

WHAT IS THIS ASKING?

Purpose

This quick skill-building activity is intended to help you understand what is being asked of you when you're presented with historical prompts, particularly those you'll encounter in assessment prompts such as document-based questions (DBQs) and long essay questions (LEQs).

Process

In this activity, you will revisit the process of how to parse a prompt. Remember, parsing a prompt is the process of analyzing a string of words—that is, trying to figure out what something is saying and asking!

Take out the Question Parsing Tool and write down the following prompt at the top of the tool:

In the period 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E., different factors led to the emergence and spread of new religions and belief systems, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Develop an argument that evaluates how such factors led to the emergence or spread of one or more religions in this time period.

Now, follow the tool directions. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class!

WHAT IS THIS ASKING?

Directions: Follow the steps to parse the prompt you are presented with. Use the key at the bottom to help you with the historical reasoning process and composition questions.

1. **Prompt:**

2. Rewrite the prompt in your own words:

3. **Periodization:** What is the time period you are being asked to consider? Write out the years if you are given something in terms of century (for example, twentieth century = 1900s).

4. **Location:** What areas of the world are included in this prompt?

5. **Topic:** What is the main topic being asked about in this prompt?

6. **AP Theme:** What AP theme is the prompt asking you to address as part of your response? Please explain your reasoning. PIECES is a helpful reminder for the AP themes.

WHAT IS THIS ASKING?

7. **Historical reasoning process:** What historical reasoning process is this prompt asking you to engage in? Provide justification for why you chose the one you did.

8. **Composition:** What is the prompt stem asking you to do as part of your response? Remember the prompt stem is usually a verb.

Key

Historical Reasoning Process	Words/Phrases to Look For
Causation	Cause, effect, led to, lead to, emergence, resulted, bring about, give rise to, be the cause of, result in, produce, generate, spawn, precipitate, prompt, induce, promote, foster, provoke, trigger
Comparison	Similarities, differences, compare, contrast, set side-by-side, juxtapose, differentiate, liken, equate
CCOT	Continuities, changes, continuation, persistence, consistent, over time, two points in time
Prompt Stem Examples	What It's Asking in Simpler Language
To what extent	Weigh, evaluate, assess
Evaluate, assess	How much—needs a quantitative answer/thesis/claim (Note: A quantitative answer is one that includes an amount or a number. For example: a lot, a little)
Analyze, develop	Describe and explain
Argue, argument	Make a claim