

Document Based Question: How to Approach the Essay



No worries! This essay is not testing how much you know about the historical information—it is testing your ability to read, think, analyze, and draw conclusions based on evidence.

The Scene of the “Crime”

- You have **10 minutes** to study the scene of the crime:
 - Read the prompt carefully and thoroughly. Mark it up with “crime scene” chalk—what is it actually asking you to do?
 - Read the historical background—does it give you potential about how to organize your essay?
 - Collect evidence from the “on-the-scene” witnesses—what do the documents tell you?
 - Take notes—you don’t have time to go back to the scene of the crime!!!

**Read the prompt carefully and thoroughly.
Mark it up with “crime scene” chalk-what is it actually asking you to do?**

- **Ascertain to what factors contemporaneous observers attributed the rise and fall of the Muslim empires; determine which factors would have made the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals most successful and which ones would eventually weaken their empires.**
- **Based on the following documents, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Muslim empires. What types of additional documentation would help access the rise and fall of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals?**

Read the prompt carefully and thoroughly.
Mark it up with “crime scene” chalk-what is it actually asking you to do?

Who? Point of View? Strength or weakness?

- Ascertain to **what factors contemporaneous observers attributed the rise and fall of the Muslim empires**; determine **which factors** would have made the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals **most successful** and **which ones would eventually weaken** their empires.
- Based on the following documents, discuss the **strengths and weaknesses of the Muslim empires**. **What types of additional documentation would help** access the rise and fall of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals?

Must be feasible!!

**Read the historical background—
Does it give you potential about how to organize your
essay?**

- **Beginning in 1280, the Ottoman Turks rose from a minor frontier state to control most of Southeastern Europe, Southwest Asia and parts of North Africa. For centuries, European Christians refused to ring church bells for fear that local inhabitants would think the Turks had invaded. Starting in the early 1500s CE, in Persia and India, the Safavids and Mughals created powerful states, whose institutions and policies shared many similarities to the Ottoman Empire. Until their decline in the 1700s CE, these three Muslim states controlled the richest and most developed lands on three continents, and challenged Europeans for control of numerous seas and trade routes. But by 1800, all were in decline or had collapsed.**

Collect evidence from the “on-the-scene” witnesses—
What do the documents tell you?
All DBQs have between 5 – 10 documents

- How will you analyze and look for patterns?
SCRIPTED, PERSIA, Connections, Point of View?

Father Paul Simon, missionary to the Safavid court of Shah Abbas the Great in the city of Isfahan, his report to Pope Clement VIII, 1605 What is his POV?
Christian, observed military prowess, strength



“He is very valiant and has a great liking for warfare and weapons of war, which he has constantly in his hands: we have been eye-witnesses of this because, whenever we were with him, he was adjusting his [swords], testing his [muskets], etc: . . . This is the great experience, which he has obtained of warfare over so many years, that he makes it in person and from the first has made him a fine soldier and very skilled, and his men so dexterous that they are little behind our men in Europe. He has introduced into his militia the use of and esteem for [muskets], in which they are very practiced. Therefore it is that his realm has been so much extended on all sides. . . . All the above mentioned soldiers, who will total some 100,000, receive pay for the whole year. “

Collect evidence from the “on-the-scene” witnesses—
What do the documents tell you?



Strength for
rise of empire

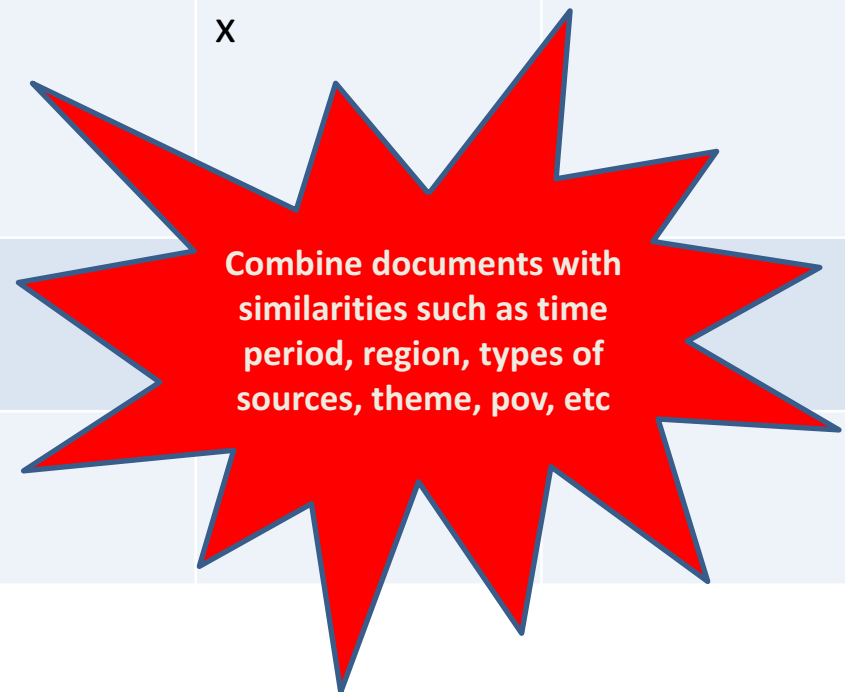
Doc 1: Safavids have strong military leader,
weapons, skilled and professional army

Father Paul Simon, missionary to the Safavid court of Shah Abbas the Great in the city of Isfahan, his report to Pope Clement VIII, 1605 What is his POV?
Christian, observed military prowess, strength

“He is very valiant and has a great liking for warfare and weapons of war, which he has constantly in his hands: we have been eye-witnesses of this because, whenever we were with him, he was adjusting his [swords], testing his [muskets], etc: . . . This is the great experience, which he has obtained of warfare over so many years, that he makes it in person and from the first has made him a fine soldier and very skilled, and his men so dexterous that they are little behind our men in Europe. He has introduced into his militia the use of and esteem for [muskets], in which they are very practiced. Therefore it is that his realm has been so much extended on all sides. . . . All the above mentioned soldiers, who will total some 100,000, receive pay for the whole year. “

Chart the Eyewitness Reports: Grouping is Essential

Groups	POV:	Strength	Weakness	
Documents: 1, 2,	Strong Military; weaponry; professional army	x		
Documents: 5, 7,	Inexperienced or ineffective leaders		x	
Documents:				
Documents:				



Keys to Grouping:

- Have at least three groups
- Each group needs at least two documents
- You can use a document in more than one group
- Use ALL the documents



Write Up Your Findings: 30 Minutes

- Take a position and write a thesis
 - Thesis must be supported by evidence from the documents
 - Can be more than one sentence
 - Good idea to put it in the first paragraph and again in the conclusion
- Use your groupings to help you form a position and write your thesis. Each body paragraph should be tied to a group.
 - Always cite the document by name and number or by number (Doc 1) or (1)
- Ask for additional documents and explain why you need it at the end of each body paragraph

