

THEMATIC ESSAY QUESTION

Directions: Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs explaining your position, and a conclusion.

Theme: Constitutional Principles

Actions undertaken by Great Britain during the colonial period greatly affected the development of the United States government. Both the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution reflected America's colonial experiences.

Task:

Select **three** characteristics of the US government under either the Articles of Confederation or the Constitution. For **each** characteristic selected:

- Discuss the historical circumstances which led to that characteristic
- Explain how this characteristic differed from the American colonial experience
- Discuss the impact of the characteristic on the functioning of the American government

You may use any examples from your study of United States history. Some suggestions you may wish to consider include:

Division of powers under the Articles of Confederation

Lack of an executive under the Articles of Confederation

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

Division of powers under the Constitution

Checks and balances under the Constitution

Inclusion of a Bill of Rights in the Constitution

You are not limited to these suggestions

Thematic Essay Scoring Rubric

Score of a 5:

- Shows a thorough understanding of the theme or problem
- Addresses all aspects of the task
- Shows an ability to analyze, evaluate compare and/ or contrast issues and events
- Richly supports essay with relevant facts, examples and details
- Writes a well- developed essay, consistently demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Includes a strong introduction and conclusion that is beyond a simple restatement of the task

Score of a 4:

- Shows a good understanding of the theme or problem
- Addresses all aspects of the task
- Shows an ability to analyze, evaluate, compare and/ or contrast issues and events
- Includes relevant facts, examples and details, but may not support all aspects of the theme or problem evenly
- Writes a well developed essay, demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Includes a good introduction and conclusion that is beyond a simple restatement of the task

Score of a 3:

- Shows a satisfactory understanding of the theme or problem
- Addresses most aspects of the task or addresses all aspects in a limited way
- Shows an ability to analyze or evaluate issues and events, but not in any depth
- Uses some facts, examples and details
- Writes a satisfactorily developed essay, demonstrating a general plan of organization
- Restates the theme in the introduction and concludes with a simple restatement of the theme

Score of a 2:

- Shows a limited understanding of the theme or problem
- Attempts to address the task
- Develops a faulty analysis or evaluation of issues and events
- Includes few facts, examples, and details; and may contain inaccurate information
- Writes a poorly organized essay, lacking focus
- Has vague or missing introduction and/ or conclusion

Score of a 1:

- Shows a very limited understanding of the theme or problem
- Lack of analysis or evaluation of the issues or events
- Uses little or no accurate or relevant facts, details, or examples
- Attempts to complete the task, but essay demonstrates a major weakness in organization
- Has vague or missing introduction and/ or conclusion

Score of a 0:

- Fails to address the theme
- Is illegible
- Blank paper