover, feature national study on date rape. Also spoke out on the criminalization of abortion. Letty Cottin is forgotten because she was also Jewish. Took movement into a magazine.

- Title IX of the Education Amendments prohibits sex discrimination in all aspects of education programs that receive federal support.
- Landmark Supreme Court ruling Roe v. Wade makes abortion legal. The Supreme Court in a separate ruling ban sex-segregated "help wanted" advertising.
- Paula Hawkins of Florida, a Republican, becomes the first woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate without following her husband or father in the job.
- It was not successful
 - Paula Hawkins of Florida, a Republican, becomes the first woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate without following her husband or father in the job. Shows how long it took to do this
 - Take back the night in 1976. Women walked streets to prove they're safe. Taking control of own dialogue, I can take care of myself. Still, no actions were taken over these protests.
 - Over 82,990 cases of rape in America by 1980 which is over 4x the rape rate in 1960

How successful were the attempts to improve the position of native Americans and Hispanics in the 1960s and 1970s?

1960s

- The attempts were successful
 - Indian Civil Rights act- to ensure that the American Indian is afforded the broad constitutional rights secured to other Americans, First, it confers certain rights on all persons who are subject to the jurisdiction of a tribal government. Second, it authorizes federal courts to enforce many of these rights.
 - Occupation of Alcatraz- grabbed national attention
- The attempts were not successful
 - Occupation of Alcatraz- they did not 'win' Alcatraz island, protest was kind of for nothing. http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3348
 - Sterilization of native Americans and women of color- somewhere between 25 and 40% of native American women were sterilized by the Indian health service
 - In 1970, the Indian unemployment rate was 10 times the national average

- The typical resident of the reserves had completed just five years of school, and fewer than one adult in six had graduated high school
- By 1970, most native Americans in the united states had completed an average of 9 years of school. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/pc-2-1f/42043783v2p1d1gch3.pdf>

1970s

- The attempts were successful
 - Indian Education Act- establishes the Office of Indian Education and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, and provides federal funds for American Indian and Alaska Native education at all grade levels
 - In 1980, the federal government agreed to pay \$81.5 million to the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot of Maine, and \$105 million to the Sioux in South Dakota
 - Unemployment rate was 13% by 1980
- The attempts were not successful
 - The death rate among Native Americans exceeded that of the total U.S. population by a third. Deaths caused by pneumonia, hepatitis, dysentery, strep throat, diabetes, tuberculosis, alcoholism, suicide, and homicide were 2 to 60 times higher than the entire U.S. population
 - By 1980, 56% of native Americans had finished high school
 - Wounded Knee incident- South Dakota, in 1890, there was a massacre of over 800 men women and children, the us army just got a first machine gun and we want to use our new toy, part of the tribe was moving to a new reservation about 40 miles away. 200 members of the Lakota tribe AIM American Indian movement founded in 1968, they took the village of wounded knee, about three buildings very small, and took hostages and declared the land to be in independent nation as it had once been. this is a media stunt. Lakota means the people like the chosen one, they weren't farmers, they were hunter gatherer tribes nomadic a little. there happened to be people in these buildings, and they didn't hold guns, they just said you can't leave. FBI and federal marshals cornered them into a utilitarian 7/11 for 71 days, giving a middle finger to the fed. FBI agents were killed, the murderer sees himself as innocent, no hostages were killed, people were arrested, some got away before being prosecuted.

WRITING AN ESSAY FROM YOUR PLAN:

Those are some plans that I used to actually study. Plans on my actual essays are much less in depth, and much more compact. Below is the length of planning that I think would be perfect for a timed essay. As you can tell, the explanations are left out and it simply bullets evidence that I can use to support each claim.

How far do you agree that Truman should have won the Election of 1948?

- Truman's win was unexpected
 - Dewey had more political experience
 - Party split
 - Truman was less educated
 - Differences between him and Roosevelt
 - Low approval ratings- before election his approval rating was 36%
- Truman's win was expected
 - Truman's executive orders to look good in public's eye (9835 and Truman doctrine)
 - Truman was the incumbent
 - Truman ended WW2 and had won so people looked up
 - Track record of democrats in presidency before
 - Truman had aggressive campaign

Finally, I am going to put an actual essay I wrote and the planning below. My overall notes on the essay and suggestions for writing your essay!

Question: How far do you agree that in the years 1933-39 the Nazis established a police state to deal with the German Jews?

PLAN:

It was established to deal with German Jews

- Nuremberg Laws
- Kristall Nacht

It was established for other reasons:

- The Roma minority group
- Political enemies (Marxists, socialists, communists)

See how my planning is very minimal, I try to only outline the main topics I will use as evidence

ESSAY:

In the years 1933 to 1939 the Nazis established a police state to deal with the German Jews because they specifically targeted Jews in politics and in concentration camps. However, some would argue that the Nazis established a police state to deal with groups other than the German Jews like other 'racially inferior' minority groups as well as Marxists and Socialists who were a potential political threat.

Thesis includes claims followed by the counter-claim Claims are highlighted

The first reason the police state was established for the German Jews is because the Jews were the ones specifically targeted in laws and government actions. The biggest example of this is the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. The Nuremberg Laws are examples of how the Nazi's established police state in Germany because these laws supervised its citizens and made sure Jewish blood was not mixing with German blood. This specifically discriminated against Jews and shows an example in the years 1933-39 of how Nazi's had established a police date to deal specifically with German Jews. Therefore, this shows how the Nazis established this police state specifically for actions like these to be taken against German Jews. The Nuremberg Laws were one example of the weapons Nazis had pointed directly at German Jews more than anyone else and they were preparing to fire.

Nuremberg Laws are the evidence here, connection to question is in bold

Another Reason the police state was established to deal with German Jews is because again, Jews were specifically targeted in many concentration camps more than other groups. For example, in 1938 30,000 Jewish men were rounded sent to concentration camps on Kristall Nacht after having their business, synagogues, and homes destroyed. This shows an example of how **in the year 1933-39 Nazis were specifically targeting Jews**, that were innocent of any crimes, beyond just politically discriminating against them. Therefore, the police state was established so that the Nazis could 'deal with' German Jews without having anyone else interfere and so they could target 'innocent' people without much pushback. By sending 'innocent' German Jews into concentration camps, the Nazis could take care of Jews without issues from other Germans. The Nazis used the police state to keep swords at all Germans necks so they could deal with German Jews by killing them while 'saving' everyone else with swords to their neck.

Evidence here is in the form of numbers; also be sure to directly address the time period the question is asking about!

On the other hand, some argue that the Nazis established a police state to deal with groups other than the German Jews like other ‘racially inferior’ minority groups as well as Marxists and Socialists who were a potential political threat. One example of a group other than the Jews that were discriminated against and would have been necessary to establish a police state for was the Roma. The Roma were a nomadic group that the Germans and other Europeans referred to as gypsies that were specifically discriminated on numerous occasions. An example of this is in 1938 when Heinrich Himmler established the Reich Central Office for Combating the Gypsy Nuisance and then continued persecuting them with things like the Decree for Combating the Gypsy Plague. With laws being passed by the leader of police in the Third Reich against other minority groups we can see an example of the **police using the police state to deal with other minorities**, just like they did Jews. Therefore, the police state in Nazi Germany was not established to deal with only German Jews because the police were also concerned and wanted to take care of any other minority groups. The police state was like a multi-edged sword that allowed them to slice any group that was ‘racially inferior’ no just German Jews.

****The evidence here is in the form of a situation with supporting government policies like ‘the Decree for Combating the Gypsy Plague’.****

The Nazis also needed to establish a police state to ensure political enemies (also November Criminals) like Marxists and Socialists were taken care of. Dachau was one of the first concentration camps in Germany that opened in 1933, On the day Dachau opened it was designed for political enemies. This is from the original press statement, “All Communists and—where necessary—Reichsbanner and Social Democratic functionaries who endanger state security are to be concentrated here”. When the camp opened as a part of the police state, it was meant to hold political prisoners like the enemies Marxist and Socialists. The first concentration camps in 1933-39 were made for people ‘committing crimes of treason’ to be put in ‘protective custody’. The opening day press statement did not mention Jews at all and Dachau was never known for being where they sent the innocent Jews. Therefore, in the years 1933-39 the **police state established in the way of concentration camps was not actually intended to deal with German Jews at all, but anyone who contradicted the Nazis**. The impact of this was that now people were too afraid to stand up to the Nazis and Jews were just left unharmed for the moment, though they likely saw where these concentration camps would eventually end up (for them).

****Evidence here is the form of a quote with evidence of dates and events.****

In conclusion, although many of the policing in the police state that went on was not directly targeted at Jews, by the end of the year 1933-39 the main people being ‘dealt with’ were Jews more than any other minority group. Therefore, in the beginning of Nazi rule (about 1933-1935) Jews were not

being ‘dealt with’ directly yet but by 1939 they were being targeted more than any other group. This can be seen because 1 million more Jews were killed than all other groups in the Holocaust altogether, proving that the police state was established so that eventually Jews could be directly ‘dealt with’.

****The conclusion simply restates the thesis then makes a judgement about both sides, you can bring up the evidence you used but you probably will not have time in a timed exam so don’t worry about it. Also notice how I used a fact to support my judgement that didn’t really fit into any of my claims! This is okay to do if you have time to try and get some more points!****

Notes:

This essay was not all the way successful. I chose to use this essay on my project so that you can see the structure I use because this was one of the clearest structures I wrote. The biggest places I lost points on this essay was with analysis and evaluation. Please understand that analysis and evaluation are probably the most important parts of your paper but without any supporting evidence or structure, you will struggle to pass. I think I achieved a B or C on this paper, simply because of the weak analysis and evaluation, but the facts are extremely strong. I think another way you can get more points that I did not get on this paper is simply by including more evidence or better breaking up your evidence. You’ll notice that in this paper I only had one point of evidence, but some of them got kind of long. My suggestion is that you break up your evidence into separate points and then analyze them separately. This will get you a lot of points. Still, I hope this paper gave you a good understanding of the structure, how to use it, and how to plan/study for writing your papers. Good luck on your AICE exam!!