



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF
NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234**
89 Washington Avenue
Room 675 EBA
Albany, NY 12234

David Abrams, Assistant Commissioner
Office for Standards, Assessment and Reporting

February 2007

To: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public High Schools
Administrators of Nonpublic and Charter Schools
Social Studies Supervisors
Grade 3–5 Social Studies Teachers

From: David Abrams

Subject: Revised Generic Scoring Rubric for the Grade 5 Elementary-Level
Social Studies Test

With this memorandum, the Department is providing the revised generic scoring rubric for the Document-Based Question (DBQ) that will be used with the Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test beginning in November 2007. This revised generic scoring rubric will form the basis for the content-specific DBQ scoring rubric and rating guide used for the scoring of this test.

The Department has revised the rubric to improve its overall clarity. The revisions require very little change to the basic criteria for each score point. The primary changes affect the criteria for scores of two, one, and zero on the DBQ. While the changes to actual scoring criteria are minimal, elementary-level social studies teachers should be aware of these changes as they prepare students for the November 2007 Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test. A booklet providing a detailed explanation of the changes and comparisons of the original and revised generic DBQ rubric is attached.

If you have any questions about this memorandum or the revised rubric, please send them to emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov. Thank you.

Enclosure



**Revised Generic Scoring Rubric for the
Document-Based Question (DBQ)
on the Grade 5 Elementary-Level
Social Studies Test**

For Use Beginning in November 2007

**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF STATE ASSESSMENT**
Tel. 518-474-3860
Fax 518-486-5765
Web: www.emcs.nysed.gov/osa
Email: emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov

The generic DBQ scoring rubric for the Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test has been revised. This revised rubric will first be used with the November 2007 Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test. This revised rubric provides the general criteria for scoring the DBQ essay and forms the basis for the content-specific scoring rubric and scoring commentaries that are part of the rating guide for each test. The revised rubric can be found in Appendix A.

The revisions to the generic rubric are based on comments and suggestions from elementary-level social studies teachers and supervisors and from Department staff reviews of the scoring materials provided with past Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Tests. The revisions for the Grade 5 Social Studies Test rubric were guided by five primary goals:

- (1) To reduce or eliminate overlap between the different scoring criteria (bullets) in the rubric;
- (2) To realign scoring criteria within score points to increase rubric clarity;
- (3) To formally adopt minor changes previously made to specific rubrics that clarified scoring criteria within and between individual score points;
- (4) To clarify the issue of using information copied directly from documents in the essay portion of the DBQ at scores 2, 1, and 0, thus encouraging the use of specific and appropriate quotations that support original student statements in the essay;
- (5) To modify the scoring criteria by requiring either an introduction or a conclusion be used to satisfy the last scoring criterion for a score of 3.

While most revisions clarify existing scoring criteria, two changes do modify the conditions under which a score of 3 and a score of 0 are evaluated. Appendix B provides a side-by-side comparison between the original social studies generic DBQ rubric first released on the Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test Sampler in 2000 and the revised version being released in this publication.

This new Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies DBQ Generic Rubric will form the basis for the development of all content-specific DBQ scoring rubrics beginning in November 2007.

Scoring Criteria for the Grade 5 Generic DBQ Rubric

Each bullet (scoring criterion) in the generic scoring rubric was designed to measure a particular aspect of writing in the social studies content area. The social studies DBQ essays are scored based on four primary criteria:

- The extent to which students develop the assigned task
- The extent to which students use accurate information to develop their essay
- The extent to which students support their ideas with examples, reasons, and details
- The extent to which students organize and develop a social studies essay

Additional criteria: The extent to which students utilize higher level thinking skills *and* the extent to which they incorporate relevant outside information in their DBQ essay are requirements of all social studies DBQs, beginning with the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test. These are aspects of well-written essays that we encourage all elementary teachers to address with their students.

Appendix C provides the information from the generic rubric ordered by scoring criteria, not by score.

Explanation of Changes in the Revised DBQ Generic Rubric

Goal #1: To reduce or eliminate overlap between the different scoring criteria (bullets) in the rubric

The original DBQ generic rubric had a few scoring criteria that overlapped. For example, the last two bullets of the generic rubric that addressed the organization of the essay and the expression of ideas were similar. In practice, these two criteria are closely related. How well a student clearly expresses his or her ideas is evidence of an organizational strategy. In the revised generic rubric, the last bullet subsumes the expression of ideas.

Goal #2: To realign scoring criteria within score points to increase rubric clarity

The original rubric grouped a few criteria that did not fit well together. For example, for a score of 4, the original option for outside information was placed in the portion of the rubric that was measuring how well students were addressing all aspects of the task. Any outside information used in the response provides supporting evidence and/or relevant examples, reasons, and details. Thus, teachers preferred that reference to outside information be placed in bullet 3.

Goal #3: To formally adopt minor changes previously made to specific rubrics that clarified scoring criteria within and between individual score points

Since the administration of the first standards-based performance assessments in November 2001, minor wording changes have been made to specific rubrics to improve the clarity of the scoring criteria or to address changes recommended by the field. For example, for a score of 4, the scoring criteria that originally said, “Consistently uses accurate data,” became in 2003, “Consistently includes accurate information from at least ~~xxx~~ number of documents.” This change was made as the Department began using a more open-ended model for the DBQ. Directions were also changed on the test itself to remind students to use a minimum number of documents on each essay.

Goal #4: To clarify the issue of using information copied directly from documents in the essay portion of the DBQ

While selective quotation from the documents used to support statements in the essay is encouraged as a legitimate social studies writing skill, extensive or indiscriminate copying directly from the documents is not appropriate. The revised DBQ generic rubric adds wording to each score point related to quoting and/or copying information directly from the documents. For a score of 4 and 3, the phrase “may

include portions of the document that support specific points made in the essay” allows for the appropriate use of copied material. For a score of 2, the phrase “[the response] consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents” is now used. For a score of 1, it now states “[the response] consists of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents.” A response that includes only entire documents copied from the test booklet or includes only the historical background and/or task as copied from the test booklet is to be scored a 0. Both the extent of the information copied from the document and the selectivity shown by the student in choosing what information to copy, aid in distinguishing a score of 2, 1, or 0 on a response that is primarily copied directly from the documents.

Goal #5: To modify the last scoring criteria for a score of 3 by stating that as part of a general plan of organization the response may lack either an introduction or a conclusion, but not both.

In 2001, a change was made to the last bullet for a score of 3. This change stated that a response should “Use a general plan of organization; but may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion.” In the 2007 revision the “and” was removed. Now a response should have either an introduction or a conclusion when meeting this criterion for a score of 3. This helps clarify the scoring criterion for this bullet for a score of 4, 3, or 2.

Scoring Note: Criteria listed for scores of 4 through 1 are intended to work holistically to define a particular score point, but the criteria for a score of 0 are not. The criteria for a score of 0 are intended to be distinct and as such, if only one of them is met, the response may be scored 0. To illustrate this on the actual rubrics, bullets are used for scores of 4 through 1, but not for a score of 0.

Appendix A

REVISED GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC FOR THE GRADE 5 SOCIAL STUDIES DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION (For Use Beginning in November 2007)

Score of 4

The response:

- Thoroughly develops all aspects of the task.
- Consistently includes accurate information from at least **xxx** documents; may include portions of the documents that support specific points made in the essay
- Provides supporting evidence, using many relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include relevant outside information
- Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization, including a beginning (introduction), middle (body), and ending (conclusion)

Score of 3

The response:

- Develops most aspects of the task
- Includes accurate information from some of the documents; may include portions of the documents that support specific points made in the essay
- Provides supporting evidence, using some relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack an introduction or a conclusion

Score of 2

The response:

- Develops some aspects of the task
- Includes limited information from the documents *or* consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents
- Provides little supporting evidence, using few relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include some inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a weakness in organization (may go off the topic; may list information without tying it together; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion; may lack focus)

Score of 1

The response:

- Minimally develops some aspects of the task *or* shows a limited understanding of the task
- Lacks information from the documents *or* makes vague or unclear references to the documents *or* consists of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents
- Provides little or no supporting evidence; may include inaccuracies
- Lacks a plan of organization

Score of 0

The response:

Fails to develop the task; *OR* is totally unrelated to the topic; *OR* provides no accurate information; *OR* includes only the historical background and/or task as copied from the test booklet; *OR* includes only entire documents copied from the test booklet; *OR* is illegible; *OR* is a blank paper

Appendix B

ORIGINAL GRADE 5 DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC 2000

Score of 4:

- Answers all aspects of the task by using the documents and may bring in relevant outside information related to the documents
- Consistently uses accurate data
- Develops ideas fully, using such supporting evidence as examples, reasons, details, explanations, and generalizations that are relevant and appropriate
- Demonstrates a logical plan of organization and coherence in the development of ideas
- Consistently expresses ideas clearly

Score of 3:

- Answers most aspects of the task by using the documents
- Generally uses accurate data
- Develops ideas satisfactorily with adequate supporting evidence
- Develops an answer, using a general plan of organization
- Generally expresses ideas clearly

Score of 2:

- Answers some aspects of the tasks by using some of the documents
- Uses some accurate data
- Demonstrates weakness in development of ideas with little supporting evidence
- Attempts to organize an answer but is weak and goes off the topic
- Attempts to express ideas clearly

REVISED GRADE 5 DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC 2007

Score of 4:

- Thoroughly develops all aspects of the task
- Consistently includes accurate information from at least ~~xxx~~ documents; may include portions of the documents that support specific points made in the essay
- Provides supporting evidence, using many relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include relevant outside information
- Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization, including a beginning (introduction), middle (body), and ending (conclusion)

Score of 3:

- Develops most aspects of the task
- Includes accurate information from some of the documents; may include portions of the documents that support specific points made in the essay
- Provides supporting evidence, using some relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack an introduction or a conclusion

Score of 2:

- Develops some aspects of the task
- Includes limited information from the documents *or* consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents
- Provides little supporting evidence, using few relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include some inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a weakness in organization (may go off the topic; may list information without tying it together; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion; may lack focus)

Appendix B — *continued*

Score of 1:

- Shows limited understanding of the task
- Does not use information to support ideas or uses information that is not relevant
- Fails to use documents or only vaguely refers to the documents

- Lacks a plan of organization
- Does not express ideas clearly

Score of 0:

- Fails to answer question or response is totally unrelated to topic
- Uses no accurate data
- Is illegible or so many words cannot be read that no sense can be made of the response
- Is a blank paper
- Is incoherent; i.e., words are legible but syntax is so garbled that no sense can be made of the response

Score of 1:

- Minimally develops some aspects of the task *or* shows a limited understanding of the task
- Lacks information from the documents *or* makes vague or unclear references to the documents *or* consists of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents
- Provides little or no supporting evidence; may include inaccuracies
- Lacks a plan of organization

Score of 0:

Fails to develop the task; *OR* is totally unrelated to the topic; *OR* provides no accurate information; *OR* includes only the historical background and/or task as copied from the test booklet; *OR* includes only entire documents copied from the test booklet; *OR* is illegible; *OR* is a blank paper

Appendix C

INFORMATION FROM THE GENERIC RUBRIC ORDERED BY SCORING CRITERIA, NOT BY SCORE

Bullet 1 (The extent to which students develop the assigned task)

Score	
4	Thoroughly develops all aspects of the task
3	Develops most aspects of the task
2	Develops some aspects of the task
1	Minimally develops some aspects of the task <i>or</i> shows a limited understanding of the task

Bullet 2 (The extent to which students use accurate information to develop their essay)

Score	
4	Consistently includes accurate information from at least xxx documents; may include portions of the documents that support specific points made in the essay
3	Includes accurate information from some of the documents; may include portions of the documents that support specific points made in the essay
2	Includes limited information from the documents <i>or</i> consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents
1	Lacks information from the documents <i>or</i> makes vague or unclear references to the documents <i>or</i> consists of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents

Bullet 3 (The extent to which students support their ideas with examples, reasons, and details)

Score	
4	Provides supporting evidence, using many relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include relevant outside information
3	Provides supporting evidence, using some relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies
2	Provides little supporting evidence, using few relevant examples, reasons, and details; may include some inaccuracies
1	Provides little or no supporting evidence; may include inaccuracies

Bullet 4 (The extent to which students organize and develop a social studies essay)

Score	
4	Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization, including a beginning (introduction), middle (body), and ending (conclusion)
3	Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack an introduction or a conclusion
2	Demonstrates a weakness in organization (may go off the topic; may list information without tying it together; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion; may lack focus)
1	Lacks a plan of organization