

LEQ Organizer

When writing an effective LEQ (Long Essay Question), it's all about using your brain. This is why we practice both content AND skills, in order to help you have the evidence you need to substantiate (back up) your thesis and your argument. Let's use this organizer to help you figure out the skills you need to plan and execute an effective LEQ!

Step 1: Know what the question is asking

Just like in the SAQs and DBQ, the biggest mistake you can make is not understanding the question, and not answering it fully. These prompts can be very wordy, and throw you off just by the language. Don't let the language get you—conquer the language! Break it down for yourself so that you understand it before launching into answering.

Rewrite the prompt here in your own words. What is the question asking you to do?	
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Step 2: Brainstorm and develop your ARGUMENT (2 points on the rubric)

Develop your argument and what evidence you will use to support it. This is the most important part of planning your essay, as it is your detailed answer to the prompt. You'll do this BEFORE writing your thesis, since your thesis will need to reflect your main arguments. You'll probably want two body paragraphs (not more than three), so think about how you'll respond to the question with two main ideas.

- To earn the first point, your essay must answer the question asked, and ensure that you used the Historical Reasoning Skill in the question. (1 point)
- To earn the second point, your essay must show *complex understanding*. (1 point) This is actually a really, really hard point to get. Some teachers call it the "Unicorn Point" because we see it so rarely. Nevertheless, you *can* earn this point by considering alternative perspectives and using evidence to demonstrate how your argument makes better sense of the evidence.

Argument Part 1 <u>Topic Sentence</u>	Argument Part 2 <u>Topic Sentence</u>

Step 3: Write the Thesis (1 point on the rubric)

The thesis is the concise and clear statement of your argument that you just decided on above.

- Use your arguments to make your thesis—don't go off script. DO NOT HIJACK THE QUESTION!
- Answer the question in your thesis – **ALL PARTS** of it!
- Provide the reader with a "road map." I should be able to visualize your body paragraphs from the thesis itself.
- We will work more on making complex thesis statements later, just try your best here for now!

Thesis: Must be a historically defensible claim, and it must respond to ALL parts of the question!	
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Step 4: Contextualization (1 Point on the rubric)

We have already looked at Contextualization, but to review, this is where you use a few sentences in your introduction to set up your argument before you hit your thesis. So you will “situate the argument” by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes **immediately relevant** to the question. That’s a big deal - the context has to relate to the topic of the prompt!

- This is NOT a part of your argument, but the historical processes *leading up* to your argument.
- Make sure you don’t use the same evidence here that you plan to use later in the paper—double dipping isn’t allowed!

<p>Contextualization Sentences: In this box, write two-three sentences describing what is going on leading up to your argument. Be specific!</p>	
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Step 5: Support your Argument with EVIDENCE (2 points on the rubric)

Now, you have to back up your claims. You can’t just make a statement and not support it!

- To earn one point, the response has to have **specific** historical examples of evidence **relevant** to the topic of the prompt (aka - nouns, vocabulary words). (1 point)
 - Start with **relevant** evidence that connects to the prompt. Don’t use random facts.
 - It has to be “specific”—it cannot be vague.
- To earn two points you have to **use** the “specific historical evidence” to **support** your argument. How does it relate? How does it connect to your argument? To which part of your argument does it connect? We will start with a simple “which shows…” prompt to get you started. Eventually you can ditch the formula, but start by trying to tie your evidence to the thesis/argument you’ve made. (1 point)

Evidence/Specifics Supporting Argument Part 1	Connection to Argument
	which shows
	which shows
	which shows

Evidence/Specifics Supporting Argument Part 2	Connection to Argument
	which shows
	which shows
	which shows