AP World History – Comparative Essay Outline (Unit 1)

Below is the **basic** essay structure for a 5-paragraph expository essay. **Each CD** (concrete detail – the "what" = evidence, support, facts, examples, quotes, etc.) would be **followed by at least two CMs** (commentary – the "so what" = analysis, interpretation, opinion, inference, insight, etc.) that analyze the CD and connect it to the thesis.

PROMPT: Compare the basic features of **two** of these early civilizations in at least **two** different structures: ***culture, state (politics), social structure, or migration***.

- Mesopotamia
- Egypt
- Indus Valley or Harrapan civilization
- Shang or Huang He (Yellow River) valley civilization
- Mesoamerica and Andean South America

Characteristics (Concrete Details) of Region/Topic #1: _____ (10 points)	**Characteristics (Concrete Details) of Region/Topic #2: _____ (10 points)**
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Key Similarities (Commentary) – written in COMPLETE SENTENCES (10 points)
1.
2.

Key Differences (Commentary) – written in COMPLETE SENTENCES (10 points)
1.
2.

Reason(s) for Similarities/Differences (Analysis) – written in COMPLETE SENTENCES (10 points)
1.
2.

AP World History – Thesis Paragraph Development

Comparative Essay (Unit 1)

PROMPT: Compare the basic features of **two** of these early civilizations in at least **two** different structures: ***culture, state (politics), social structure, or migration***.

- Mesopotamia
- Egypt
- Indus Valley or Harrapan civilization
- Shang or Huang He (Yellow River) valley civilization
- Mesoamerica and Andean South America

Background Introduction (5 points)

Place your essay in the larger context of world history. Set the stage by showing how, when, and where this topic relates to the rest of world history.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thesis Sentence (10 points)

Circle one of the beginnings below and then continue with the rest of your thesis based on the outline you created. Do NOT just re-write the prompt.

While / Although / In spite of / Despite _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Rest of Thesis Paragraph (aka "Forecast" of the rest of your essay) (10 points)

Include a brief outline / summary of how you will prove your thesis (In other words, preview the topic sentences of each paragraph to come.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Writing a Comparative Essay Thesis

All essays must have an acceptable thesis, which address the issues and themes specified in the prompt. One of the simplest and most successful ways is to use a format called **WAHP3 – "What is it about, how will you prove it - give me three ways?"**

For instance if the prompt was "Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia" an acceptable thesis sentence would look something like this: *While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism*. The "WA" part of the thesis is empire formation in Rome and Han China while the "HP3" includes (1) both centralized power and (2) both used militaries to expand; and one difference (3) different political philosophies. Please note that this thesis contains themes specified in the prompt (empire building), two regions (Rome and Han China), at least one comparison (there are two) and at least one difference, and the time period. Please note that is critical to include the time period because without it an essay might not be historical valid.

It is best in the thesis statement to make at least two significant and direct comparisons – one should be a similar and one a difference (if the prompt asks you to compare). It is not acceptable to simply say "the two civilizations were similar and different." This is paraphrasing or copying the prompt. A student must qualify the prompt by fleshing it out in detail.

A thesis may constitute two sentences but they must be next to each other. Many of my students have separate "WA" and "HP3" sentences.

For this assignment and all essays, **your thesis statement and introduction paragraph should match up with the outline you created.** If your thesis doesn't relate to the content of your essay then your essay is not supporting the claims you make in your thesis.

THESIS DEAD WORDS (as well as anywhere else in your writing)

Very
Many
Things
Lots / A lot
Stuff
Really
Ways
Several
I think
In this essay I will

I'm going to tell you about
The people (who?)
Never
Always
I (this is not first person writing!)
Major
Huge
Aspects (too vague)
Back in the day