**A.P. U.S. History**

**DBQ/FRQ SURVIVAL TIPS**

1. Essays are to be completed in black ink.

2. All essays are to be short, concise and to the point.

3. Essays will be scored on a scale of 1-9. Standards are rigorous.

5. Suggested length: 1½ to 2 pages (5-6 paragraphs).

**Nine Suggestions for Better Essays**

1. Be certain you understand the question and attempt to answer it. Underline the command

words. If there is more than one part to the question, be sure to address each.

2. Use facts to support your thesis, argument and generalizations. Make specific references as

possible, no matter how general or broad the question. Load up your essay with facts. You

can never put too many facts in a good essay. Three to five facts per paragraph is a good rule

of thumb.

3. Have a thesis that answers the questions in the introduction. Do NOT wait until the last

paragraph to write your thesis! What if you run out of time? A good thesis should attempt to

tell why, explain or somehow account for the reasons a particular set of historical

circumstances occurred. All facts should reinforce the thesis.

4. Use standard organization, with Introduction, Body and Conclusion. Essays in the highest

scoring category will often run six or more paragraphs.

5. Use good English grammar.

6. Use the past tense consistently.

7. Avoid first or second person pronouns (even if they appear in the question). Use “one” if no

other circumlocution is available. Be careful with spelling. Pay special attention to keywords

such as historical terms or proper names.

8. Avoid sophomoric efforts at humor. These usually fall flat and tell the reader that you have

not taken the essay seriously. If you wish to impress the reader with your literary skills,

employ metaphor or irony, but only if you are an experienced practitioner of these devices.

9. Proofread your essay if time permits. Budget your time so that you will finish your essay. If

you foresee that you will be unable to complete the essay, abbreviate or leave out the

conclusion.

**Advanced Placement U.S. History**

**Essay Scoring Rubric**

Scale: 0-9 for all essays

Standards for evaluation (Response may not fit all elements of a particular category):

8-9

Contains a clear, well-developed thesis.

Supports thesis with substantial, relevant information.

Understands complexity of question.

Deals with the question in depth, although treatment may not be balanced.

Effective analysis.

May contain minor errors.

5-7

Contains a clear thesis with limited development.

Supports thesis with some relevant information.

Limited understanding of complexity. May deal with only one aspect of a question in some

depth, or with all in a more general way.

Limited analysis, mostly describes.

May contain errors that do not detract from overall argument.

2-4

Lacks a thesis, or thesis may be confused or underdeveloped.

Lacks supporting information, or information that is given is minimal or irrelevant.

Ignores complexity; may deal with only one aspect of the question in a general way of all aspects

in a superficial way.

No analysis.

May contain major errors.

0-1

Incompetent response.

May simply paraphrase or restate the question with no discussion.

Limited or no understanding of the question.