Writing the Document Based Question for the 2020 Modified APUSH Exam

Paragraph #1:

3-4 sentences of providing the **historical context** of the prompt:

❑ What generally has been going on in this era or the era previous to the one described in the prompt?
  o During the era of …, it was a time of …
  o The United States had a history of …
  o During the era of… it had evolved / changed into …
  o Prior to the …, the United States had … (things similar to that asked about in the prompt)
❑ You can go back approx. 25 years prior to the time of the prompt. Give the reader historical events related to the topic of the prompt but not contained in your thesis.

1-2 sentence **complex thesis statement** that makes a historically defensible claim and establishes a line of reasoning (X, A, B).

❑ Even though X. A and B.
❑ While X, A and B.
  o "X" represents the strongest point **against** your argument (counter-argument) or the weakest argument related to the prompt that shows the complexity of the topic.
  o "A and B" represent the strongest points or lines of reasoning in your argument.

1 sentence to **transition** to your first line of reasoning.

Paragraphs #2-4:

Separate paragraphs for each of the lines of reasoning in your thesis.

❑ 5-7 sentences for **each paragraph** that incorporates **one or two documents and ONE piece of evidence beyond the documents**. Evidence should thoroughly explain and support the relationship to the thesis.
  o Each body paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence** that relates this paragraph to one of the lines of reasoning in your thesis.
  o The **first body paragraph should be your counter-argument or the weakest part of your argument**. Use documents and evidence beyond the documents to support your argument and make certain this evidence corroborates your thesis.
  o The last **two body paragraphs should be your strongest argument** and should clearly support your thesis statement.

1. **Introduce it**: Each main body paragraph should start with an opening sentence to let the reader know what the paragraph will be about.
   - ❑ Make sure it connects to your X, A, or B in your thesis.
2. **Support it**: <u>**Use at least two documents to support the line of reasoning**</u>. <u>**HIPP the documents**</u> in a sentence or two right after using the documents to corroborate your argument. State Evidence (PN/SHE) and **explain** it in the context of your argument.
   - ❑ Your goal should be to have <u>**one or two documents and**</u> <u>**ONE piece of evidence beyond the documents**</u> in each main body paragraph. When you use a document, parenthetically cite the document (3), to indicate use of document 3.
3. **Connect it**: Use the documents and the evidence beyond the documents to support your thesis (your argument.)
   - ❑ Make sure you connect the facts to the argument clearly and <u>**explain the how and why of the connection**</u> – do NOT assume the reader will make the connection on their own.

Paragraph #5:

Conclusion:

- ❑ This last paragraph, in 1-2 sentences, you should **restate your thesis** and **its lines of reasoning** in different words than used in the opening paragraph so as to reinforce your thesis to the reader.
- ❑ You can conclude your LEQ by providing 2-3 sentences of **post-contextualization** that explains the direction of the prompt in **the years that follow the parameters of the prompt**. Generally, what happens next with this topic or with this general theme in U.S. history?
   - o Later / next this will evolve into …
   - o This … is short-lived, however because soon …
   - o In the years to follow… will only get stronger / weaker …