

## DBQ POV

Analyzing point-of-view (POV) on **at least three documents** is one of the toughest things to do in a DBQ but it matters a lot. DBQ scoring is really weird. You have six basic points you're aiming for. If you earn all six basic points, the judges then scrutinize your essay and look for the beautiful little embellishments for which they can dole out up to three bonus points for a **grand possible total of nine points**.

But, if you miss **any** of the basic six, then you disqualify yourself from any of the bonus points and instead you're looking at earning a score of a 5 or below. And the number one thing most students leave out is analyzing POV thereby limiting themselves to a maximum score of only five points.

So, let's take a look at home you can handle analyzing POV. Every source is biased in some way. On the surface, documents tell us only what the creator of the document wants us to know. Thus, when historians review evidence from the past:

- Every piece of evidence and every source must be read or viewed skeptically and critically.
- No piece of evidence should be taken at face value. The creator's perspective must be considered.
- Each piece of evidence and source must be cross-checked and compared with related sources and pieces of evidence.
- You must ask yourself "How **credible** is the information? Can I trust it? Is it corroborated by other sources? Are important facts ignored? Why would such facts be omitted?" Using other credible evidence, can you confirm or contradict the thesis of the document? Is the testimony sincere, exact? What makes you think so? Are there assertions made that you know and the author most likely would have known to be incorrect?

### WHERE DO YOU FIND POINT OF VIEW/BIAS IN THE DOCUMENTS:

One will find POV/bias in the documents by looking at the source of the document. Look for sources that, by their nature, may be of interest. Remember, what is in the document will verify whether the source's POV is of interest. Looking for exaggeration is often a good place to begin.

### POINT OF VIEW" (POV):

1. Firstly, consider "Who produced it?" – gender, age, ethnicity, social status, religion, political views, intellectual beliefs, etc.
2. Secondly, ask "When was it produced?" Can it be connected with a significant historical event?
3. Thirdly, consider "Who was the intended audience?" – written privately, written to be read/heard by others (who?), official government document, commissioned painting, etc.
4. Lastly, as any good detective knows, ask "Why was this written?" What is the **MOTIVATION** of the writer/producer of the document, based on what you can surmise about them?

When you put these together, you get the POV – why **THIS PERSON** would be producing **THIS PIECE OF INFORMATION** at **THIS TIME**. Then you can evaluate how much you "trust" the information in the document, or what you think was really going on. It is useful to consider the tone and vocabulary of the document, just as you would in analyzing a piece of literature. It will sometimes convey the intent, the point of view of the author be it anger, disdain, or admiration, etc.

#### **EXAMPLES-OF SOURCES THAT ARE GOOD FOR AN ANALYSIS OF POINT OF VIEW/BIAS:**

- Religious figures
- Extreme individuals
- The illiterate
- People with an agenda (political or religious leaders)
- The poor
- The rich

#### **HOW TO WRITE ABOUT POV**

So, while writing your essay, after citing the document using parenthetical citation, immediately give your analysis of point of view/bias.

How to do this? Just say something like:

- "One should approach this document with caution because the source."
- "The point of view expressed in this document is of interest because ..."
- "The source of this document possesses a unique point of view because ..."
- "One should take into account the point of view of the source because ..."

#### **FOLLOW THESE STEPS!**

If you don't follow my advice here, you are dooming yourself to **never earning above a 5/9** on a DBQ score. Do follow my advice and you very well may see your DBQ score rocket and your overall AP exam score jump from a 2 to a 3 or a 3 to a 4, or hopefully, a 4 to a 5!