Social Science Essay Directions/Rubric

Note: Essays MUST follow the proper social science format as articulated below:
Step 1: Write a single THESIS PARAGRAPH: (30 Points)
*All of these parts must be included in a single thesis or introductory paragraph:

A. (3 points) **SET THE CONTEXT** by explaining the political, economic and social history surrounding the topic/issue question. Be sure to use historically accurate *specific examples* and *restate* in *your own words* the specific topic/issue question (don't parrot) (3-5 complete sentences).
Ask yourself:
  - Does my paragraph begin with detailed historically accurate context associated with the topic question?

B. (2 points) **COMPLEXITY**: Show understanding of **OTHER POINTS OF VIEW** to the issue AND include EXAMPLES (use specific Taking Sides authors whenever possible). (2-4 complete sentences)
Ask yourself:
  - Does my paragraph provide complexity which articulates opposing viewpoints such as both Taking Sides author's POV separately?

C. (10 points) **THESIS STATEMENT SENTENCE**: Clearly state *your own opinion* about the topic/issue question by take *declarative position*, backed up with a well-reasoned **"BECAUSE" three part rationale.** (Your thesis should always be a complex sentence.) (AGREE **BECAUSE** WHY or DISAGREE **BECAUSE** WHY). Must be a single complete sentence only and *your thesis sentence MUST be underlined! Do not use first person* or use qualifier or transitional words or phrases to begin your thesis (I believe. . ; Although . . ; On the other hand . . , ECT.) The thesis statement is the most important part of the essay as it is what you are going to prove and it must be able to be lifted out of the essay and stand on its own as a declarative statement. Never use or refer to secondary sources or quote in your thesis as it should be all you.
Ask yourself:
  - Does the paragraph contain an underlined Opinion- Because-3 Part Rational that does not contain 1st person references; states the author's own opinion; contains a complex rational that can easily be expanded into three sub topics?

D. (15 points) **THREE SUBTOPICS**: Sometimes called the essay map. After your underlined thesis statement write *"There are three main reasons that support this position."* Then, using structural indicators (first, second, finally) provide THREE *single sentence* subtopics that are each direct extensions of a portion of the thesis three part thesis rational. Each single sentences subtopic, derived from a portion of the thesis rational MUST demonstrate how or why the subtopic proves a portion of the three part thesis rational.
  - **"First"** Subtopic 1: An ANALYSIS and/or EVALUATION topic that PROVES a major part of your main thesis rational (remember to show or say HOW/WHY).
  - **"Second"** Subtopic 2: An ANALYSIS and/or EVALUATION topic that PROVES a major part of your main thesis rational (remember to show or say HOWWHY).
  - **"Finally"** Subtopic 3: An ANALYSIS and/or EVALUATION topic that PROVES a major part of your main thesis (remember to show or say HOW/WHY).
  - Each subtopic is worth up to 5 points.
  - Do not use first person, quote or use secondary sources. Subtopics are all you.
  - Each subtopic will then be used as a topic sentence for the three body paragraphs.

Ask yourself:
- Is the sub topic identified by structural indicators; does it clearly demonstrate how/why it proves a portion of the thesis rational; is the ST historically accurate?; does not contain vague/generalized statements?

Step 2: Write Three SEPARATE BODY PARAGRAPHS: (66 points)

For each of the three Body Paragraphs:

- **(2 points) TOPIC SETENCE:** Restate the SUBTOPIC sentence from the thesis essay map as a topic sentence.

Ask yourself:
- Does the topic sentence restate subtopic 2, taken directly for the thesis paragraph essay map and does the subtopic clearly demonstrate support for a portion of the thesis rational?

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- **(10 points) EXAMPLES:** Provide At least **3 SPECIFIC EXAMPLES**: events, people, acts, policies, etc. (Note: the number of examples depends on the amount of time and the number of body paragraphs OR what the question specifically calls for) Identify and give the significance for each specific example by providing **RELEVANT DETAILS** about each example that support the Subtopic (a well-developed sentence or two on each example is generally sufficient). *Quoting secondary sources is not providing examples.* However, quoting primary sources as evidence is acceptable and encouraged.

Ask yourself:
- Does the body paragraph include at least 3 specific examples that are clearly identified and linked to analysis that works to prove the topic sentence? Does the paragraph AVOID using secondary source quotes as evidence?

- **(10 Points) ANALYSIS:** Provide at least 2-3 well developed sentences of ANALYSIS and/or EVALUATION *for each example* that explains **HOW/WHY** the examples support/prove the Subtopic. *Do not quote secondary sources.* Your analysis should be your own, not someone else's opinions. (Note: more analysis never hurts!)
- Repeat for subsequent Body Paragraphs

Ask yourself:
- Does the body paragraph contain detailed analysis linked to specific examples; is the analysis provided original and not based on secondary sources?

Step 3: CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH: (4 points)

- RESTATE Main Thesis & Sub Points
- (Explain how you have PROVED your thesis via your evidence and analysis despite the other points of view on the subject.)
- **BIG PICTURE:** ANALYZE and/or EVALUATE how your essay fits into the BIG PICTURE QUESTION of History

Ask yourself:
- Does the conclusion articulate how/why the essay proved the thesis?