

YOU

Help me practice writing a DBQ (document-based question) essay on the causes of the Great Depression. I'm not sure where to begin. Provide an complete example of a DBQ prompt, including references to the specific historical documents, and walk me through how to respond.

TUTOR

Certainly! Writing a Document-Based Question (DBQ) essay involves analyzing documents and using them to construct a coherent argument. The goal is to use these documents as the basis for your thesis and arguments while also bringing in your own knowledge of the subject. Let's break this process down step by step.

Example DBQ Prompt

Prompt: Analyze the multiple causes of the [Great Depression](#) in the United States. Consider a variety of economic, social, and political factors that contributed to the economic downturn.

Documents:

1. **Herbert Hoover's Speech (1931)** - [Herbert Hoover](#) describes his administration's policy responses to the economic crisis.
2. **Stock Market Data (1929-1932)** - Graph showing stock prices before and after the Stock Market [Crash of 1929](#).
3. **Letter from a Farmer in Kansas** - A letter detailing the struggles of a farming community during the drought and economic hardship.
4. **Excerpt from John Maynard Keynes (1936)** - [John Maynard Keynes](#) discusses his economic theory and the role of government intervention.
5. **Newspaper Article from 1930** - An article discussing the [Dust Bowl](#) and its impact on agriculture.

Steps to Writing Your DBQ Essay

Step 1: Understanding the Prompt and Documents

Before you start writing, you need to understand the prompt and review the documents. Identify what each document is about and how it relates to the causes of the Great Depression. Consider how you might use each document to support your argument. Look for connections between the documents and think about how they fit into the broader historical context.

Step 2: Develop a Thesis Statement

A strong thesis statement clearly answers the prompt and outlines the main points you will discuss in your essay.

Example Thesis: "The Great Depression was caused by a combination of systemic economic weaknesses, such as stock market over-speculation and bank failures, compounded by poor agricultural conditions due to the Dust Bowl, and inadequate governmental response."

Step 3: Organizing Your Essay

Introduction

- Start with a brief introduction to the [Great Depression](#).
- Present your thesis statement.

Body Paragraphs

- Each paragraph should focus on a specific cause or factor.
- Utilize the documents: Quote or paraphrase relevant sections, and explain how they support your thesis.

1. Economic Faults

- Use **Stock Market Data** to discuss over-speculation and the *Stock Market Crash of 1929*.
- Introduce an example or reasoning from **John Maynard Keynes** on the need for increased government intervention.

2. Agricultural Collapse

- Explain the impact of the **Dust Bowl** using the **Letter from a Farmer**.
- Connect this to broader themes of rural hardship and economic collapse.

3. Governmental Response

- Analyze **Herbert Hoover's Speech** to understand the limitations of the government's early response.
- Compare Hoover's approach to Keynesian economics for context.

Conclusion

- Reinforce your thesis and summarize your main points.
- Connect the causes of the Great Depression to larger historical trends or consequences where possible.

Step 4: Writing and Revising

Begin writing with a focus on clarity and coherence. After drafting your essay, review it for logical organization, clarity, and proper use of evidence. Refine your connections

between the evidence and your thesis, ensuring that every document and detail plays a part in supporting your argument.

Additional Resources

- [Further exploration of the *Great Depression*](#)
- [A biography of *John Maynard Keynes* and his theories](#)
- [Analysis of the *Dust Bowl*](#)

Next Steps

- Want to dissect one of the documents more closely? We can analyze it together.
- Would you like a summary of the Dust Bowl's consequences? Let me know!
- I can help you brainstorm additional contextual knowledge to include in your essay.
- Let's talk about how economic policies today are informed by Keynesian economics.
- Interested in practice prompts for more DBQ essays? I can craft a few for you!

Feel free to ask for any specific information or assistance you might need as you work through the process!