

DBQ ESSAY EXAMPLES

Many of you had a chance to look at the DBQ on the “Scramble for Africa” – I have a sample Thesis, POV, possible groupings and additional document for you to look at tonight.

Question:

Using the documents analyze African actions and reactions in response to the European Scramble for Africa. Identify an additional document and explain how it would help in assessing African actions and reactions.

Thesis paragraph:

For years after the Berlin Conference, various European powers raced to occupy and colonize land in Africa. Africa’s fate was being decided for it by the European imperialists. Not all Africans stood by and watched however. There was a wide range of actions and reactions from the African themselves, from giving in peacefully (Docs 1,4,7) to calls for “nonviolent” resistance (2,6,7,8) and also those who wanted to resort to violent resistance. (Docs. 4,5,7,8,9)

Groupings: There are a variety of ways you could group these documents and you could use the same document in a variety of ways since there were multiple different African responses sometimes within one document.

Other possible groupings were : Use of diplomacy (Docs. 1,2,3)
Resorting to tradition (Docs. 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8)
These are just a few examples, many more were possible.

Topic Sentence 1:

Many Africans were afraid of European power so they gave in without a fight. (Docs. 1,4,7)

Topic Sentence 2:

While some Africans did wish to give in without protest, they preferred to do by peaceful, nonviolent means. (Docs. 2,6,7,8)

Topic Sentence 3:

Not all Africans were obedient and complacent about the changes they were facing in the late 19th century and were willing to take a violent stand against the Europeans. (Docs 4,5,7,8,9)

Additional Documents:

One could ask for of course numerous documents, looking for a “voice” that has not been heard in assessing the actions and reactions.

“An additional document that would be helpful in assessing the African responses to European imperialism would be a document that assessing motivations of chiefs for signing the Niger River Company’s contract.”

(additional document would have to make a distinction between Doc. 9 which was written down by a German Catholic missionary, BUT it is the account of an African chief who described the battle that he saw. So this account is the story of the chief not the viewpoint/observations of the missionary.

“Another view that might be helpful in understanding African reactions to imperialism would be a letter or journal of an American missionary to Africa who is an unbiased observer to the actions of the Europeans who take over and the reactions of the Africans who are impacted. This account could give a more accurate observation of the events and how the people they serve in their mission felt about the actions of their native leaders and the Europeans.”

An American journalist reporting on the battles taking place in Africa for possession of their lands could also shed some light into the reactions of Africans as he observes the events and possibly interviewing both sides of these altercations.

POV

Samuel Maherero is a leader of the Herero people who have already given in peacefully to the Germans. He has no reason to distort the truth of the situation his people are enduring at the hands of the Germans. He also can speak freely in a letter to a fellow African leader because it is a private correspondence. (Doc. 7)

Yaa Asantewa is speaking to chiefs in West Africa and there is no reason to believe any Europeans would have been present at such a meeting so she could speak freely and express the thoughts of other women in her tribe. As the “Queen Mother” she probably would be a reliable source of what other African women were feeling on the subject of imperialism since they would have felt safe to confide in her. (Doc. 6)

The German military officer describing an account of the supernatural beliefs of the African natives as they went into battle could be exaggerating the tale in order to win the approval of people back home for their aggression by painting a picture of the Africans as an inferior people who believe in magic and who would benefit from the presence of the more “evolved” Germans.