



# “What do I do with this?”

Working with source based questions  
for World History Exams

- All WH constructed response questions begin like this:

*Using the **source** and your **knowledge** of history, **explain** (or **assess**, or **justify**, or **analyze**, etc)...*

- Therefore there are three aspects to your response
  - The **source** (quote, cartoon, photograph, poster, slogan, etc.)
  - Your **knowledge of history** (a complete understanding of the people, places and circumstances surrounding the event)
  - An answer to the question (**thesis**)

- The best way to learn the history is to constantly read and review. No one can do this for you



- Assuming you know your history, the two main problems students have with CR questions are...

I know my *history* but I don't know what the source *means*!



I know what it *means* but I don't know how to *write* it!



# Don't fret!

- Writing effective responses is as easy as 1-2-3:
  - 1. Interpret the question and draw from your own knowledge
  - 2. Analyze the source
  - 3. Write a concise response





# 1. Interpret the question and draw from your own knowledge

- Discover what the question is asking you by looking at the verb
  - Assess
  - Explain
  - Justify
  - Describe
- \*Use your handout to ensure you know what these all mean

- Develop a **working thesis—your answer to the question in one or two sentences**
- Starting with a thesis will keep you from rambling in your response
- A quick glance at the source in combination with your own knowledge will give you a working thesis in under 2 minutes

# Example

- Using the source and your knowledge of history, explain the reasons for the expansion of imperial powers at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



- Take a moment to jot down what you know about reasons for imperial expansion and imperialism in general

# Example

- Thesis:
- At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many European powers sought to expand their empires for “gold, glory and God.”



## 2. Analyze the source

- Use the handouts to work through the sources below
- For each source be sure to **provide a clear understanding of its message in one sentence**

# Example

- Notes:



# Example

- What is the message of this cartoon?
- Wave of German imperialism indicates Kaiser Wilhelm II actually intends to devour or take over the world





### 3. Write a concise response

- There are many ways to do this.
- If you already have a style that works for you—go for it!
- If you are having trouble, use the **handout** and follow this formula:

**General opening statement**



**Thesis**



**Literal meaning of source**



**Tie source into your own knowledge (evidence) to  
prove your thesis**



**Close by return (restate thesis)**

# The final step...

- Check your work:
  - Read all teacher comments
  - Read the exemplar and compare
  - Assess yourself by filling out the self-evaluation questions
  
- \*Remember—Practice makes perfect so why not do it again?!

# Source analysis

*I told them (my fellow soldiers) that it would be better to die with honour than to obey any further orders to shoot the crowds. “Our fathers, mothers and sisters are begging for food. Are we going to kill them?”*

Young peasant soldier, March 1917

# Source analysis

- Using the sources and your knowledge of history analyze the causes of the Russian Revolution.
- Carefully examine each source and use all the info you're given to answer in essay format

## Source A

*"We want peace!  
We want bread!  
We want land!"*

Slogan of Russian peasants in  
1917

## Source B

The Caption Reads:

*The Dominant Rasputin*

*The Russian Tsars at home*



# Source A

- What is depicted in the source? (given info)
- To what does this refer? (own knowledge)