

Power Words for Writing Historical Essays

When writing for a history course you will often be constructing arguments to answer a question or relay information. Creating and justifying a strong argument is part of analysis (see what is Analysis?). To illustrate your mastery of writing and analysis, there are some words you can use to help the reader understand your points. To jog your memory, here are some words that you can use to create analysis:

why?	causes?	comparisons?
how?	effects?	differences?
when?	changes?	process/steps
where?	continuities?	point of view?

More detail can be given if action or descriptive words are used to present evidence given in an analysis.

Descriptive Verbs	Compare	Contrast
Asserts change	agree	conversely
compliments connect	also	differently
demonstrates continue	as well (as)	disagree
embraces transform	both/all	however
exemplifies emerge	in addition	in contrast
illustrates reflects	in common	none
indicates reveals	shares the view	on the other hand
undermines evolved	similarly	unlike
strengthens portrays	neither	either
symbolizes signifies	too	
revolutionize		

Are there other words that could be added to this table?

The use of transitional phrases also helps to guide the reader point by through the essay. Additionally, transitional phrases provide organization. Some teachers discourage the use of transitional phrases, but in the class, you are encouraged to use them in order to demonstrate analysis.

- To clarify a sequence of events: first, second, third, next, finally, last. (However, **NEVER** start each body paragraph with one of these words. The sequencing of paragraphs does not indicate analysis, but rather a simplistic style.)
- To show a similar relationship: similarly, in like manner, likewise
- To point out dissimilarity: in opposition to, in contrast to, on the other hand
- To emphasize a point: indeed, in fact, surely, certainly
- To show or point out a result: consequently, as a result, therefore, hence
- To summarize a position: in summation, finally, in conclusion, in short
- To illustrate a point: for example, by way of illustration, for instance
- To contrast a position: on the other hand, however, but, yet, despite, although
- To record time: now, gradually, later, eventually, immediately, at once, at this point, next, afterward, soon, then

Instead of constantly using the word “said,” try using one of the words below, these words have much stronger connotations than “said.”

Synonym	Meaning
added	to embellish or enhance an argument
continued	to further an earlier point
stated	to say, usually confined to quotes or paraphrases from documents
announced	to declared publicly or formally
asserted	to state positively, with great confidence but no objective proof
commented	to make a remark to explain, interpret, or criticize
declared	to make known clearly and openly
observed	to mention casually
remarked	to make a brief, casual statement of opinion
reported	to give an account of

There are, of course, many more words that can lend strength to your argument. Think about those now, and add them to this handout. Share with me and other students. Try to use these words when you write in other classes. You won't be disappointed.

POWER WORDS/ PHRASES TO REFER TO ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS ON THE AP WORLD EXAM:

When starting the additional document paragraph, use these phrases to enhance the essay.

An additional document that could have been provided was _____

It can be stated that all the documents were from (_____)viewpoint, etc.....

An additional document that would have provided better insight into (_____) would be.....

It must be stated that all of these documents discussed _____, **LEAVING THE READER TO GUESS**.....

WHEN REFERRING TO DOCUMENTS IN THE AP DBQ ESSAY...

- According to _____, “..... (Author’s name or title of document)
- As stated by _____, (Author’s name)

“Hatred and envy reigned throughout the empire causing civil wars” (Doc.2).

TIP: MIX IT UP

YOU MUST USE ONE OF THESE WHEN YOU REFER TO A DOCUMENT!

(Do not stick to just one way of referring to the documents if you want maximum credit)

WHEN COMPARING TWO SIMILAR DOCUMENTS YOU CAN SAY:

- Document 1 compliments/ reflects/ strengthens Document 3 because.....
- Author’s name compliments/ reflects/shares the same view as Author’s name.
- Title compliments/ connects/ Title.
- **WHEN TRYING TO SHOW DIFFERENCES IN TWO DOCUMENTS, YOU CAN SAY....**
- Document 1 disagrees Document 3 because.....
- Unlike, Author 1, Author 2 states
- Title compliments/ connects/ Title.
- Document one states ..., However/ This is in contrast to Document 2 because