

REALLY WANT A 5?

There are few things you can do to impress the essay graders as they read your writing.

1. Read the directions & **ADDRESS ALL ASPECTS OF THE TASK!** The first bullet in the **task** is about addressing **all aspects of the task**. For instance, on the **January 2014** exam, the theme is **Human Rights-Justice** & the task says to pick **two individuals** & for each individual write about three things: the **historical circumstances (causes)**, their **methods (what they did)** & the **extent of their success (effects)**. That's 2 individuals times 3 bullets for a total of 6 things (components) you need to address/write about. Compute the number of components and draw a chart before you do anything else! By the way, the theme for June 2014 was Change-Challenges to Tradition or Authority...Take a look at it. It's INDIVIDUALS again! The task is very similar!
2. Write an original intro & conclusion. These are not easy things to do, considering the time constraints of this exam, but if you just copy the theme & call it your intro, you are not doing much to impress the grader/reader from the get go. If you do not impress the reader with an original intro, you are most likely looking at a 2 or a 3, even if your body paragraphs are awesome. Impress the reader from the first sentence of your essay. Put the theme into your own original words & show the reader that you know what the task is & that you are going to address it all. And do not forget to write a sentence that includes a list of the individuals, revolutions, geographic features or whatever theme you are asked to write about. Check out the anchor papers from recent exams in the chart above on www.nysedregents.org.
3. Use simple topic sentences at the beginning of your body paragraphs. Do not get into many details. Just write something like, "An example of an individual from history who fought for human rights was _____."
4. Specifically address each task by rewording it & using it in your body paragraphs. Example: **January 2014: Bullet 1:** "The **historical circumstances** surrounding this individual were..." Then write about the time period, the region/nation & the problem/cause of his/her fight for human rights. **Bullet 2:** "The **methods** he/she used to defend human rights were..." Then write specifically what they did to defend human rights. **Bullet 3:** "The **efforts** of this individual were very **successful** because..." For this particular essay, look at the content in **GRR! Individuals**, especially sections **6) QTA & 9) MODERNIZERS & REFORMERS**
5. **VOCABULARY, VOCABULARY, VOCABULARY!!!** If you are writing about the **Protestant Reformation** & you did not mention **indulgences, vernacular** or **Martin Luther**, you dropped the ball! Some students write about important vocabulary words & individuals & never write the important vocabulary word or name. You need to use the vocabulary & use it effectively. If you are writing about **John Locke** & you fail to mention **natural rights** & the **Enlightenment**, you dropped the ball. Some teachers tell students to underline vocabulary & famous individuals in their essays to force the reader to take notice.
6. Use transition words/phrases like **however, on the other hand, another example, finally, furthermore, in addition, therefore**, etc. The use of transition words shows a good command of the English language & impresses the grader.
7. Write an original conclusion that is different from your intro & if you can, make reference to a modern issue or current event. For instance, if you chose to write about the Scientific Revolution for **June 2013's** thematic essay on **Change-Revolution**, your conclusion could make reference to current conflicts between science & the church, such as stem cell research. If you chose to write about the French Revolution, you could mention the Arab Spring in your conclusion.
8. Be familiar with all the GRR! Themes & be ready for a thematic essay that relates to any of them. Look at past thematic essays & outline them for practice using **GRR!** content. Look at Modern Issues & Conflict for current event ideas for your conclusion.
9. Use the charts on pages 276-279 to outline Regents thematics before you write the essay.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: Permission to photocopy thematic essay outline charts on page 276 (2x2 chart) & page 277 (3x2 chart) is granted. **Example:** A 2x2 chart is 2 task bullets for 2 examples. A 3x2 chart is 3 task bullets for 2 examples. A 1x3 chart is 1 task bullet for 3 examples. A 4x1 chart is 4 task bullets for 1 example.

ESSAY CHECKLIST

USE THE CHECKLIST BELOW TO MAKE SURE YOU DID EVERYTHING TO GET A 5 BEFORE YOU LET SOMEONE READ IT...

CHECKLIST: Answer these questions honestly before you hand your essay to a peer, then teacher.

1. INTRODUCTION

- Did you write an original introduction or did you put the historical context into your own words?
- Did you explain what political & non-political revolutions are & how they are different?
- Did you include a sentence that names the 2 non-political revolutions that you wrote about?
- Is your intro at least 5 sentences?

2. BODY PARAGRAPHS

- Do both of your body paragraphs begin with simple topic sentences?
Ex. *The Neolithic Revolution is an example of a non-political revolution.*
(topic sentence beginning 1st body paragraph)
Ex. *The Scientific Revolution is another example of a non-political revolution.*
(topic sentence beginning 2nd body paragraph)
- **Do both of your body paragraphs ADDRESS ALL ASPECTS OF THE TASK?**
(the change & its impact on a specific society)

3. VOCABULARY

- Did you use & underline at least 5 important vocabulary words or names of individuals for each revolution?
Ex: *possible vocabulary for Neolithic Revolution: nomads or nomadic societies, hunters & gatherers or food-gathering societies, agriculture & domestication or food producing societies, settled communities, civilization, specialized occupations, river valleys or early river civilizations, etc.*
Ex: *possible vocabulary/individuals for Scientific Revolution: geocentric vs. heliocentric theories, Kepler, Copernicus, Galileo, telescope, experimentation & observation, Scientific Method, heresy, conflict with the church, Inquisition, other scientists from the time period: Newton, Vesalius, Bacon & Descartes, printing press to spread ideas, etc.*

4. TRANSITIONS

- Did you use transition words such as however, on the other hand, another, such as, therefore, for example or for instance, etc....?

5. CONCLUSION

- Does your conclusion sum up the causes & effects of each non-political revolution?
- Does it show similarities & differences between the 2 non-political revolutions?
- And does your conclusion show how the non-political revolutions affected the time periods to follow?
Ex: *how the Neolithic Revolution led to early river valley civilizations.*
Ex: *how the ideas of the Scientific Revolution helped lead to the Enlightenment.*
Did you mention how there may be non-political revolutions today?
Ex: *Neolithic Revolution changes in food production, Green Revolution in the 1970s, organic foods today.*
Ex: *Scientific Revolution & conflict with the church, stem cell research & conflict with the church.*