

HOW TO SCORE ALL SIX POINTS ON A LEQ

The following are the requirements provided in the scoring rubric for the Long Essay Question. They are accompanied by suggestions as to how students could achieve each of the points.

The Thesis: 1 Point

The thesis must take a position on all aspects of the question. This must be done without repeating the question. One way to avoid that pitfall is by providing the organizing categories of evidence and historical thinking skills approach along with the position taken by the student. This must be stated in the first paragraph of the essay.

Support for the Argument: 2 points

This is the portion of the essay that used to be called outside information. In this section, students are to support their thesis, or relevant argument, by using some specific evidence. If that is accomplished, it garners one point. In order to get the second point, this is where the quality of writing of the student is evaluated. Throughout this portion the student must clearly and consistently demonstrate how their evidence supports their argument or thesis and be clear in the linkage. A one-point example might include “the abolition movement speeded up the nation’s move toward war”. A more clear way of stating that might include “the abolition movement influenced the nation’s move toward war by inspiring the Underground Railroad, by being banned in the South, and by the political pressure it exhibited on the government. Socially the abolition movement influenced a great amount of the citizenry through literature, most notably *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.”

Application of the targeted historical thinking skill: 2 points

One of four historical thinking skills will be targeted by the question. They are **Continuity and Change over Time, Comparison, Causation, or Periodization**.

For **Continuity and Change over Time**, one point will be garnered by simply describing **both** the continuity and the change over time made by the topic of the question. In order to receive the second point, students must also analyze (tell how and why) specific examples illustrate both continuity and change. An example of this might begin with “the Civil Rights Movement, begun during the post-World War II era, used both protests and legal means to pursue equality. This continued a practice established in the late 19th century. The movement changed in the 1950s and 1960s with the civil disobedience of the SCLC and the confrontational tactics of groups like SNCC which pursued immediate equality through more violent protests because of the slow perceived slow pace of reform.” After those statements, the student would then analyze each component. These types of questions almost always include the words “continuities, or a change in the process” in them.

For **Comparison** questions, one point will be garnered when students describe similarities **and** differences among historical developments. In order to receive the second point, the student must also analyze (tell why and how) there are similarities and/or differences. An example might be “The industrial revolution and the period of industrialization were similar in that they both saw increased immigration and urbanization of the nation while the latter era was different with its creation of unions for worker grievances, a growing middle class, and the dominance of monopolists and business combinations.” Depending on the prompt, the student might also garner this point by evaluating the relative

significance of the historical developments. An example of this might be “the modern conservative movement of the 1950s was significant in its establishing of conservative principles for 20th century governing, but the conservatism of the Reagan Era was much more significant in that it put into effect these principles by governing; an example of this would be the principle of combatting communism and the Reagan challenge to the Soviets to tear down the Berlin Wall.” After either of those statements, the student would then analyze each component. Questions of this type almost always have the words “compare, similarities, differences” in them.

For **Causation** questions, one point will be garnered for describing causes **and** effects of a historical development. In order to receive the second point students must also analyze (tell how and why) specific examples that illustrate causes and/or effects of the development. An example of this might begin with “The causes of the Great Depression included inventory recession, an unregulated stock market, and buying on margin. These resulted in effects such as dramatically increased unemployment, the crash of the stock market, and bankruptcies.” The student would then proceed to analyze each component of the statement. Questions of this type almost always have the words “cause or effect” in them.

For **Periodization** questions, one point will be garnered for describing the ways in which the historical development in the prompt was different from **or** similar to developments that preceded or followed. In short, was the development a turning point from previous or prior developments or not? In order to receive the second point, the student must also provide specific examples to illustrate their analysis. An example of this might begin with “The beginning of the New Deal marked the end of laissez-faire business policies of the federal government with regard to the economy. The government’s actions created became more “hands on” with agencies such as the NRA, CCC, Social Security, and many more.” The student would then proceed to analyze each component of the statement. Questions of this type almost always have the words “turning point, era, or period” in them.

Synthesis: 1 point

The synthesis point can be achieved in one of three ways. Synthesis best fits at the end of the essay either in the conclusion or in the penultimate paragraph. The three ways the point can be earned are:

- The student can extend or modify their position. This would include use of counter arguments or “except” positions. Counter arguments are those which provide evidence that is in opposition to the thesis position. For example, the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie might be used as a counterpoint to the crimes of the robber barons. The “except argument” would be expressed by stating that all of the evidence provided proves the point, except what is next provided.
- The student can provide an additional category of analysis, apart from what is given in the question. For example, if an essay provides the categories of political and social effects of Reconstruction on African Americans, a student can include economic effects to achieve synthesis. Or, if a question was focused on race, a student could write about gender.
- The last way to achieve this point would be to connect it to other historical periods, geographic areas, contexts, or circumstances. For example, an essay on the radicalism of the abolition movement might be tied to the increased radicalism of the 1960s Civil Rights movement.