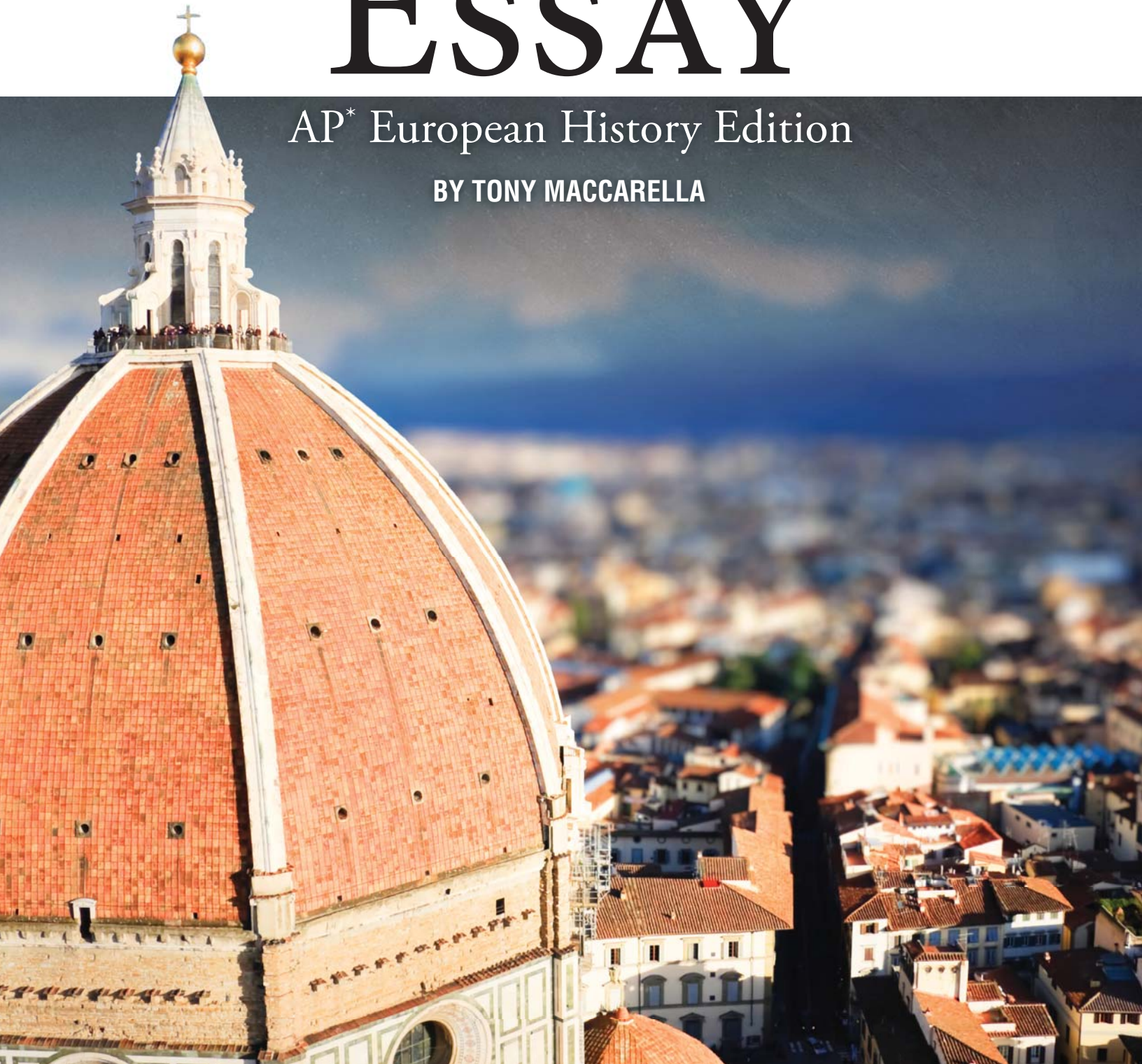


Mastering the ESSAY

AP^{*} European History Edition

BY TONY MACCARELLA



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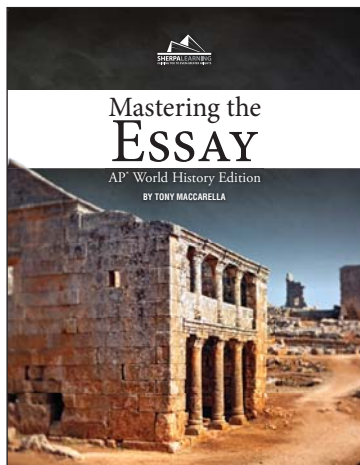
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- Argument outlines
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- Powerful conclusions

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ISBN 978-0-9905471-4-3

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Mastering the ESSAY

AP* European History Edition

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The Teacher's Guide

- Detailed descriptions for each step of the writing process, along with suggestions for classroom delivery
- Answers and explanations for every exercise, including sample essays
- Lesson plans and pacing guides

Teacher's Companion Website

- Reproducible **worksheets and charts** for classroom use
- Sortable/searchable **test bank** of every quiz item
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An Inside Look

Mastering the Essay is divided into units that parallel the writing process, so students learn to write excellent essays by building their writing skills one step at a time—from the thesis to the closing paragraph. Equally important is that each unit is filled with practice exercises that span the entire content of AP European History.

| | Thesis & Opening | Evidence & Body Paragraphs | |
|--------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| 15th Century | 2.2.1 2.3.1 2.4.1 | 3.1.1 3.3.1 3.5.1 4.2.1 4.3.1 | |
| 16th Century | 2.2.2 2.3.2 2.4.2 | 3.1.2 3.3.2 3.5.2 4.2.2 4.3.2 | 5 |
| | 2.2.3 2.3.3 | 3.1.3 | |

No matter what content you happen to be teaching, *Mastering the Essay* has a writing exercise for your students—regardless of their current skill level.

Need to develop good thesis statements within your Renaissance unit? *Mastering the Essay* has an exercise for you.

2.2.1 Renaissance Art

Exercise Question: Analyze the ways in which Italian art reflects Renaissance values. Cite specific works in your response.

TASKS: analyze, cite

TERMS: Italian Renaissance art, reflects, Renaissance values, specific works and artists

Possible Thesis Statement Responses:

____ A. Art of the Italian Renaissance reflects humanism and classicism.

____ B. Italian artists, such as Michelangelo, reflected Renaissance values.

EXERCISE 3.1.1 The Rise of the Ottomans in Turkey

Exercise Question: Analyze the impact of the Ottoman peoples of Eastern Europe 1453–1600.

EXERCISE 3.1.2 Origins of Christian Humanism

Exercise Question: Assess the extent to which Christianity traced its roots to Italian Humanists.

EXERCISE 3.1.3 The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation

Your kids are ready for body paragraphs in that same unit? *Mastering the Essay* has an exercise for you.

Maybe you need students to learn thesis writing skills within your Enlightenment unit—*Mastering the Essay* has an exercise for you, too!

EXERCISE 2.4.4 Enlightened Despots

Exercise Question: To what extent was the reign of Frederick the Great of Prussia more “enlightened” than that of Joseph II of Austria?

Thesis: To the extent that the Prussian Code instituted religious freedom, the reign of Frederick the Great was more enlightened than that of Joseph II, but to the extent that the reforms were enacted for the sake of reforming Austrian society, the reign of Joseph II was more enlightened than Joseph.

The Key to the AP Exam

A few years ago, in my first AP textbook, I argued that “the only skill that truly matters on the AP European History exam is writing.” Now, however, the AP European History test is changing, so it’s time to reevaluate. The new test has fewer multiple choice questions, a new Document-Based Question format, a single Free Response Question, and several short-answer questions. So guess what—on the new test, writing matters even more!

Most other books claiming to help improve your AP exam score are based on the assumption that success on the test depends on your ability to recall historical facts. That is why so many of them devote hundreds of pages to a review of the historical content. Unfortunately, this assumption ignores several interesting statistics published by the College Board, the organization that writes, administers, and scores the AP test. Did you know, for instance, that more than half of all students who score a 4 or 5 on the AP exam actually score lower than 60% on the multiple choice section (the part of the test on which content seems to matter most)? That means that the majority of students whose scores qualify for college credit get almost half of the multiple-choice questions wrong. They do, however, score 7–9 on each of their three essays. At the same time, many students who score better than 50% on the multiple choice section end up getting a score of less than 4 on the test overall if their essay scores are low. Bottom line—the key to a great score on the AP exam is good writing!

I help score the essays for AP European History. I know, from years of firsthand experience, what it takes to score a 7, 8, or 9 on Advanced Placement history essays, and I’ve written this book to share this knowledge with AP students and their teachers. The process outlined in this book is not a secret formula and the College Board will not disqualify your score for using this process. In fact, the creators of the test want you to know how to write better essays. Better essays mean higher scores, and higher scores demonstrate to colleges and universities the value of an Advanced Placement education. Just as it is not a secret formula, this process is also not a magic potion. Just reading this book will not improve your score. Before you can see any improvement in your score, you must practice the steps outlined here until they become second nature. That is precisely the reason why this book includes 100+ exercises, including 30 full-length Document-Based Questions (DBQs).

Let’s be clear about one thing before we move ahead: Just because writing is the key to a great score, that doesn’t let you off the hook when it comes to studying.

Read your textbook! You must know your history in order to achieve the highest scores on your essays. Content is not the key to the exam, but it still matters.

Understanding the Process

Considering that I've written a book about how to write strong, high-scoring essays, you might think that my students spend hours each week writing essay after essay. Not so. In fact, many of my students become uneasy when, for the first several months of the school year, they've been asked to write few, if any, full-length essays. During those months, they practice developing strong thesis statements and outlines, but no essays. By winter recess, some of them are actually a bit anxious, fearing that they should have been writing more.

It's not until the second semester rolls around that I ask them to try their hands at a complete essay. When they do, they are pleasantly surprised. By this time, they have learned the most important lesson for mastering the essay: To produce a quality essay, it is essential to perfect the thesis and outline first.

To understand my reasoning, take a look at how the old AP Free-Response Question rubric defines a "stronger essay." (Note: While the rubrics have been revised in the new course description from the College Board, the qualities of a great essay have not changed.)

Essay has a clear, analytical thesis that addresses ALL tasks and terms of the question evenly. Organization is clear and logical. Argument is persuasive and the thesis is supported by an analysis of considerable specific, relevant evidence. Essay may contain minor errors that do not detract from the overall argument. Even a 9 may contain minor errors.

A student may score a 9 on the essay if he or she meets four criteria:

- The thesis is clear and analytical
- All tasks and terms are addressed
- The organization is clear and logical
- The argument is persuasive and well-supported

You might naturally assume that the four criteria are not equal, but rather of varying importance, with the fourth criterion being the most important. After all, what good is an essay if it's not full of facts and figures to support the main idea, right? Wrong. The first three criteria are much more important than the fourth. If you look lower on the essay rubric at the 4-5 level you will see that, although the evidence may be lacking (criterion #4), the essay must contain

an acceptable thesis (criterion #1) that addresses at least some of the tasks and terms (criterion #2). What's more, the first three criteria can all be made apparent within the introductory paragraph, before any specific evidence is ever introduced.

Readers of AP exam essays consistently point to the thesis as the key feature in determining the quality of an essay. A high-quality thesis does more than simply answer the question; it outlines the argument in terms of how you will present evidence and why that evidence matters. After reading a high quality thesis, the AP reader will have a fairly reliable idea of where the essay will fall on the rubric in terms of thesis, tasks and terms, and organization. This is why my students spend half the year writing only theses and outlines. By February, they are skilled at meeting three of the four key criteria assessed on the FRQ rubric. Since they have completed most of the course content by that time, they have all the necessary evidence to tackle the fourth criterion with very little trouble, as well.

Is it possible to begin with a weak thesis and improve the essay within the body paragraphs? Yes, but without a well-organized opening, it is much more difficult to develop your argument.

Since many of the AP readers are university professors, it should be no surprise that success on your college history essays will rely very heavily on the same criteria as the AP essays. Remember, though, that AP readers and college professors are humans, and all humans are subject to their own predispositions. Appeal to those predispositions! Take the time to craft a solid thesis and use it to develop a well-organized and comprehensive essay that your readers will appreciate.

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Overview of the MTE Process

THE LONG ESSAY WRITING PROCESS

Step 1: Analyze the Question

Read the prompt and identify the tasks and terms.

Step 2: Organize the Evidence

- A. Brainstorm for essential evidence.
- B. Then organize the evidence into categories, addressing all tasks and terms.
- C. Use the categories to create an outline of your argument.

Step 3: Develop the Thesis

Craft a thesis that clearly states your argument, being careful to address all tasks and terms.

Step 4: Write the Opening

Draft an opening that includes the thesis and categories with brief analysis (why? or how?). The opening should outline your argument.

Step 5: Write the Body

Topic sentences from each paragraph should expand on the category statements in the opening. All evidence must relate back to the thesis (why does this matter to the argument?)

Step 6: Write the Closing

Close the essay by restating the opening and alluding to the best evidence from the body.

THE DBQ WRITING PROCESS

Step 1: Analyze the Question

Read the prompt and identify the tasks and terms.

Step 2: Analyze the Documents

- A. Read the documents, taking notes in the margin.
- B. Apply the document analysis process to each document:
 - Summarize:* What is the main idea of the document?
 - Analyze:* How does the document content address the question tasks?
 - Criticize:* How does the source affect the content of the document?
- C. Group the documents into 3+ logical categories.

Step 3: Develop the Thesis

Craft a thesis that clearly states your argument, being careful to address all tasks and terms.

Step 4: Write the Opening

Draft an opening that includes the thesis and categories with brief analysis (why? or how?). The opening should outline your argument.

Step 5: Write the Body

Topic sentences from each paragraph should expand on the category statements in the opening. Analyze each (and every) document individually, relating each back to the thesis. Include source analysis (whenever possible) and document citations.

Step 6: Write the Closing

Close the essay by restating the opening and alluding to the best evidence from the body.

Mastering the ESSAY

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Step 1: Analyze the Question

TASKS: What to Do

We define TASKS as those parts of the question that tell you WHAT TO DO. The task will ask you to apply what you know about a particular period of history in a specific way. Take a look at the prompt below.

Example Prompt: Identify and analyze the characteristics of 15th-century Italian city-states that made them fertile grounds for Renaissance artists.

What is this prompt telling you to do? For this question, the tasks are “identify” and “analyze.” Most AP European History essay questions identify the task with a specific verb:

Assess the extent to which Napoleon I was anti-revolutionary.

Discuss the arguments in favor of a common currency in Europe, 1980–2000.

Analyze the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the lower classes of Europe in the nineteenth century.

Some questions may require that you complete more than one task, but in every case, the question will pose your tasks explicitly.

Compare and *contrast* the influence of nationalism on Italian and German unification.

Describe and *analyze* the components of the Catholic Reformation in Spain.

Study the verbs in the sample questions above and make certain that you understand their meanings. Then, see if you can define or paraphrase each question.

assess—to understand the impact or importance of

discuss—to elaborate or explain

analyze—to explain the meaning or importance of something for something else

compare and *contrast*—to relate in terms of how one thing is like or not like another

describe—to elaborate or clarify in terms of greater detail

Make certain that you clearly understand what each one of these tasks requires you to do. Later in this book, you will learn how to respond to questions that use a slightly different format.

TERMS: What to Discuss

The terms of the question determine the scope of your answer. In other words, the TERMS are defined as those parts of the question that specify WHAT TO DISCUSS. Take look at the example prompt again.

Example Prompt: Identify and analyze the characteristics of 15th-century Italian city-states that made them fertile grounds for Renaissance artists.

What are the specific topics you are asked to address in this prompt? In this question, the terms are “characteristics of Italian city-states,” “fertile grounds,” and “Renaissance artists.”

Each question introduces a body of material that collectively forms the general subject of the essay. The terms are the words used to focus the subject of the question. These terms should elicit a body of knowledge from you that will serve as evidence later on. As you probe the terms, you should be able to start to formulate categories of evidence that will help you to craft your thesis and propose an outline for your essay.

Moving Ahead

Once you’ve analyzed the question and you understand the tasks and terms, then it’s time to call upon your knowledge of history to brainstorm and organize the evidence you will need to thoroughly address the terms of the question. The way you organize your evidence will determine your categories of evidence and the foundation of your thesis. The thesis is the most important sentence in your entire essay, so anything that contributes to the quality of that sentence is something with which you must be concerned. But don’t be afraid, just turn the page and let’s get to work.

Introduction: The Art of the Thesis

As you read earlier in this text (several times), the thesis is the single most important part of the essay. AP European History readers consistently say that the thesis is “the heart of the essay.” If the thesis is strong, the essay is likely to be strong, as well. If the thesis is weak, the essay is probably weak, too.

If they’re not still fresh in your mind, take a minute to review the first two steps of the process. Once again, start with the **TASKS** of the question—what are you asked to do? Next, identify the **TERMS** of the question—what are you asked to discuss?

A good thesis attacks the tasks and terms head-on. Respond to the question directly by telling the reader why and/or how you will **complete the tasks** within the body of your essay by **using the terms**. Your thesis must address the terms of the question explicitly and directly, and outline, however briefly, the categories of evidence you will use to make your point. Although it is not absolutely necessary to use three categories of evidence in every essay, it is a good rule of thumb. This is why so many English teachers refer to thesis essays as 5-paragraph essays—one opening paragraph, three body paragraphs (one for each category of evidence), and one closing paragraph.

Next, let’s review the categories of evidence you created Step 2 for the example prompt.

Example Prompt: Identify and analyze the characteristics of 15th-century Italian city-states that made them fertile grounds for Renaissance artists.

TASKS: Identify and analyze

TERMS: 15th-century Italian city-states, fertile grounds, Renaissance artists

Categories of Evidence:

- **Rivalries** amount city-states fueled by autonomy and pride
- **Proximity** to antiquities
- **Wealth** of the bourgeois class

As we discussed earlier, these categories of evidence will form the structure of your essay. Use them to construct your thesis. Remember, the thesis will tell the reader HOW you are going to answer the question. Take a look at one possible thesis for the example prompt.

Thesis: The coincidence of proximity to the works of antiquity, ready funding through local bourgeois wealth, and centuries-old intercity rivalries made the 15th-century Italian city-states a fertile ground for Renaissance artists.

As you can see, this prompt effectively states how you are going to answer the question and outlines the argument you will make in the body of the essay.

Moving Ahead

As you can see, crafting a successful thesis is integrally connected to how carefully you read and how clearly you understand the tasks and terms of the essay question. For that reason, the exercises for each of the following sections are grounded in sample essay questions. These sets of exercises are designed to help you master the art of crafting a successful thesis. The first section provides a series of examples of theses and asks you to identify how each would score on an AP test. The second set of exercises asks you to generate a successful thesis based upon the process that you learned in Unit 1. The last section helps you to practice composing an opening paragraph that expands upon that thesis and introduces your essay as a whole. As you complete each set of exercises, remember that you are building on a process that will help you to compose clear, analytical thesis statements and consistently successful essays.

Sample Exercise: Thesis Recognition

Directions: In order to write an excellent thesis, it helps to know what one looks like. In these exercises, you will read sample essay questions followed by several possible thesis responses. Assuming that a strong thesis indicates a strong essay and a weak thesis indicates a weak essay, match each thesis with the score range that it might achieve on the AP test.

Before you begin, review the Long Essay Rubric on page 6 to familiarize yourself with the thesis qualities that correspond with each score range. Begin each exercise by identifying the TASKS and TERMS of the question. Next, read the thesis statements below the question, and on the line beside each thesis, provide a score that you think it deserves, ranging from 0 to 9.

Follow along with the sample exercise below to see how it's done. The sample exercise is followed by answers and explanations to illustrate the process.

Exercise Question: Analyze the ways in which Italian Renaissance art reflects Renaissance values. Cite specific works and artists in your response.

TASKS: analyze, cite

TERMS: Italian Renaissance art, reflects, Renaissance value, specific works and artists

Possible Thesis Statement Responses:

- _____ A. Art of the Italian Renaissance reflected an interest in humanism and classicism.
- _____ B. Italian artists, such as Michelangelo and Titian, reflected Renaissance values in their works through their use of humanist techniques, classical themes, and secular realism.
- _____ C. Italian Renaissance art reflected Renaissance values in many ways.
- _____ D. Italian Renaissance art reflected Renaissance values socially, politically, and economically.
- _____ E. The Renaissance values of humanism, classicism, and individualism are reflected in the works of Italian Renaissance artists.
- _____ F. The Renaissance values of humanism, classicism, and individualism are reflected in the works of Michelangelo and da Vinci.
- _____ G. The works of Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Titian reflected Renaissance values.

Answers and Explanations:

- A. (4–5) This is actually a tricky thesis because, although it goes beyond restating the question, it fails to make the necessary connections to ALL tasks and terms of the question. The author has implied that “humanism and classicism” are Renaissance values (which they are), but this connection is implicit only. Your thesis should address ALL tasks and terms of the question explicitly. Additionally, this thesis alludes to only two categories of evidence—humanism and classicism. Although there is no strict requirement for three categories of evidence, it is a widely accepted standard in thesis essay writing (e.g., the 5-paragraph essay).
- B. (8–9) The author has addressed all tasks and terms of the question by identifying specific artists (“Michelangelo and

Titian”) as well as specific Renaissance values (humanism, classicism, and secularism). Furthermore, this thesis is analytical because it begins to answer HOW the artists reflected Renaissance values in their works—through “humanist techniques,” “classical themes,” and “secular realism.”

- C. (2–3) This is a simple restatement of the question.
- D. (2–3) Although this statement does more than restate the question, it implies three very general categories of evidence without any explicit connection between these categories and the terms of the question. Additionally, these categories are particularly overused by students. Readers have seen the “social, political, and economic” divisions forced upon almost every question imaginable.
- E. (6–7) This thesis makes essentially the same point as in Example A, except that this time there is an explicit connection between “Renaissance values” and “humanism, classicism, and individualism,” and it alludes to three categories of evidence. Since it does not try to answer HOW the values are reflected in the works, it still lacks analysis.
- F. (6–7) This is Example E with the addition of specific artists.
- G. (6–7) The author has failed to explicitly identify “Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Titian” as Italian artists of the Renaissance; however, in this instance it is unnecessary. These people are so famous that it may be assumed that this connection would be made by any reader. Additionally, unlike in Example A, here the author provides for three distinct categories of evidence—the works of Michelangelo, those of da Vinci, and those of Titian.

NOTE: AP readers have the benefit of reading the whole essay before they assign a score. In a Thesis Recognition exercise, you must make a judgment based on the thesis alone. It certainly would be possible for a writer to achieve a higher (or lower) score than those assigned above.

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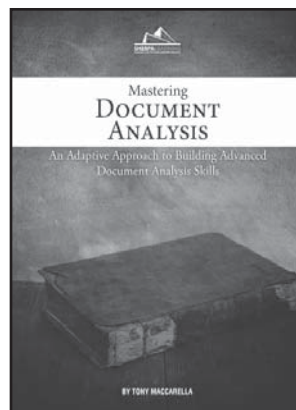
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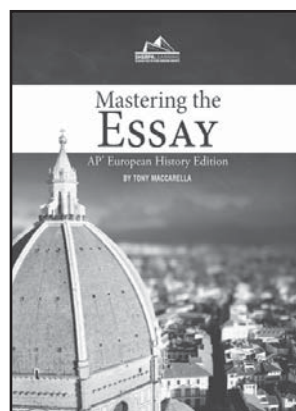
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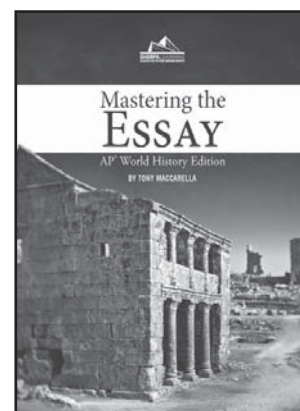
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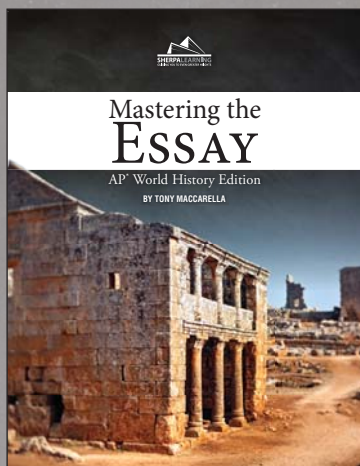
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- Clear, analytical essays in the time allotted
- Build strong thesis statements
- Argument outlines
- Analyze evidence
- Powerful conclusions

About the Author

Tony Maccarella taught AP European History at Parsippany Hills High School in Parsippany, NJ for over a decade. Prior to teaching at Parsippany Hills, he taught at Egg Harbor Township High School and Dunellen Senior High School. Tony has been teaching social studies since 1982, and besides European History, he has taught World History, AP US History, Comparative Governments, Anthropology, Psychology, Economics and Military History.

Since 2002, Tony has served as a Reader and Table Leader for the AP European History exam. He is responsible for scoring AP European History exam questions, supervising other readers, and assisting with the clarification of scoring standards.

He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from St. Joseph's University and a Masters in Teaching and Learning from Nova Southeastern University. In 1988, Tony was a New Jersey Governor's School teacher-scholar, and in 1990, he was awarded the New Jersey Governor's Teacher Grant for his "History in the News" activity, a writing skills program that employs the journalistic process in the history classroom.

Tony is an avid traveler. He has bicycled across the United States, studied in China, and traveled through Italy with students from seven different European History classes. When he is not writing or traveling, Tony likes to build things, including a 1968 Camaro, a kitchen, several desktop computers, and a portable aluminum decking system trademarked as the Porta-Deck.



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