AP World History

THE CHANGE AND CONTINUITY OVER TIME ESSAY

For this essay, you must analyze continuities and changes in a particular society over a specific period of time. You may or may not have a choice in terms of which society you will write on.

**Essay Tip**: Weaker students ignore the continuities part of the essay. Don’t do that! Answer all parts of the question.

Like the other essays, the CCOT essay has a “core” system of 7 points that is found on a grading rubric.

You will not lose any points on the rubric. I will start at zero and add points for things you do correctly.

Let’s look at the scoring rubric for the change and continuity over time essay:

1. **Has acceptable thesis (1 point)**

You must have a thesis that addresses all parts of the question. The thesis should consist of a couple of sentences connected together. It must be found at the beginning of the essay. It will be very similar to the thesis written for a comparative essay. In this essay, you will again need to restate the prompt by including all of the important information you underlined in the prompt. It is particularly important that you include the name of the society you will be writing on, the area you will be focusing on, and the date of the question. Instead of a similarity and a difference, you will include both a change and a continuity.

**Essay Tip**: If you write, “There were many continuities and changes …” and don’t include any specific examples to go with your “many,” you’ll never earn the thesis point.

If the CCOT question is, “Analyze continuities and changes in beliefs and practices in Egyptian religion from 3100 BCE through 500 CE,” one acceptable thesis could be, “Egyptian religious beliefs and practices went through many changes and continuities from 3100 BCE to 500 CE. One of the most important changes was the practice of monotheism under the rule of Akhenaten. Continuities included the belief that the pharaoh was a god.” Now, that’s not all you’re going to discuss; it’s just a couple of examples, which tells the exam reader you know how to write an AP-level thesis statement. The body of your essay will contain more examples. Do not forget to add your historical argument (transition sentence) at the end of your thesis.

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2. Addresses all parts of the question (1 or 2 points)

You must address all parts of the question. This is an easy task. Begin a new paragraph and write about changes over the time period. In your third paragraph, start writing about continuities over time. You have now addressed changes and continuities and will earn 2 points. If you address only changes or continuities, the best you can get is one point.

3. Substantiates thesis with appropriate historical evidence (1 or 2 points)

You must include specific examples – evidence – to support the general statements you make. Write as many examples of continuities and changes you can think of in your second and third paragraphs. A good measure of thumb is to always try to include four changes and four continuities – for a total of 8. The more evidence you give, the more points you’re likely to receive. Many students forget to provide examples of continuities – don’t let that be you! Remember, your evidence must address the question exactly, and no credit is given for evidence that is outside the topic or the time period.

4. Analyzes the process of change and continuity over time (1 point)

This is the most ignored point on all the AP World History essays, but it really isn’t that difficult to get. When you think analysis, think in terms of because – “This change (or continuity) happened because…” You can either add it to the end of an evidence sentence or let it stand alone: “Ancient Egyptians began practicing monotheism because the pharaoh Akhenaten encouraged them to do so.” Be sure to include as many examples as you can think of.

5. Uses relevant world historical context (1 point)

This is the part of the essay where you must show world historical context. It’s an easy point to get, but many students don’t even try. In our sample question, bring an outside group or idea into the Egyptian world during the time period, and you’ll have the world historical context. For example, “During the period from 3100 to 500 BCE, there is some evidence to indicate that the Egyptians may have acquired the concept of monotheism from their neighbors in Mesopotamia, the Hebrews. This connection may have led to the pharaoh Akhenaten creating his own monotheistic religion in ancient Egypt.” These sentences show the world historical context because the concept of monotheism may have come from an area outside of Egypt. You must have a minimum of three examples.

When you finish, write a brief conclusion in which you restate the prompt and your historical argument (your transition sentence).