

american imperialism dbq answer key

American Imperialism DBQ Answer Key

American imperialism, a term used to describe the United States' expansionist policies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, has generated significant discourse among historians and educators. The Document-Based Question (DBQ) format is a popular method in Advanced Placement (AP) history classes to assess students' understanding of historical events and themes. This article serves as a comprehensive answer key for a typical DBQ on American imperialism, detailing the key documents often included, thematic connections, and model responses to potential prompts.

Understanding the Context of American Imperialism

American imperialism was characterized by the United States' efforts to extend its influence globally, particularly in Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia. The late 1800s and early 1900s saw a surge in American expansionism, driven by various factors:

1. **Economic Interests:** The need for new markets for American goods due to overproduction and industrial growth.
2. **Nationalism:** A growing sense of national pride and the belief in American exceptionalism.
3. **Military Strategy:** The desire to establish naval bases and strengthen military presence worldwide, as articulated in Alfred Thayer Mahan's writings.
4. **Cultural Justifications:** The belief in the superiority of American culture, often linked to the concept of the "White Man's Burden."

Common Documents in American Imperialism DBQs

In a typical DBQ on American imperialism, students might encounter various primary and secondary source documents. Key documents often include:

1. Political Cartoons

- "The White Man's Burden" by Rudyard Kipling: This poem famously encapsulated the imperialist mindset, suggesting that it was the duty of Western powers to civilize non-Western peoples.
- Cartoons from the era: Political cartoons often depicted the U.S. as a benevolent force in its expansion efforts, showcasing themes of paternalism.

2. Government Documents

- The Treaty of Paris (1898): This document ended the Spanish-American War and ceded territories such as Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the U.S.

- Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine: This extension of the Monroe Doctrine asserted U.S. intervention in Latin America, justifying military action to stabilize the region.

3. Speeches and Writings

- President William McKinley's speeches: His justifications for the annexation of the Philippines emphasized the perceived benefits of American governance.
- Anti-imperialist literature: Writings from figures like Mark Twain and Andrew Carnegie voiced opposition to imperialism, questioning its morality and implications.

Analyzing the DBQ Prompts

When approaching a DBQ on American imperialism, students should focus on the specific prompt provided. Common themes may include:

1. The Justifications for American Imperialism: Analyze the economic, cultural, and political motivations behind U.S. expansion.
2. The Consequences of Imperialism: Discuss the effects of imperialism on both the United States and the territories it acquired.
3. Opposition to Imperialism: Explore the perspectives of anti-imperialists and the arguments they presented against expansionist policies.

Structuring a DBQ Response

A well-structured DBQ response typically follows a standard format, which includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Here's a guide on how to effectively structure a response:

1. Introduction

- Thesis Statement: Clearly state your argument in response to the prompt. For example: "American imperialism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was driven by economic interests, nationalistic fervor, and a belief in cultural superiority, leading to significant political and social consequences both domestically and globally."

2. Body Paragraphs

- Document Analysis: Each paragraph should focus on a specific document or group of documents. Use evidence from the documents to support your thesis. For example:
- First Body Paragraph: Discuss economic motivations using statistics from the era and references to government documents.
- Second Body Paragraph: Analyze cultural justifications, referencing Kipling's poem and political

cartoons to illustrate public sentiment.

- Third Body Paragraph: Address the consequences of imperialism, using the Treaty of Paris and its aftermath as a case study.

- Counterargument: It can be effective to include a paragraph that acknowledges the anti-imperialist viewpoint, citing relevant documents and arguments.

3. Conclusion

- Summarize Key Points: Briefly reiterate your main arguments and the significance of American imperialism in shaping the United States' role in the world.

- Reflection: Consider the implications of imperialism on modern America, linking past to present.

Tips for Success

To excel in a DBQ on American imperialism, consider the following strategies:

- Familiarize Yourself with the Documents: Understand the context and significance of each document provided in the DBQ.

- Practice Writing: Regularly practice writing DBQ responses under timed conditions to improve your analytical and writing skills.

- Cite Evidence: Always use specific evidence from the documents to support your arguments, and explain how it relates to your thesis.

- Stay Organized: Plan your essay structure before you start writing to ensure a logical flow of ideas.

Conclusion

The study of American imperialism through the DBQ format presents a unique opportunity to analyze a complex and multifaceted historical phenomenon. By effectively engaging with primary and secondary sources, students can develop a nuanced understanding of the motivations, consequences, and debates surrounding U.S. expansionism. Mastering the skills necessary to construct a compelling DBQ response not only aids in academic success but also fosters critical thinking about the implications of historical events in contemporary society.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the significance of the American Imperialism DBQ in understanding U.S. history?

The American Imperialism DBQ is significant as it helps students analyze the motivations, methods, and consequences of U.S. expansionism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, highlighting themes of economic interests, military strategy, and cultural attitudes.

What primary sources are commonly included in the American Imperialism DBQ?

Common primary sources in the American Imperialism DBQ include political cartoons, government documents, speeches by key figures like Theodore Roosevelt, and writings from contemporary journalists, which provide diverse perspectives on imperialist policies.

How can students effectively structure their essays when responding to the American Imperialism DBQ?

Students can structure their essays by starting with an introduction that includes a thesis statement, followed by body paragraphs that each address a specific document or theme, and concluding with a summary that reflects on the implications of American imperialism.

What themes should students focus on when analyzing documents in the American Imperialism DBQ?

Students should focus on themes such as economic motives, racial and cultural superiority, strategic military interests, and the impact of imperialism on both the U.S. and the nations being influenced or controlled.

What is a common misconception about American Imperialism that students should clarify in their DBQ essays?

A common misconception is that American Imperialism was solely driven by altruistic motives; students should clarify that while some justifications included spreading democracy and civilization, economic interests and geopolitical strategy were significant driving forces.

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