



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
(518) 473-7880 (518) 473-7737 (fax)

December 2004

To: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public High Schools
Administrators of Nonpublic and Charter Schools
Social Studies Supervisors
Grade 7–8 Social Studies Teachers

From: David Abrams 

Subject: Revised Generic Scoring Rubrics for the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test

With this memorandum, we are providing the revised generic Document-Based Question (DBQ) scoring rubric that will be used with the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test beginning in June 2005. This revised generic scoring rubric will form the basis for the content-specific DBQ scoring rubrics and rating guide used for the scoring of this examination.

We have 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 five, three, and zero on the DBQ. While the changes to actual scoring criteria are minimal, Grade 7 and 8 social studies teachers should be aware of these changes as they prepare students for the June 2005 Grade 8 Intermediate-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.

By June 2005, all middle level and high school level social studies examinations will be using these revised rubrics as the basis for their respective content specific rating guides. If you have any questions about this memo or the revised rubrics, please send them to emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov. Thank you.

Enclosure



**Revised Generic Scoring Rubric for
Document-Based Questions (DBQs)
on the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level
Social Studies Test**

For Use Beginning in June 2005

**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF STATE ASSESSMENT
Tel. 518-474-3860
Fax 518-486-5765**

The generic DBQ scoring rubric for the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies test has been revised. This revised rubric will first be used with the June 2005 Grade 8 Intermediate Level Social Studies Test. This revised rubric provides the general criteria for scoring the DBQ essay question and forms the basis for the content-specific scoring rubric and scoring commentaries that are part of the rating guide for each examination. The revised rubric can be found in Appendix A.

The revisions to the generic rubric are drawn from comments and suggestions from social studies teachers and supervisors, and from Education Department staff reviews of the scoring criteria provided with past Regents-level and Intermediate-level examinations. The revisions for the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test rubric were guided by six primary goals.

- (1) To reduce or eliminate overlap among the different scoring criteria (bullets) within the rubric;

- (2) To formally adopt minor changes previously made to specific rubrics that clarified scoring criteria within and between individual score points;
- (3) To clarify the issue of using information copied directly from documents in the DBQ essay;
- (4) To revise the score points of 1 and 0;
- (5) To revise the score point of 3 to require at least “some” outside information as **one** of the criteria;
- (6) To slightly modify the scoring criteria for a score of 5.

While most revisions only clarify existing scoring criteria, a few changes do modify the conditions under which different score points are evaluated.

Appendix B provides a side-by-side comparison between the original social studies generic DBQ rubric first released in 2000 and the revised version now being released for the grade 8 test.

Implementation Schedule for the Revised Regents and Grade 8 Social Studies Generic Rubrics

Exam Administration Dates	Global History and Geography Regents Examinations	United States History and Government Regents Examinations	Grade 8 Social Studies Tests
January 2004	Original Generic Rubric	Original Generic Rubric	n/a
June 2004	Revised Generic Rubric	Original Generic Rubric	Original Generic Rubric
August 2004	Revised Generic Rubric	Original Generic Rubric	n/a
January 2005	Revised Generic Rubric	Revised Generic Rubric	n/a
June 2005 and thereafter	Revised Generic Rubric	Revised Generic Rubric	Revised Generic Rubric

***Primary Scoring Criteria for the
Grade 8 Generic DBQ Rubric***

Each bullet (scoring criteria) 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 *six* primary criteria:

- The extent to which students address the assigned task;
- The extent to which students utilize higher level thinking skills in their response;
- The extent to which students support their ideas with fact, examples, and details;
- The extent to which students organize and develop a social studies essay;
- The extent to which students use the information provided in the documents;
- The extent to which students incorporate relevant outside information in their DBQ essay.

***Explanation of Changes in the
Revised DBQ Generic Rubric***

Goal #1: To reduce or eliminate overlap among the different scoring criteria (bullets) within 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 introduction and/or conclusion overlapped. In practice, these two criteria are related. Introductions and conclusions are evidence of an organizational strategy. In the revised generic rubric, these two criteria are now combined under one bullet.

Goal #2: 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 June 2000, minor wording changes have been made to specific rubrics to improve the clarity of the scoring criteria. The scoring criteria that measure the student's ability to use higher level thinking skills (Bullet 2) is now reworded to focus on the degree to which students make historical connections using analytical statements rather than simpler, and often more general, descriptive statements. The parenthetical information provided in Bullet 2 refers to the cognitive process dimension as described in *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* by Lorin W. Anderson, David R. Krathwohl, eds., with Peter W. Airasian, et al., eds., by Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2001. In a level 5 response, analytical statements show a student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and/or create relevant historical information within the essay. The rewording of Bullet 2 clarifies this criterion.

Goal #3: To clarify the issue of using information copied directly from documents in the DBQ essay

While limited copying, using appropriate citation, to support positions or emphasize a particular point 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 one phrase to the scoring criteria of a score of 2 and one phrase to a score of 1 that help clarify the issue of a student copying

directly from the documents in a response. The phrases “the response consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents” (at score point 2) and “the response consists primarily of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents” (at score point 1) make a distinction regarding both the extent of material copied and the selection of material copied.

Goal #4: To revise the score points of 1 and 0

The original criteria for a score of 1 (Bullet 3) allowed for “little or no accurate or relevant facts, examples or details.” This option could allow a paper to be scored a 1 despite the fact that it contained no accurate facts, examples, or details. In practice, a paper without any relevant facts would more often be scored a zero. This issue has been addressed in two ways. The revised rubric now calls for a “few relevant facts, examples and/or details” as one criterion for a score of 1 and having “no relevant facts, examples and details” has become a criterion for a zero paper. In addition, several other scoring criteria have been added to a score of zero. These additional DBQ criteria are listed below.

- May only refer to the theme in a general way
- Includes only the historical context and/or task as copied from the test booklet
- Includes only entire documents copied from the test booklet

For a score of 1, the last two bullets in the original rubric have been combined and expanded slightly in this revision.

Please note: Criteria listed for scores of 1 through 5 are intended to work together to define a particular score point, but the criteria for a score of zero do not. The criteria for a score of zero are intended to be distinct and as such, if only one of them is met, the paper may be scored 0. To illustrate this on the actual rubrics, bullets are not used for a score of zero.

Goal #5: To revise the score point of 3 on the DBQ essay to require at least “some” outside information as one of the scoring criteria

Under the original DBQ generic rubric, a level 3 paper could have “limited **or no** relevant outside information.” But in the Department’s reviews of thousands of level 3 papers, it has been noted that the vast majority of student responses receiving a score of 3 do include at least “a limited amount” of outside information. Comments from teachers also suggest that the requirement for some outside information is a realistic and appropriate expectation for a level 3 paper. Therefore, Bullet 4 for a score level of 3 now reads, “Incorporates limited relevant outside information,” and the criteria for a score of 2 reads, “Presents little or no relevant outside information.” This change does slightly elevate the level 3 criteria for scoring a DBQ essay paper. Under holistic scoring guidelines, this change still allows a reasonably well-written paper without outside information to receive a score of 3. On the other hand, this change does suggest it will be more likely that a paper will be scored at least a 3 on a DBQ essay if some relevant outside information is provided in the essay.

Goal #6: To improve the scoring criteria for a score of 5

While in a typical 5 paper you tend to see at least some analytical statements, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether or not there are more analytical statements than descriptive statements. By revising Bullet 2 for a score of 5 to mirror that specific criterion under a score of 4, you do ease the criteria for a score of 5. Now the student’s use of some analytical statements can help elevate a response to level 5 when most of the other criteria for a score of 5 are also met.

Appendix A

REVISED GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC FOR DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION (DBQ) ON THE GRADE 8 INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL SOCIAL STUDIES TEST (For Use Beginning in June 2005)

Score of 5:

- Thoroughly develops all aspects of the task evenly and in depth
- Is both descriptive and analytical (applies, analyzes, evaluates, and/or creates* information)
- Incorporates relevant information from *at least xxx* documents
- Incorporates substantial relevant outside information
- Richly supports the theme with many relevant facts, examples, and details
- Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme

Score of 4:

- Develops all aspects of the task but may do so somewhat unevenly
- Is both descriptive and analytical (applies, analyzes, evaluates, and/or creates information)
- Incorporates relevant information from *at least xxx* documents
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Supports the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme

Score of 3:

- Develops all aspects of the task with little depth *or* develops most aspects of the task in some depth
- Is more descriptive than analytical (applies, may analyze, and/or evaluate information)
- Incorporates some relevant information from some of the documents
- Incorporates limited relevant outside information
- Includes some relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a satisfactory plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that may be a restatement of the theme

Score of 2:

- Minimally develops all aspects of the task *or* develops some aspects of the task in some depth
- Is primarily descriptive; may include faulty, weak, or isolated application or analysis
- Incorporates limited relevant information from the documents *or* consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents
- Presents little or no relevant outside information
- Includes few relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack focus; may contain digressions; may not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion

Score of 1:

- Minimally develops some aspects of the task
- Is descriptive; may lack understanding, application, or analysis
- Makes vague, unclear references to the documents or consists primarily of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes few relevant facts, examples, or details; may include inaccuracies
- May demonstrate a weakness in organization; may lack focus; may contain digressions; may not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion

Score of 0:

Fails to develop the task or may only refer to the theme in a general way; *OR* includes no relevant facts, examples, or details; *OR* includes only the historical context 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

* The term *create* as used by Anderson/Krathwohl, et al. in their 2001 revision of Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* refers to the highest level of the cognitive domain. This usage of *create* is similar to Bloom's use of the term *synthesis*. Creating implies an insightful reorganization of information into a new pattern or whole. While a level 5 paper will contain analysis and/or evaluation of information, a very strong paper may also include examples of creating information as defined by Anderson and Krathwohl.

Appendix B

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC 2000

Score of 5:

- Thoroughly addresses all aspects of the Task by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least **xxx** documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Richly supports the theme or problem with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Is a well-developed essay, consistently demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the Task or Historical Context and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

Score of 4:

- Addresses all aspects of the Task by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least **xxx** documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Includes relevant facts, examples, and details, but discussion may be more descriptive than analytical
- Is a well-developed essay, demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the Task or Historical Context and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

Score of 3:

- Addresses most aspects of the Task or addresses all aspects of the Task in a limited way, using some of the documents
- Incorporates some information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates limited or no relevant outside information
- Includes some facts, examples, and details, but discussion is more descriptive than analytical
- Is a satisfactorily developed essay, demonstrating a general plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by repeating the Task or Historical Context and concludes by simply repeating the theme or problem

REVISED GRADE 8 DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC 2005

Score of 5:

- Thoroughly develops all aspects of the task evenly and in depth
- Is both descriptive and analytical (applies, analyzes, evaluates, and/or creates information)
- Incorporates relevant information from *at least* **xxx** documents
- Incorporates substantial relevant outside information
- Richly supports the theme with many relevant facts, examples, and details
- Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme

Score of 4:

- Develops all aspects of the task but may do so somewhat unevenly
- Is both descriptive and analytical (applies, analyzes, evaluates, and/or creates information)
- Incorporates relevant information from *at least* **xxx** documents
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Supports the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme

Score of 3:

- Develops all aspects of the task with little depth *or* develops most aspects of the task in some depth
- Is more descriptive than analytical (applies, may analyze, and/or evaluate information)
- Incorporates some relevant information from some of the documents
- Incorporates limited relevant outside information
- Includes some relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a satisfactory plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that may be a restatement of the theme

Appendix B — *continued*

Score of 2:

- Attempts to address some aspects of the Task, making limited use of the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes few facts, examples, and details; discussion restates contents of the documents
- Is a poorly organized essay, lacking focus
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

Score of 1:

- Shows limited understanding of the Task with vague, unclear references to the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes little or no accurate or relevant facts, details, or examples
- Attempts to complete the Task, but demonstrates a major weakness in organization
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

Score of 0:

Fails to address the Task, is illegible, or is a blank paper

Score of 2:

- Minimally develops all aspects of the task *or* develops some aspects of the task in some depth
- Is primarily descriptive; may include faulty, weak, or isolated application or analysis
- Incorporates limited relevant information from the documents *or* consists primarily of relevant information copied from the documents
- Presents little or no relevant outside information
- Includes few relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some inaccuracies
- Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack focus; may contain digressions; may not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion

Score of 1:

- Minimally develops some aspects of the task
- Is descriptive; may lack understanding, application, or analysis
- Makes vague, unclear references to the documents or consists primarily of relevant and irrelevant information copied from the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes few relevant facts, examples, or details; may include inaccuracies
- May demonstrate a weakness in organization; may lack focus; may contain digressions; may not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion

Score of 0:

Fails to develop the task or may only refer to the theme in a general way; *OR* includes no relevant facts, examples, or details; *OR* includes only the historical context 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