**How to write about Bias and Point-of-View (POV) on a DBQ**

**(Borrowed from a Mr. Hart, AP Teacher at B.H.S) Thank you sir!**

The document (source) based question (DBQ) requires that your show evidence of understanding Point of View (POV) and bias in at least three specific instances in your essay. Here are some ways to identify POV.

**You can reference EXTERNAL bias. Consider the following questions:**

* What is the author’s self-interest that makes him/her say things the way he or she does?
* Do people of certain groups usually construe issues in a certain way?
* What is the author’s gender, class, nationality, religion, political affiliation, occupation, status, ethnicity, age? Determine if what they are saying may be biased based upon self-interest.
* How does the type of document (journal, decree, personal letter, official report) impact it reliability or point of view?

But be careful not to make sweeping generalizations. (See #1 above)

**EXAMPLES OF INCORPORATING POV AND BIAS INTO YOUR WRITING**

 Bad—“The cartoonist has put horns on the German soldier’s head showing that he’s bad.”

 Good – **“In placing horns upon the head of the German solider (Doc 7), cartoonist Joseph Heller not only demonizes them as being purely evil and murderous, but he also implies that the public has no choice but to hate all Germans.”***(shows awareness of nationalistic feelings of the artist)*

Bad—“Henry VIII is a man and therefore hates women.”

 **Good—“Since Henry VIII grew up in a patriarchal society, his anger at Catherine’s refusal to grant him a divorce (Doc 2) is understandable and not surprising.”***(demonstrates how gender and era impact his perspective)*

Bad—“Isabella thinks she must expel the Jews and Moors.”

 **Good—“Isabella believes she must expel the Moors and Jews because she believes that by doing so she will earn a place in heaven”***(demonstrates how occupation, religion influence words)*

Bad—“Cortez thought that all Native Americans were savages”

 **Good—“It is not surprising that Cortez thought that all Native Americans were savage because he’d grown up in a society that valued money and material goods—the Natives did neither.”***(recognizes use of fallacy, half-truths, lies)*

Bad—“Machiavelli believes that all rulers should be cruel because they will have better control of their people.”

 **Good—“Although Machiavelli indicates that rulers “should be cruel” (Doc 3), his experiences in an Italy unable to maintain unity and subject to foreign invasions make him biased.”***(evalutes emotional bias, black and white thinking)*

Bad—“Because Giovanni Tintori had tutored Lucrezia Borgia, he was biased toward her.”

 **Good—“Tintori’s report to Pope Alexander IV, indicates that Lucrezia was a ‘fine student who was mastering the materials” (Doc 4); however, since this was an official report and not a diary entry, one can assume that Tintori wants to make himself appear capable as a teacher and so reports only the positive about Lucrezia’s progress.” (***analyzes reliability of document-type)*

**More About Point of View (POV)**

 You will be required to demonstrate evidence of understanding Point of View in many instances in this class. Here are some ways to apply POV.

1. You can reference the ***internal bias*** you see in the document. Examples of name calling, loaded language, and other kinds of rhetoric betray the prejudices or biases of the author.
2. You can reference ***external bias***. What is the author’s self-interest that makes him or her say the things he or she does? Do people of certain groups usually construe issues in certain ways?
3. You can write “The author thinks (or says) X because he or she wants (or needs, or believes) Y. According to the rubrics the idea is to show “awareness that the gender occupation, class, religion, nationality, political position or ethnic identity of the author may well have influenced the views expressed in the document.”
4. Remember that it does not count as understanding “Point of View” if you merely say what the author of a document thinks. You are using POV when your discussion ***accounts*** for what the authors are saying. Explain WHY someone holds a certain view, or speaks about something in a certain tone.
5. You can demonstrate you understand the ***tone*** of a document by using vivid verbs. Instead of “The author says…” try “The author condemns, lauds, pleads, complains, exults, rants…” Any word that relates to the feelings or values of the author will convey his or her POV.
6. It is not enough to merely say that someone was “biased” or “prejudiced.” To earn credit you must give the reader your EVIDENCE for asserting that someone is biased. The evidence may come from the document itself, or from your understanding of the external bias of the author.
7. You must NOT accept every document your read as fact! Pay attention to the circumstances behind the creation of the document and the goals of the author.
8. You may discuss the reliability and accuracy of a source. According to the AP you should “critically examine the source for its reliability and accuracy by questioning whether the author of the document would be in a position to be accurate and or would likely be telling the truth. The student can also evaluate the type of source, e.g. a letter or official report, showing an understanding that different types of sources vary in their probably reliability.”
9. You can group some documents by author. When you do so you show awareness that certain types of authors, by being in that certain type, will share and express similar views.
10. You will NOT earn “Point of View” points merely for using attribution when you discuss the documents, even if you do it every time.
11. You may group and evaluate documents by type. Public documents such as government statistics may be compared to private documents such as diaries or letters.