THEMATIC ESSAY QUESTIONS

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

1. Theme: CHANGE

The contributions and achievements of ancient civilizations have helped to influence and change the world.

Task:
Choose two ancient civilizations from your study of global history and geography.
For each civilization:
• Describe a contribution or achievement of that civilization.
• Explain how that contribution or achievement helped to influence and change the world.

Suggested Topics:
You may use any of the following civilizations. You are not limited to these suggestions.
*Mesopotamia  *Egypt
*Indus Valley  *Huang He

2. Theme: BELIEF SYSTEMS

A people’s beliefs often play a major role in shaping their history and culture.

Task:
Choose two belief systems from your study of global history and geography.
For each belief system:
• Describe two basic beliefs of that religion or philosophy.
• Explain how that religion or philosophy had an impact on a people’s history or culture.

Suggested Topics:
You may use any of the following belief systems. You are not limited to these suggestions.
*Judaism  *Islam  *Christianity
*Hinduism  *Buddhism  *Confucianism
*Shinto

3. Theme: CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Throughout history, many cultures have experienced a “Golden Age”.

Task:
Choose two cultures from your study of global history and geography.
For each culture:
• Describe two achievements of that culture’s “Golden Age.”
• Discuss one way in which the two cultures are similar of different.

Suggested Topics:
You may use any “Golden Age” for a civilization that we have studied.
*Athens  *Rome  *Egypt
*Mali  *Ghana  *Songhai
*Byzantine  *Renaissance  *Meiji

4. Theme: CULTURE AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Art works often express the political, social and economic conditions of the time period in which they were created.
Task:
Choose two works of art.
For each work of art:
- Describe the time period in which it was created.
- Describe how the artwork expressed the political, social or economic conditions of that period.

Suggested topics:
You may use any of the following empires/dynasties. You are not limited to these suggestions.
* Ancient Greece  * Ancient Rome  * Ancient Egypt  
* Byzantine  * West African Kingdoms  * T’ang (China)  
* Sung (China)  * Renaissance  * Heian (Japan)

5. Theme: MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PEOPLE
Cultural diffusion often takes place when one society establishes contact with or conquers another society.

Task:
Choose two examples in which one society established contact with or conquered another society. For each example:
- Describe one way in which the two societies were changed.
- Explain how cultural diffusion related.

Suggested topics:
You may use any of the following examples. You are not limited to these suggestions.
* Ancient Greece  * Ancient Rome  * Islamic Empire  
* Mongol Empire  * Spanish Conquistadors  * the Crusades  
* Europeans/Africa  * British in India  * Dutch in SEA

6. Theme: CHANGE
Some events in global history are called “turning points” because they have had such an significant political, social or cultural impact.

Task:
Choose two major turning points in global history.
For each turning point:
- Describe the event.
- Explain the political, social or cultural impact of that turning point in history.

Suggested Topics:
You may use any of the following examples. You are not limited to these suggestions.
* Neolithic Revolution  * Muslim Conquests  * the Fall of Rome  
* French Revolution  * Industrial Revolution  * Meiji Restoration  
* World War I  * Hiroshima  * Europeans in Latin America

7. Theme: CHANGE
The ideas and actions of some individuals have had significant impact on others.

Task:
Choose two individuals from global history.
For each individual:
- Explain how that individual’s ideas or action changed his or her own nation or another area of the world.
- Explain one way in which the two individuals were similar or different.
Suggested Topics:
You may use any of the following examples. You are not limited to these examples.
* Alexander the Great * Simon Bolivar * Martin Luther
* Catherine the Great * Mohandas Gandhi * Adolf Hitler
* Josef Stalin * Kwame Nkrumah * Nelson Mandela

8. Theme: JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS
Throughout human history, certain groups have faced injustice, discrimination, and brutality from those in power.

Task:
Choose two groups from global history.
For each group:
• Show how that group faced injustice or brutality from those in power.
• Explain how that group or the world community dealt with the injustice.

Suggested topics:
You may use the following examples. You are not limited to these choices.
* Native Americans under European Rule * Protestants during Counter Reformation
* Jews in Nazi Germany * Muslims in Kosovo
* Blacks in South Africa before Mandela * Indians under British rule
* Africans forced into slavery * Women in history

9. Theme: INTERDEPENDENCE
Global concerns pose challenges for both national and international efforts.

Task:
Choose two global concerns from global history.
For each global concern:
• Describe why it is considered to be a problem.
• Show how the problem might be solved.

Suggested topics:
You may use the following examples. You are not limited to these choices.
* Pollution * Terrorism * Computer Viruses
* Desertification * Overpopulation * Hunger
* AIDS * Deforestation * Human Rights Violations

10. Theme: HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
Throughout history, geography has had an impact on the development of nations and regions.

Task:
Choose three nations or regions.
For each nation or region:
• Explain how geography has affected the development of that nation/region
• Use specific facts to support your position that geography has had an impact on that area.

Suggested topics:
You may use the examples below. You are not limited to these choices.
* Great Britain * Japan * China * India
* Middle East * Russia * Brazil * Latin America
* South East Asia * Sub-Saharan Africa

11. Theme: GEOGRAPHY / RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS
Throughout ancient history, river valleys have played an important role in the development of regions.
Task:
Choose two river valley civilizations.
For each river valley civilization:
- Describe the spatial relationship of river valleys and human development.
- Explain how each river valley shaped the culture and economic development of the region.

Suggested topics:
You may use the examples below.
* Indus Valley  * Huang He  * Nile  * Mesopotamia

12. Theme: MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS
Throughout history, invasions have had both positive and negative effects on the development of regions.

Task:
Choose two invading nations.
For each invading nation:
- Discuss the nation or region that they invaded.
- Describe the effects of the invasion on the invaded society.

Suggested topics:
You may choose from the examples below. You are not limited to these choices,
* Alexander the Great (Persia)  * Islamic Jihads in Spain  * Mongols in Russia
* Mongols in China  * Franks in France  * Lombards in Italy
* Germany during WWII  * Aryans in India  * British in Ireland

13. Theme: POWER AND AUTHORITY: ABSOLUTISM
From 1450 – 1750, rulers sought to centralize their power and in the process, they changed the world in many ways.

Task:
Choose three absolute leaders or groups of leaders from this time period
For each leader or group chosen:
- Describe their influence on their nation and on the nations around them.
- Discuss whether their influence was either generally positive or negative.

Suggested topics:
You may choose from the following example. You are not limited to these choices.
* Sultan Suleiman I (Ottomans)  * Tokugawa Shoguns (Japan)  * Stuarts (Great Britian)
* Philip II (Spain)  * Hong Wu (Ming, China)  * Peter I (Russia)
* Ivan I (Russia)  * Akbar (India)  * Louis XIV (France)
* Charles V (Holy Roman Empire)

14. Theme: NATIONALISM
Throughout modern global history, nationalism has played both positive and negative roles.

Task:
Choose one negative example and one positive example of the way in which nationalism has impacted history.
For each example:
- Discuss the forces that led to the development of the example chosen.
- Discuss the impact on later history.

Suggested Topics:
* France (1789-99)  * Balkans (1980 – present)  * PLO
* India (prior to 1947)  * Germany (1930-45)  * Zionist Movement
* Former Soviet Union  * African Nations (after 1945)  * Black South Africans
* Vietnam  * Latin America (early 1800’s)
15. Theme: **CHANGE / WAR**
Throughout global history, wars have led to major changes in international affairs.

**Task:**
- Select one war
- Discuss the war’s impact on international affairs.

**Suggested topics:**
You may use the examples below. You are not limited to these choices.
*World War II  *Persian Gulf War
*Franco-Prussian War  *Russo-Japanese War
*Crusades  *Arab-Israeli Wars
*Opium War  *Napoleonic Wars

16. Theme: **DIVERSITY**
At various times in history, people of diverse ethnic, religious or racial backgrounds have experienced living side by side. Often problems have occurred that resulted in violence and death.

**Task:**
Choose two ethnic, religious or racial groups from global history.
For each group:
- Describe the circumstances that led to the problems.
- Explain how the selected group reacted, the actions it took to solve the problems, and the actions, if any, of the international community.

**Suggested topics:**
*Jews in Hitler’s Germany  *Roman Catholic in Northern Ireland
*Sikhs in India  *Blacks under Apartheid in S. Africa
*Muslims in Kosovo  *Native Americans in Mexico

17. Theme: **TECHNOLOGY**
Since 1945, there has been tremendous progress in technology, science, and medicine. In many cases, improvements in these fields have made substantial changes to the quality of human life.

**Task:**
Choose two improvements in, medicine, science or technology since 1945
For each example chosen:
- Discuss a specific way it has improved the quality of human life since 1945.
- Describe the impact that science, technology and medicine on human development.