

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tesler - NYSUSH 7

Seat #: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thematic Essay: Supreme Court Cases

### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

This question is based on the accompanying documents. It is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of the documents have been edited for the purposes of the question. "As you analyze the documents, take into account the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document."<sup>1</sup>

**Historical Context:** *Throughout United States history, the Supreme Court has dealt with many controversial issues. The Court's decisions in these cases have had a significant impact on the United States and/or on American society.*

#### Task:

1. Select, and conduct research on *two* United States Supreme Court decisions that have had a significant impact on American society. Pick two cases that you find interesting.
2. For each case
  - a. Describe the Historical Circumstances leading to the case
  - b. Explain the Court's decision in the case
  - c. Discuss the impact of the decision on American Society

For a more detailed explanation of the task, [CLICK HERE](#)

In developing your answers, and writing your essay, be sure to keep these general definitions in mind:

*(a) describe means "to illustrate something in words or tell about it"*

*(b) discuss means "to make observations about something using facts, reasoning, and argument; to present in some detail"*

DUE DATE: May 23, 2016

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<sup>1</sup> New Jersey v. T.L.O. (n.d.). Retrieved May 24, 2016, from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/469/325>



### Thematic PRE-WRITING WORKSHEET

| Task                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Case #1 | Case #2 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| <p>1. Discuss the HISTORICAL BACKGROUND leading to each case:<br/>What was going on?</p> <p>What had happened that led to this case getting to the Supreme Court.</p>                                                    |         |         |
| <p>2. Explain the Court's decision in the case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What was the verdict?</li> <li>● Why did the court rule this way?</li> <li>● What influenced their ruling?</li> </ul>       |         |         |
| <p>2. Discuss the IMPACT of the case on the US, and/or on American Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How was America, and/or the American people different because of this/these case(s)?</li> </ul> |         |         |

Pre-Writing Outline:

**Intro:**

1. Big Picture Statement: In this case, talk about the Supreme Court. What does it do? How does it work? Why is it important?
2. Focus: Which two cases will you be writing about (SAY IT WITHOUT SAYING, "I'M GOING TO WRITE ABOUT")? What happened in each case?
3. Task: What will you be doing (say it without saying, "I'm going to talk about")?

**Body /Case #1:**

**Background on the Case**  
**The Court's Decision**  
**Effects of the Court's Decision**

**Body #2/Case #2:**

**Background on the Case**  
**The Court's Decision**  
**Effects of the Court's Decision**

**Body #3 (optional)**

**Conclusion:** 1. Remind the reader of what your essay accomplished 2. Present some of the facts/details of the two cases 3. Explain why the outcome of these cases is important

Writing an Effective Introduction  
Special Thanks to Mr. Murphy, teacher @ Frederick Douglass Academy

**Introduction #1: "Zero to Hero"**

*This essay comes from the June 2008 GH&G Regents Exam*

**Idea:** start with a **very specific** reference to one of the topics/people/events that you are going to write about. Then, *work your reader back* to the question choices, and be sure you provide over all direction for the essay.

**Example:** *"When the United States "liberated" Iraq in the spring of 2003, its intention was to prevent Saddam Hussein from being able to use weapons of mass destruction. WMD's, along with growing environmental threats, are two issues that the international community has attempted to deal with in recent years. By focusing on the information given in the documents provided, a close examination of the nature of these threats will be provided. Further, we shall assess the various attempts made to resolve these concerns."*

**RED** = **Zero In** (Small Picture)

**Blue:** = **Focus:** here is where I link the two issues that I will deal with together.

**Black** = **Direction:** I take the task and condense it into at least two clear statements of purpose.

**Introduction #2: "Go Big or Go Home!"**

**Idea:** Capture the reader's attention with a broad **but** interesting statement reflecting your understanding of the topics/people/events that have been provided. Then, you narrow your focus, providing the reader with your two choices. Finally, provide them with a basic directions statement that addresses at least two of the trigger words provided in the task.

**Example:** *The international community has had to struggle over the past decades with critical issues that have had a very significant impact on our global society. Among the most problematic have been incidences of genocide, as well as the growing problems resulting from man-made environment threats.* Through a careful examination of the documents that have been provided, we will be able to examine the many facets of theses global concerns. Finally, an assessment concerning attempts made to address these problems will be included.

**RED** = **"Big Picture"**

**Blue:** = **Focus:** Here is where I link the two issues that I will deal with together. I have made my choices clear to the reader.

**Black** = **Direction:** I take the task and condense it into at least two clear statements of purpose.

**NAME:**

**Seat#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DBQ ESSAY RUBRIC**

**RUBRIC:**

Student included the required rubric, and it has been signed by a parent (5 points)

Student included required rubric, but it was not signed by a parent (+3)

Student is missing required rubric (0)

**STAPLE/FASTENER:**

All pieces of work are handed in, having been fastened with a staple, or paper clip (+5)

Student did not bring in essay fastened with staple or paper clip (0)

**NEATNESS:**

Assignment is COMPUTER PRINTED, OR NEATLY WRITTEN (IN INK), and LEGIBLE! (+5)

Assignment is NOT NEATLY WRITTEN (IN INK), and LEGIBLE! (0)

**OUTLINE/DRAFT:**

Student submitted an OUTLINE as well as two ROUGH DRAFTS, with EVIDENCE OF REVISION (+5)

Student submitted an OUTLINE of his/her essay, as well as ONE ROUGH DRAFT, with EVIDENCE OF REVISION (+3)

Student is missing an outline, or a rough draft copy (+2)

Student did not submit a rough draft or outline (0)

**UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME:**

The student's essay shows a THOROUGH understanding of the theme (+20)

The student's essay shows a GOOD understanding of the theme (+15)

The student's essay shows a LIMITED understanding of the theme (+12)

The student's essay shows a POOR understanding of the theme (+6)

**ANALYSIS**

The author was MORE ANALYTICAL THAN DESCRIPTIVE (+20)

The author was MORE DESCRIPTIVE THAN ANALYTICAL (+15)

The author was PRIMARILY DESCRIPTIVE, there is some attempt to analyze (12)

There is no attempt at analysis. The author simply described what happened (9)

**FACTS, EXAMPLES,  
DETAILS:**

The essay is loaded with evidence. The author supported all of the bullet points with lots of relevant facts, examples and details. (+20)

The essay contains some facts, examples and details. (+12)

The essay contains few facts, examples and details. (+9)

The essay contains no relevant facts, examples and details. (6)

**ORGANIZATION:**

The essay is well organized. The introduction, and conclusion are written in the author's own words. The body paragraphs have transition words and phrases that lead the reader smoothly from one thought to the next. (+15)

The essay is satisfactorily organized. The author restated the theme or historical context in the intro and/or conclusion. Some of the body paragraphs have topic sentences, and the author uses some transition words and phrases that lead the reader smoothly from one thought to the next. (+12)

The essay is poorly organized. The author failed to address the theme or historical context in the intro and/or conclusion. The body paragraphs lack topic sentences, and the author did not use transition words and phrases. When read aloud, the essay sounds confusing (9)

The essay is not organized. It lacks a separate introduction, body paragraphs, or conclusion. It's just one "big blob of thoughts" that make no sense (6)

**PARENT'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_