

# The Long Essay Question

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## A Step by Step Walkthrough

Adapted with permission from *Writing in AP U.S. History* by John P. Irish, 2017  
[www.orgsites.com/tx/ap-us-and-european-history/index.html](http://www.orgsites.com/tx/ap-us-and-european-history/index.html)

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## The Long Essay Question

### Exam Overview

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Number of Minutes	Portion of Total Score
I	Part A: Multiple-choice questions (MCQ)	55	55	40%
	Part B: Short-answer questions (SAQ)	3	40	20
	Break			
II	Part A: Document-based question (DBQ)	1	60	25
	Part B: Long Essay Question (LEQ)	1	40	15

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## The Long Essay Question

### Scoring Scale and Guide

**40 minutes to answer one of two questions**

**0-6 points possible**

<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Responds to all parts of the question by making a historically defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning</b>	<b>0-1 point</b>
<b>Contextualization</b>	<b>Describes the broader historical context of the topic</b>	<b>0-1 point</b>
<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Provides specific examples of relevant evidence to effectively support an argument</b>	<b>0-2 points</b>
<b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>	<b>Uses historical reasoning (Causation, CCOT, Comparison) and demonstrates complexity by supporting, qualifying or modifying</b>	<b>0-2 points</b>

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## The Long Essay Question

### Study the Question

#### What is the question asking me to do?

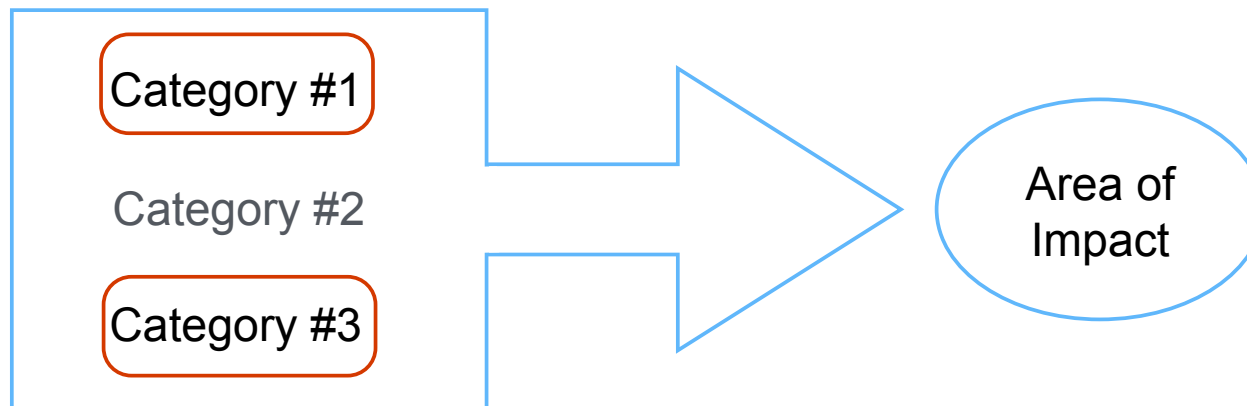
- Identify the topic (what the question is really about).
    - Is it about the political or social causes of the Civil War?
  - Determine the time frame.
    - Is it about the events leading up to the Civil War, the war itself, or the results of the war?
  - Underline all things the question is asking.
    - Is it asking about the political *and* social causes of the war?
  - Identify the correct **Historical Thinking Skill** (HTS).
    - More on this next...
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## The Long Essay Question

### The “Big Three” HTS Model

#### 1. Causation (Cause or Effect): CE

- Choose three categories from the Thematic Learning Objectives (BAGPIPE) on which to base the causes/effects.
- Rank two of these as *major* causes/effects and one as *minor*.
- In the body of the essay, address *why* these were causes/effects and whether causes *or* effects were more significant.

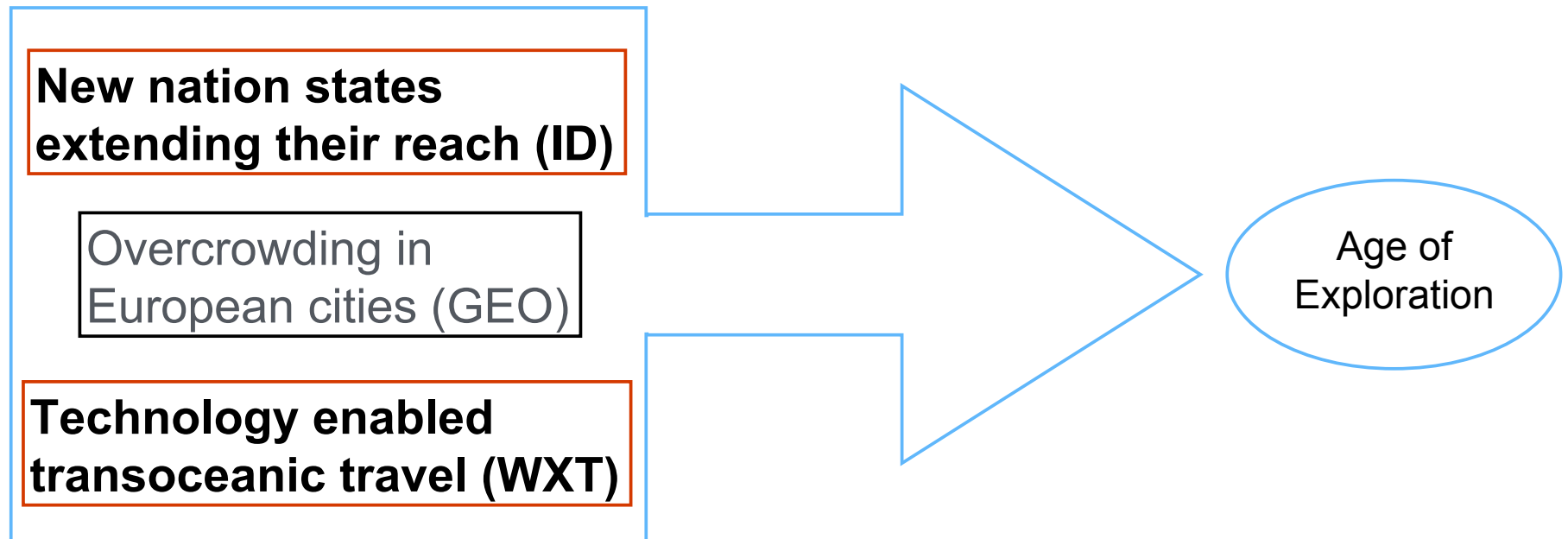


## The Long Essay Question

### The “Big Three” HTS Model

#### Sample CE Diagram

Prompt: Evaluate the factors that led to an age of exploration.

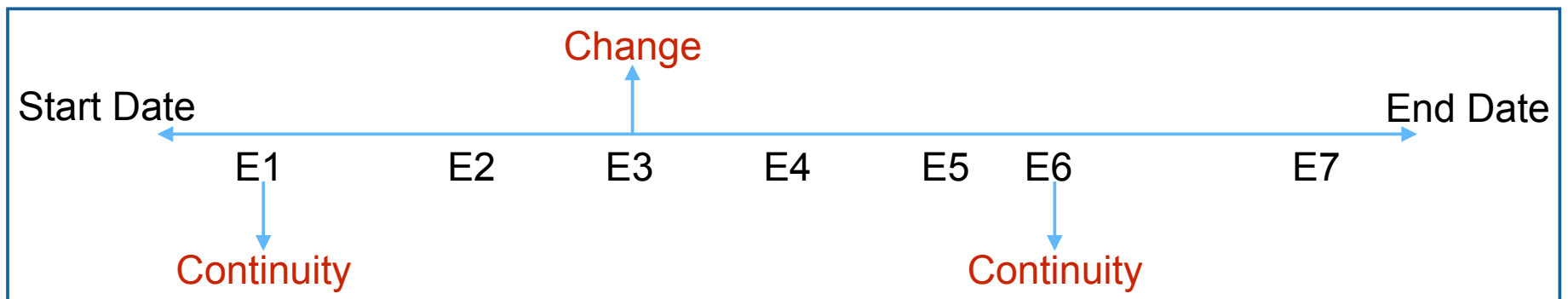


## The Long Essay Question

# The “Big Three” HTS Model

## 2. Continuity & Change Over Time: CCOT

- Label start and stop dates on a timeline.
- Place 5-7 important events on the timeline related to the topic.
- Determine if there was *more* continuity *or* change in the period.
- Select three of the most significant events, making sure one is near the start date and one near the end date.
- Two of the events should support one side of the argument, and one should support the other.
- In the body, address *why* there were continuities and changes.

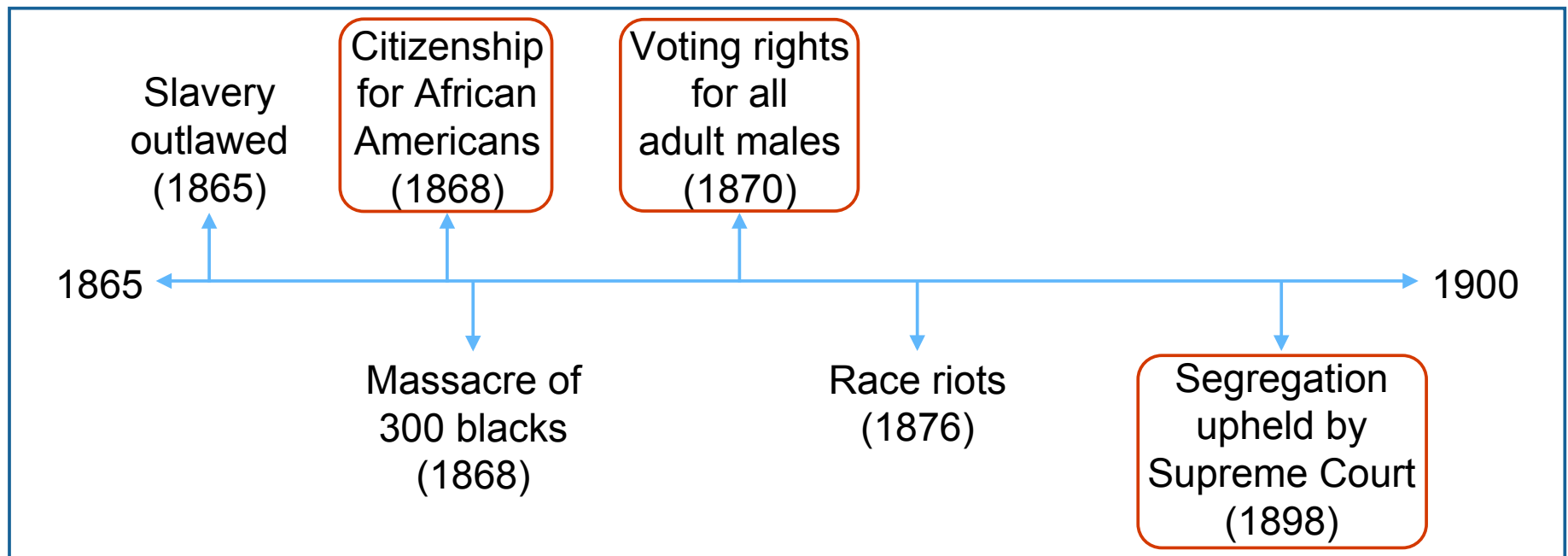


## The Long Essay Question

### The “Big Three” HTS Model

#### Sample CCOT Model

Prompt: Evaluate the extent to which the goals of Reconstruction (1865-1877) for African Americans were achieved by 1900.



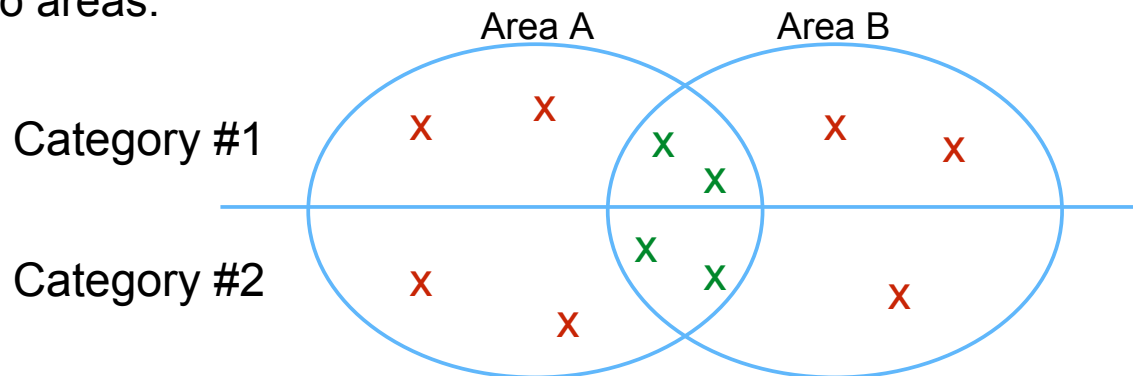


## The Long Essay Question

# The “Big Three” HTS Model

## 3. Compare & Contrast: CC

- Make a Venn diagram for the areas of the question, then bisect it.
- The top and bottom halves will each be a category from the Thematic Learning Objectives (BAGPIPE).
- Determine whether there are *more* similarities *or* differences between the two areas being compared.
- In the body, address *why* there are similarities and differences between the two areas.
- Argue whether similarities *or* differences show a more common pattern for the two areas.

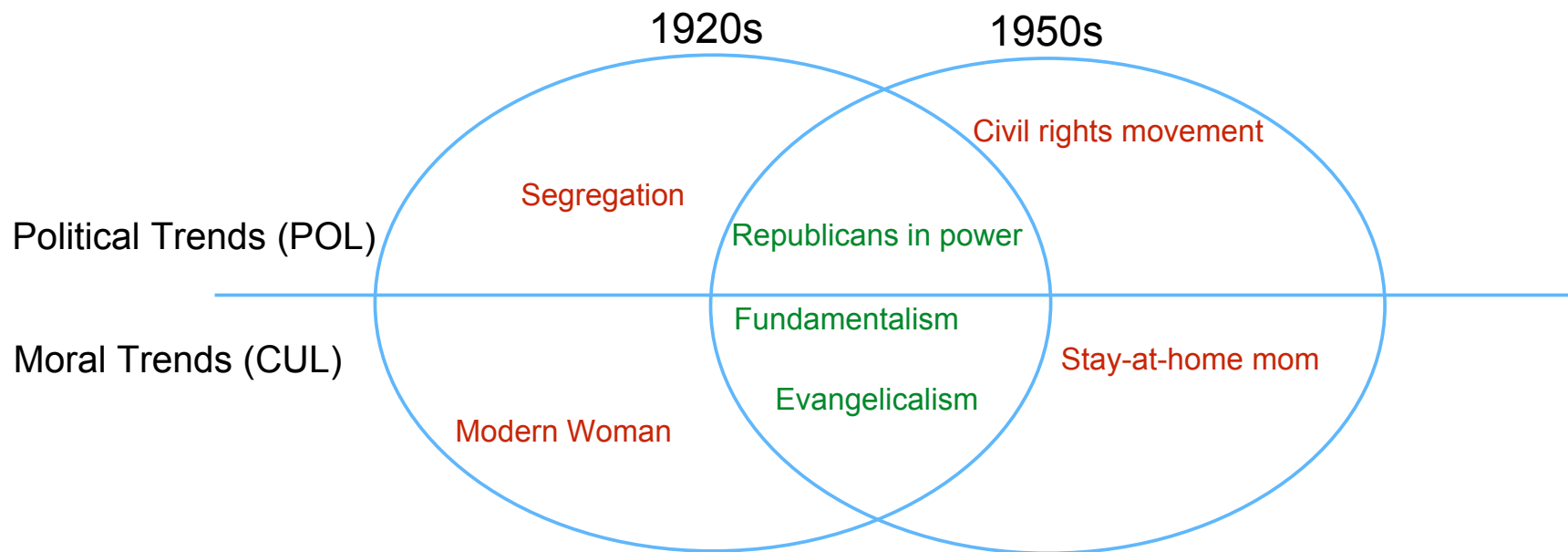


## The Long Essay Question

# The “Big Three” HTS Model

## Sample CC Model

Prompt: Compare and contrast the decades of the 1920s and the 1950s.



## The Long Essay Question

### Quiz Time!

Identify which of the “Big Three” applies to the prompt.

#### PROMPT:

Evaluate the extent to which US foreign policy goals contributed to maintaining **continuity** as well as fostered **change** from the end of WWI (1918) to the end of the Korean War (1953).

#### ANSWER:

**CCOT**

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## The Long Essay Question

### Quiz Time!

Identify which of the “Big Three” applies to the prompt.

#### PROMPT:

Evaluate the political, economic, and social **reactions** of Americans to the end of Reconstruction (1877).

#### ANSWER:

**CE**

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## The Long Essay Question

### Quiz Time!

Identify which of the “Big Three” applies to the prompt.

#### PROMPT:

Evaluate the extent to which the goals of conservatives contributed to maintaining **continuity** as well as fostered **change** from the 1950s through the 1980s.

#### ANSWER:

**CCOT**

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## The Long Essay Question

### Quiz Time!

Identify which of the “Big Three” applies to the prompt.

#### PROMPT:

**Compare** and **contrast** reactions of Americans to immigration in the 1840s-1850s with immigration in the 1910s-1920s.

#### ANSWER:

**CC**

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## The Long Essay Question

### Quiz Time!

Identify which of the “Big Three” applies to the prompt.

#### PROMPT:

Evaluate the **similarities and differences** of the goals and strategies of African American leaders in the 1890s-1920s with the goals and strategies of African American leaders in the 1950s-1960s.

#### ANSWER:

**CC**

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## The Long Essay Question

### Quiz Time!

Identify which of the “Big Three” applies to the prompt.

#### PROMPT:

Explain how intellectual and religious movements **impacted** the development of colonial North America from 1607 to 1776.

#### ANSWER:

**CE**

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## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

What do you think a thesis statement is?

- an argument?

The College Board defines it as “a historically defensible claim.”

- a premise?

- an assumption?

- a position?

**It is NOT a restatement of the question!**

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## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

**The complexity formula:** *X*; however, *A* and *B*. Therefore, *Y*.

- These are not necessarily standalone sentences. They are *concepts*.
  - *X* represents the strongest point against your argument. This can be a counter-argument or a qualification.
  - *A* and *B* represent the two strongest points for your argument. These are your organization categories.
  - *Y* represents the position you will be taking on the prompt. This is your historically defensible claim.
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## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

**Let's work through a sample prompt:**

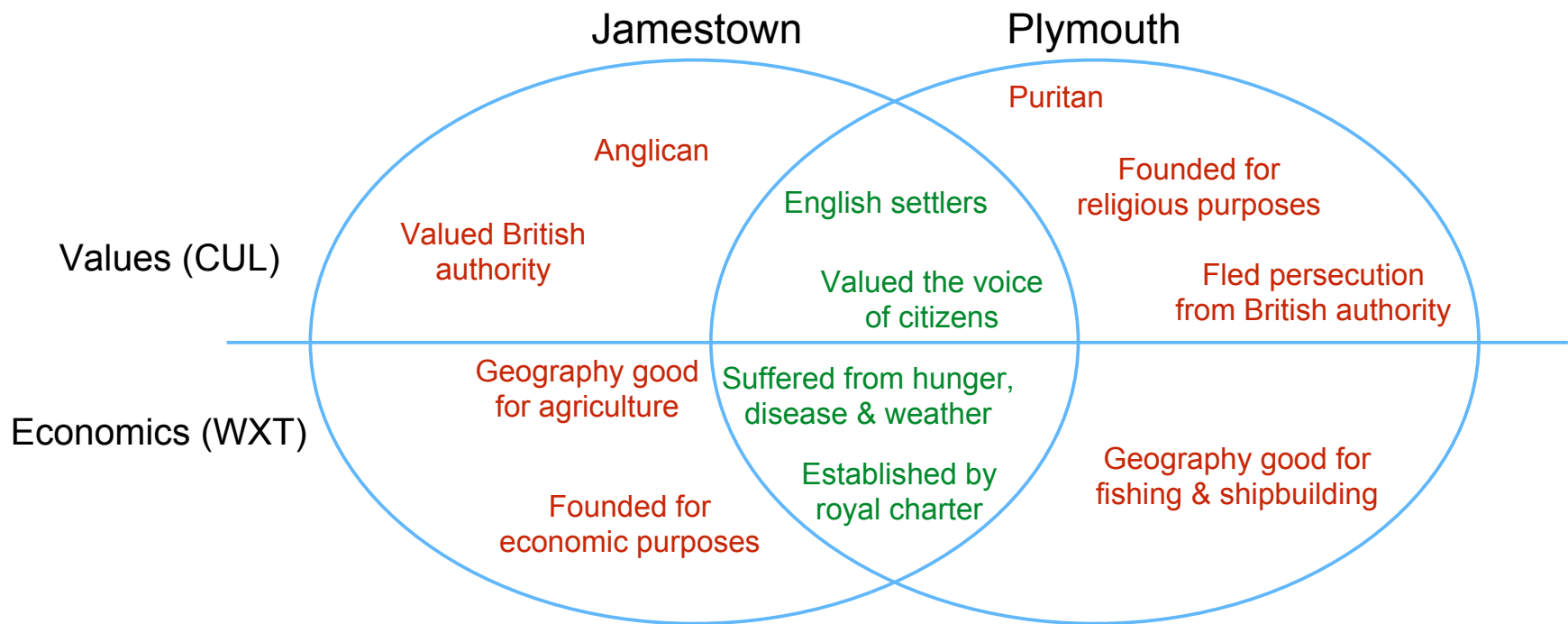
Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

1. What kind of question is this?
    - Compare & Contrast (CC)
  2. What is the goal of a CC question?
    - To argue whether there are more similarities or differences between the two areas being investigated
  3. Which “big three” diagram would be used?
    - Venn diagram
  4. What categories could be used for this question?
    - Let's use **VALUES** and **ECONOMICS**
-

## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

**Prompt:** Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.



There appear to be more areas of difference, so...  
X = examples of similarity  
A & B = examples of values *and* economics that show differences

## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

#### **Specificity—How much do I say?**

Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

#### ***Too General***

The two colonies had important similarities due to their common roots, but the differences were numerous. In looking at both values and economics, it is plain to see that the colonies were more different than they were the same. (thesis)

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## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

#### **Specificity—How much do I say?**

Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

#### ***Too Detailed***

The colonies of Jamestown and Plymouth were conceived with a similar DNA. The colonists in both places were British citizens who were loyal to the king, and they were founded by a royal charter. They also experienced similar challenges in their early years such as severe hunger, rampant disease and the ravages of harsh weather. On the other hand, there were distinct differences in both values and economics. Jamestown was firmly Anglican, while the Plymouth colonists were Puritans who wanted to reform the church. Likewise, the purpose of Plymouth was to glorify God and set an example to believers of all nations. Jamestown was quite different as its was purely an economic venture. Another important difference was geography. Jamestown was situated in a region suitable for agriculture, while the harsh winters and stark landscape of Plymouth led colonists to other pursuits such as fishing and shipbuilding. Considering the impact of these factors, history clearly shows a distinctly different pattern of development between the two colonies that far outweighs any similarities.

(thesis)

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## The Long Essay Question

### The Thesis Statement

#### Specificity—How much do I say?

Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

#### *Just Right*

The commonalities of British history and culture along with the difficult early experiences of Jamestown and Plymouth show many similarities in the establishment of the two colonies.

However, differences in their founding principles and goals, as well as the geographical factors unique to each colony, gave each a distinctly different pattern of development. (thesis)



## The Long Essay Question

### The Introduction

#### Use the following structure:

- *Pre-Contextualization*
    - This sets the stage for the essay.
    - It should include information that came about 20 years before the essay topic.
    - It should be immediately relevant to the topic in order to establish the historical context of the essay.
    - The discussion should be three solid sentences within the opening paragraph.
  - *A historically defensible claim*
    - This is the thesis statement.
    - Use the complexity formula to create it.
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## The Long Essay Question

### The Introduction

#### Example

Prompt: Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

(Pre-Contextualization) England was slow to start colonizing, and its early efforts to find precious metals were not successful. A change came when businessmen realized that growing cash crops could be a profitable investment in the southern region. New England had harsher conditions that weren't good for plantations, but religious values drew families there, and their disciplined lifestyle helped them develop a wide variety of industries.

(Claim/Thesis) The commonalities of British history and culture along with the difficult early experiences of Jamestown and Plymouth show many similarities in the establishment of the two colonies. However, differences in their founding principles and goals, as well as the geographical factors unique to each colony, gave each a distinctly different pattern of development.

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## The Long Essay Question

### Practice

#### Prompt:

Discuss the similarities and differences of the geography and the economic base of the Southern and the New England colonies.

- Determine the correct HTS, and diagram a response.
  - Write a pre-contextualization segment.
  - Follow this with a “just right” thesis statement that makes a historically defensible claim.
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## The Long Essay Question

### The Body

#### Use the following structure:

- Write a paragraph for each main point (X, A & B) from your Big Three diagram.
  - Start each paragraph with a topic sentence to introduce the point.
  - The heart of each paragraph will *cite* and *explain* 2-3 items of specific factual information that are *relevant* to the topic and thesis.
    - Aim for 6-9 items in total that you brainstormed for the diagram.
    - Each “explain” should be 2-3 sentences long.
    - “Specific and factual” means people, places, events.
  - End each paragraph with something like this:
    - “Given these factors, the \_\_\_\_\_ (main point) is valid because of \_\_\_\_\_ (sub-conclusion).”
    - Make sure the sub-conclusion relates directly to the thesis.
-

## The Long Essay Question

### The Conclusion

#### Use the following structure:

- Give an overall conclusion that goes something like this:
    - “Given these points \_\_\_\_\_ (summary of sub-conclusions), \_\_\_\_\_ (the thesis) is valid because of \_\_\_\_\_ (overall conclusion).”
  - Provide a few sentences of post-contextualization that:
    - has information from about 20 years after the essay topic.
    - show the significance of the topic in the broader historical context.
-

## The Long Essay Question

### The Conclusion

#### Example of an Overall Conclusion

Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

(Summary) Jamestown and Plymouth both had strong ties to British culture, and they are the best examples of why Britain was able to establish successful colonies in the Americas. However, These regions were much more different than they were the same. The extremes of weather and geography led to a vastly different economic base. Also, their core values regarding religion, labor and government were clearly different, even to the point of being direct opposites in some cases. (Overall conclusion) These differences created unique sub-cultures that have led us to classify the colonies into three unique groups— New England, the Middle Colonies and the Southern colonies—that are classified by how distinct they came to be.

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## The Long Essay Question

### The Conclusion

#### Example of Post-Contextualization

Compare and contrast the colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth.

As the colonies matured, their differences would lead to a divergence in economic and political values that would create tension for years to come. For example, the northern economy evolved into labor system without slaves, while the southern plantations would become increasingly dependent on them. Additionally, the southern colonies would maintain strong ties with Britain, while trade issues would drive a deep wedge between New England and the mother country. These differences made it difficult for the colonies to find agreement on any significant issues, and this created a unique challenge in defending themselves, first against the French, and later against the British.

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## The Long Essay Question

### Summary

#### The outline of the essay:

- *Introduction*
    - Pre-contextualization
    - Complexity formula that identifies the main points
    - Historically defensible claim
  - *Body*
    - Paragraph for each main point
    - Topic sentence to start each paragraph
    - 2-3 supporting details that are cited and explained
    - Sub-conclusion
  - *Conclusion*
    - Summary
      - sub-conclusions
      - overall conclusion
    - Post-contextualization
-

## The Long Essay Question

### Practice

#### Prompt:

Economic, geographic and social factors encouraged the growth of slavery as an important part of the economy of the southern colonies in the colonial period. Support, modify or refute this interpretation providing specific evidence to justify your answer.

- Determine the correct HTS and diagram a response.
  - Outline all parts of this question:
    - A full the thesis statement
    - Body paragraphs in bullet form
    - A summary of sub-conclusions and an overall conclusion in full sentences
    - Post-contextualization in bullet form
-