Guide to Writing the Long Essay

The long essay requires you to construct an analytical essay based upon your historical knowledge. You must refer to specific historical figures, events, or movements and then place them within historical context to create and defend a thesis or argument.

The long essay will test your knowledge of one of the following AP disciplinary practices skills: causation, change and continuity over time, comparison, or interpretation. It will also test your ability to demonstrate historical argumentation, analyzing historical evidence, and contextualization.

Your long essay response should include each of the following:

* Thesis statement
* Contextualization
* Argument development

Planning the long essay (recommended 10 minutes)

1. Read the question carefully! What is the question asking you to do? What topics or time period must you address in the response?
2. Identify the disciplinary practice or skill required to answer the question.
3. Create a brief list of everything you can remember about the questions topic. Think of key terms and concepts.
4. Create a thesis statement that addresses ALL parts of the question, take a clear position and provide structural categories for the analysis.

Writing the long essay (30 minutes)

1. Write an introductory paragraph that provides historical context and includes your thesis.
2. Use the structural categories from your theses to structure your paragraph. Each body paragraph should address one of your topics
3. Each body paragraph should follow the rough format below:
   1. Topic sentence
   2. Sentence(s) that refers to specific factual information (key people, concepts, events, terms)
   3. Sentence(s) that contextualize and analyze the factual information and explains how this information supports your thesis.
   4. Clincher sentence that summarizes your point
4. Construct a conclusion for your essay including:
   1. One sentence for each of your body paragraphs that summarize the main point
   2. State how your analysis proves your thesis is correct.