

To what extent...

Yellow – Here, the student directly addresses the prompt.

Blue – The student provides a “roadmap”. This demonstrates how they will prove their argument.

Prompt:

‘President Lincoln was a more effective wartime leader than President Davis.’ To what extent do you support this statement?

Sample introduction:

Abraham Lincoln directed the US in its time of crisis by demonstrating many leadership qualities that served the nation, making him a more effective wartime leader than President Davis. These included the ability to delegate responsibility, rally the nation, and remain focused on what he considered to be the national purpose, which was to preserve the union at all costs. In contrast, his opponent, Jefferson Davis, was not nearly as successful. Davis did not have nearly the same amount of resources needed to combat his much better equipped and financed opponent. Furthermore, Davis ran through four secretaries of state and six secretaries of war. This lack of consistency did reflect weaker wartime leadership.

Prompt:

To what extent did one country in the Americas (other than the US or Canada) respond successfully to the Great Depression between 1929 and 1941?

Sample introduction:

The Wall Street Crash in October 1929 led the way to an international depression that further depressed Brazil’s already weakened economy. In an effort to protect their domestic economies, countries were forced to enact tariffs that led to an overall decline in international trade that affected Brazil’s export-based economy. In addition, Brazil faced political unrest that led to the establishment of the populist dictatorship of Getulio Vargas. In an effort to battle the Depression, Vargas implemented numerous policies that were intended to move Brazil away from its dependence on coffee, such as crop diversification and Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). These policies, along with the stabilization of coffee production, ameliorated the economic effects of the Depression and some income redistribution but at the cost of political freedom and unequal development of an economy that still relied on an underpaid, underrepresented majority of peasants.

Prompt:

To what extent was the prosperity of the USA in the 1920s based on solid foundations?

Sample introduction:

On the surface, it appeared as though the USA was very prosperous during the 1920s. In comparison to European nations which were still suffering economic difficulties after the First World War, the USA was doing well. Factories were booming, people were buying homes in great numbers, and the stock market flourishing. However, there were other more important signs that all was not well. In several key areas, the foundations for a prosperous USA were shaky. Significant sectors of the population lived in poverty, particularly African-Americans and Native Americans. By the middle of the decade, the factories were producing more than could be consumed. The banking system had insufficient safeguards and rampant speculation led to financial weaknesses. Finally, trade relations with the country's major foreign partners were uneasy.

Prompt:

To what extent was President Truman justified in ordering the atomic bomb attacks on Japan?

Sample introduction:

In early August, 1945, the USA dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Within days, Japan agreed to surrender without conditions. President Truman, who had only been president for four months, took the decision to unleash this new technology on Japan. President Truman was partially justified in his decision to level two Japanese cities. He desired as quick an end to the bloody war in the Pacific as possible. He felt his actions were necessary to avoid the projected tremendous loss of US lives if an invasion of Japan was undertaken. However, there were other factors beyond just this. Truman did not trust the USSR and he hoped his actions might forestall a rapid expansion of Soviet influence in Asia. In this sense, his actions were not justifiable because he had no way of knowing what Soviet intentions were. Furthermore, not all his military advisers were in agreement about the necessity of dropping the atomic bomb. Some felt there were moral aspects to consider and that the Japanese were in no position to resist a concentrated US invasion of Japan.

Question: Discuss the extent of the United States' involvement in the First World War.		
Level	Thesis statement	Rationale
Poor	The United States was heavily involved in the First World War.	Vague. No indication that the candidate understands the complexity of the question. No indication of the evidence that the candidate will use to answer the question.
Adequate	The United States was involved economically, militarily, and politically in the First World War.	More detailed. Indicates how the question will be answered. Shows limited understanding of the complexity of the question.
Sound	The United States was involved economically and politically throughout the First World War, but only committed to total war after 1917.	A detailed thesis that indicates a position, how the question will be answered, and that it is a complex issue (that the involvement changed over time).

-  Addresses the task
-  An indication of how the position will be supported
-  A qualification to the position