

Document-Based Question - AP World History

For this question, the main historical thinking skill being assessed is comparison, although other document-based questions may focus on other skills.

The learning objective addressed in the example document-based question is SB-8.

Each document-based question will also always assess the historical thinking skills of argumentation, use of evidence, and synthesis. The directions to students explain the discrete tasks necessary to score well on this question.

Learning Objectives:	Historical Thinking Skills	Key Concepts in the Curriculum Framework
SB-8 Assess how and why external conflicts and alliances have influenced the process of state-building, expansion, and dissolution.	Comparison, Historical Argumentation, Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, Contextualization, Synthesis	6.2 I

Key Concept 6.2 Global Conflicts and Their Consequences

I. Europe dominated the global political order at the beginning of the twentieth century, but both land-based and transoceanic empires gave way to new forms of transregional political organization by the century's end.

A. The older land-based Ottoman, Russian, and Qing empires collapsed due to a combination of internal and external factors.

Directions: Question 1 is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. You are advised to spend 10 minutes planning and 50 minutes writing your answer.

Write your responses on the lined pages that follow the questions.

In your response you should do the following:

- ▶ State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- ▶ Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
- ▶ Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into your argument.
- ▶ Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.

- ▶ Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
- ▶ Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
- ▶ Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay.

Question 1: Using the documents and your knowledge of World History, compare the collapses of the Russian and Ottoman empires in the periods before, during, and after World War I.

[7 docs]

Document 1

Source(s) Telegrams between Tzar Nicholas II of the Russian Empire and his first cousin Kaiser Wilhelm II of the German Empire, 1914

[From Tsar to Kaiser:]

29 July 1914

Am glad you are back. In this serious moment, I appeal to you to help me. An ignoble war has been declared to a weak country. The indignation in Russia shared fully by me is enormous. I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure forced upon me and be forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war. To try and avoid such a calamity as a European war I beg you in the name of our old friendship to do what you can to stop your allies from going too far.

Nicky

[Kaiser to Tsar, July 29, 1:45 A.M. This and the previous telegraph crossed.]

28 July 1914

It is with the gravest concern that I hear of the impression which the action of Austria against Serbia is creating in your country. The unscrupulous agitation that has been going on in Serbia for years has resulted in the outrageous crime, to which Archduke Francis Ferdinand fell a victim. The spirit that led Serbians to murder their own king and his wife still dominates the country. You will doubtless agree with me that we both, you and me, have a common interest as well as all Sovereigns to insist that all the persons morally responsible for the dastardly murder should receive their deserved punishment. In this case politics plays no part at all.

On the other hand, I fully understand how difficult it is for you and your Government to face the drift of your public opinion. Therefore, with regard to the hearty and tender friendship which binds us both from long ago with firm ties, I am exerting my utmost influence to induce the Austrians to deal straightly to arrive to a satisfactory understanding with you. I confidently hope that you will help me in my efforts to smooth over difficulties that may still arise.

Your very sincere and devoted friend and cousin
Willy

Document 2



Source: Map of Proposed Berlin to Baghdad Railway, 1889

<http://automaticballpoint.com/2010/02/14/sms-goeben-the-berlin-baghdad-railway-and-the-coming-of-the-great-war/>

Document 3

Source: V.I. Lenin, in a published commentary, 1905

Yes, it was a great lesson, one which the Russian proletariat will not forget. The most uneducated, backward sections of the working class, who naïvely trusted the tsar and sincerely wished to put peacefully before “the tsar himself” the petition of a tormented people, were all taught a lesson by the troops led by the tsar or his uncle, the Grand Duke Vladimir. The working class has received a momentous lesson in civil war; the revolutionary education of the proletariat made more progress in one day than it could have made in months and years of drab, humdrum, wretched existence.

The slogan of the heroic St. Petersburg proletariat, “Death or freedom!” is reverberating throughout Russia. Events are developing with astonishing rapidity. The general strike in St. Petersburg is spreading. All industrial, public, and political activities are paralysed. On Monday, January 10th still more violent clashes occurred between the workers and the military. Contrary to the mendacious government reports, blood is flowing in many parts of the capital. The workers of Kolpino are rising. The proletariat is arming itself and the people. The workers are said to have seized the Sestroretsk Arsenal. They are providing themselves with revolvers, forging their tools into weapons, and procuring bombs for a desperate bid for freedom.

<http://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/lenin-unfolding-1905-revolution-1905/#sthash.mWSrQ0ec.dpuf>

Document 4



THE 24TH OF JULY.

A picture postcard commemorating the grant of the Constitution on July 24, 1908 (Old Style, July 11th). The portrait is that of Enver Bey. The inscription reads, "Long live the Fatherland! Long live the Nation! Long live Freedom!"

Source: Young Turks picture postcard commemorating the events of 1908

http://books.google.com/books?id=9kpCAAAIAAJ&dq=Turkey+in+Revolution&as_brr=1&pg=A3&ci=87,126,736,308&source=bookclip#v=onepage&q=Turkey%20in%20Revolution&f=false

Document 5

Source: Letter from a Mr. Lush to Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom), 1878.

I am a holder of Turkish [Ottoman] bonds and, through their default, am entirely ruined, having invested the savings of a long life of toil...the money I invested in the Turks was done because I had faith in England's guarantee of the integrity of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire and also the Turks' own guarantees of custom dues...

https://books.google.com/books?id=B1EMAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA2-PA61&lpg=RA2-PA61&dq=Turks+own+guarantees+of+custom+dues..&source=bl&ots=7p1ZAlxuw9&sig=AF9RwJlgweWI_218jSr6oayxc3w&hl=en&sa=X&ei=konjVPK9OOLCsAsqw4KAAg&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Turks%20own%20guarantees%20of%20custom%20dues..&f=false

Document 6

<i>Russian Government Revenue and Expenditure, 1905-1913</i>					
<i>Source : B.R. Mitchell, International Historical Statistics 1750-1988, pp.801, 823 figures in Russian Paper Roubles</i>					
Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
1900	1,704,000,000	1,883,000,000	1909	2,526,000,000	2,608,000,000
1905	2,025,000,000	3,205,000,000	1910	2,781,000,000	2,597,000,000
1906	2,272,000,000	3,213,000,000	1911	2,952,000,000	2,846,000,000
1907	2,342,000,000	2,583,000,000	1912	3,106,000,000	3,171,000,000
1908	2,418,000,000	2,661,000,000	1913	3,417,000,000	3,383,000,000

<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/russia/rusemp19051914.html#ec>

Document 7

Source - Sergei Witte, Russian minister, 1905

"I pity the Tsar. I pity Russia. He is a poor and unhappy sovereign. What did he inherit and what will he leave? He is obviously a good and quite intelligent man, but he lacks will power, and it is from that character that his state defects developed, that is, his defects as a ruler, especially an autocratic and absolute ruler."

<http://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/russian-revolution-quotations/#sthash.WyY72LkS.dpuf>

Document 8

Source: Tevfik Fikret, excerpt from Sis (Fog) published in Istanbul in 1902 in the final years of the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II.

A stubborn fog has wrapped your horizons

Such a dusty, awesome density, people looking at this

Cannot come closer to its Debt, scares!

O the field of tyranny... Yes, O flamboyant area!

O bright, sumptuous field full of tragedies!

<http://yildiztosun.blogcu.com/abdulhamid-ii-the-making-and-unmaking-of-a-sultan/10929627>

Key Features of a Good Response

A good response would draw on seven or eight documents (that is, all or all but one of the documents provided) to present a comparative analysis of the respective collapses of the Russian and Ottoman Empires in the periods before, during, and after World War I. The thesis ought to address similarities and differences of Russian and Ottoman social, economic, and political life within the time periods noted.

The analysis of the documents should provide evidence to support the thesis. In addition to including evidence from at least six documents, the essay should incorporate more in-depth analyses of the majority (i.e. at least five) examining intended audience, purpose, historical context, and point of view. A strong essay, however, does not simply list the characteristics of one document after another. Instead, it makes connections between documents or parts of documents to craft a convincing argument in light of the question. For instance, a good essay might claim the the respective collapses shared a similarity in that both countries found themselves in entangling alliances which jeopardized their positions, using Document 1 (the “Willy-Nicky” telegrams) and Document 2 (the map of the proposed Berlin-Baghdad railway) to support their claims. Another similarity in position of the Russian and Ottoman governments in the face of reform and revolution can be seen in Document 4 (the commemorative postcard celebrating the Constitutional reform implemented by the Young Turk revolution which weakened the Ottoman monarchy) and Document 3 (Lenin’s commentary on the relative weakness of the government position versus that of the population in revolt following the Bloody Sunday affair). Evidence to corroborate a claim of a difference might be found in the juxtaposition of descriptions of the two countries’ leaders (Documents 7 and 8) wherein Tsar Nicholas II is described as lacking willpower, whereas the allusion in Fikret’s poem to Abdul

Hamid II describes his stubbornness. In a good essay, this should be additionally supported by outside knowledge.

In the document-based question, students are required to use outside examples and knowledge to support their stated thesis or relevant argument. In the aforementioned argument, differences between the ruling styles of Nicholas II and Abdul Hamid II can be supported by knowledge beyond the documents at hand. For example, students may point out that Nicholas's vacillation in the face of the 1905 revolt led to the October Manifesto, an acquiescence to the reforms demanded by the revolutionaries, rather than resistance by ordering the reform movement to be confronted, thus indicating his lack of resolve. Similarly, outside knowledge of Abdul Hamid's ruthless repression of Bulgarians, Armenians, and other political enemies represents the opposite characteristic. In both these examples, outside knowledge also demonstrates an appreciation for the nuances of historical thinking.

Finally, a good response demonstrates an understanding of the broader context of issues relevant to the question. A strong essay would connect the issues raised by the documents to broader discussions of modernization and nationalization movements at the beginning of the 20th century. Alternatively, a student might make comparisons of the collapse of the Russian and Ottoman Empires to the ascendancy of the British and Japanese Empires in the years following. Another course for the student would be to import ideas from a discipline beyond history, such as civics and government, to make a claim with respect to the nature of autocracy versus that of democracy in multicultural nation-states.