

You can earn up to one point for your thesis on both the document-based question (DBQ) and the long-essay question (LEQ) of the AP® European History Exam. In order to earn this point, your thesis must do three things:

1. Respond to the prompt

Your thesis must be a specific answer to the actual prompt, not a variation of the prompt or something more generally on the topic of the prompt. This means that you have to read the question multiple times and identify everything you must do to address it. It's a good idea to mark up the prompt and underline key words. While you will want to borrow certain words and phrases from the prompt, you do not want to merely restate it.

2. Make a historically defensible claim

Your thesis must make a specific claim that could be defended with historical evidence. Avoid overly vague phrases ("throughout the ages" and "there were political, social and economic changes") and get specific. Also, make sure that you can actually back up your claims with specific evidence, whether from the documents (in the DBQ) or from outside evidence (in the DBQ and LEQ).

3. Establish a line of reasoning

It's not enough to just answer the question. You must "establish a line of reasoning," which means explaining *why* your answer to the prompt is correct. The best word in the English language for this is "because": X happened "because" A, B, and C. You can also use phrases like "as a result of" or "due to" or "on account of." The point is that you must show some rationale behind your argument that goes beyond merely stating your claim.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long should a thesis be?

The thesis is normally one or two sentences in length. It's very natural to split the thesis into two sentences with the "line of reasoning" in the second sentence. There is no perfect length or word count for the thesis. What matters is that you fulfill all the criteria of the rubric.

Where should the thesis be located?

Your thesis should be located in the introductory paragraphs or the conclusion. You can make the grader's job as easy as possible by putting your thesis clearly at the end of the first paragraph. It will help set the tone for your whole essay and for your grader's experience with your essay. You should also try to reinforce your thesis in the concluding paragraph in order to ensure that you earn the point. Don't worry about repeating yourself. Use different words to express your main idea again.

Can I earn a thesis point even if I don't earn other points?

Yes, the thesis point is completely independent of the other points of the rubric. Even if you do not properly contextualize the time period or use evidence, you can still earn the thesis point.

Notes:
