

## **11<sup>th</sup> Grade US History, Unit IV: The Cold War, 1945-1989**

### **Guidelines:**

- \* This exam essay is totally open binder. You may use all of your materials, but you may not share materials with other students during the essay.
- \* You have 58 minutes to write your essay. You must finish in that time; you will lose credit for any part of the essay that you don't finish. Your goal is to come into class with your perfect outline: you have done all of your thinking by the time you come into class so you have your full 58 minutes simply to write.
- \* Because you have limited time, plan your essay as a five-paragraph essay, but leave out the intro paragraph (except be sure to include your one-sentence thesis—this is crucial!) and your concluding paragraph. In other words, your finished product will be a one-sentence intro paragraph (your thesis) and body paragraphs—that's it. The one difference between this essay and past essays is that you are writing 2 body paragraphs (see attached outline planning sheets) instead of 3. Therefore, a complete essay will include a one – sentence intro paragraph (a thesis statement) and 2 body paragraphs. Of course, in order to complete your exam outline, you must plan 4 quality body paragraphs.
- \* Be sure you do not cross the line between collaboration and plagiarism! It is OK to talk over ideas, suggest sources, and practice interpreting passages with friends, but when you begin writing your actual outline, be sure to be alone. If your outline is too similar to anyone else's—if themes and evidence passages are the same—both writers will get zeros for the entire exam.

### **Your exam questions:**

1. From 1945-1989, how much of a real threat was the Soviet Union to American safety and security?
2. How responsibly did America act and react during the Cold War? (In other words, how responsibly did America balance collective safety and personal freedom in reacting to the USSR?)

#### **1. A strong thesis**

- A one-sentence statement that directly answers the questions: how much of a threat was the USSR, and how responsibly or irresponsibly did America act?
- Three themes for each of the two questions that are creative and well defined. I suggest having three main topics for each question: In what three areas was the USSR a threat or not a threat? In what three general areas did America act responsibly or irresponsibly?
  - \* Be sure they are not too vague (your idea is too general) or too specific (you don't want a thing--a piece of evidence, an era, or a source.) You want a big idea that several pieces of evidence from several different sources can come together to prove.
  - \* Be sure they fit your thesis. If your thesis is that the USSR was a complete threat, choose 3 themes of threatening effects. If you think that the

USSR was somewhat of a threat, choose 2 themes of threatening effects and one in which the threat was imagined by the US.

\* Be sure your themes are distinct enough from each other and that they don't overlap.

Here's a model thesis: "The USSR was somewhat of a real threat to the US as shown by \_\_\_(THEME 1)\_\_\_, \_\_\_(THEME 2)\_\_\_, and \_\_\_(THEME 3)\_\_\_; America reacted completely responsibly to the USSR as shown by \_\_\_(THEME 4)\_\_\_, \_\_\_(THEME 5)\_\_\_, and \_\_\_(THEME 6)\_\_\_."

## 2. Strong topic sentences for each body paragraph

-- TS should be written as a sub-point of the thesis: a minor point that by proving allows the writer to prove 1/3 of his/her thesis. (In other words, your TSs should be stairs on the staircase and your thesis should be at the top of the staircase.)

-- TS should repeat themes from thesis.

-- TS should organize the paper: thesis theme #1, 2, and 3 should be in the first TS; thesis theme #4, 5, and 6 should be in the second TS.

## 3. Strong evidence

-- An A essay has all of the evidence in each paragraph proving the TS of that paragraph and the thesis of the essay. No evidence is included randomly that doesn't prove the TS and/or thesis.

-- An A essay has creative, logical and convincing evidence that proves the TS of its paragraph beyond a doubt.

-- An A essay has 5-7 pieces of evidence from 3-5 different sources in each body paragraph. (Also, please note that you have access to many facts and events that make great evidence. Use your content lists in your unit outline to find them! Also, remember that all facts from lecture are common knowledge and only count as one source.)

-- An A paper includes a total of 7-10 different sources.

-- An A essay covers all eras in our unit. Evidence is presented from all time periods that we studied in the unit.

-- An A essay makes good choices about when to quote and when to paraphrase.

-- An A essay cites all sources that aren't common knowledge. Since you don't have the information necessary to cite in formal MLA format, all you need is the author and page number cited in parentheses after a piece of evidence.

## 4. Strong interpretation

-- An A essay explains how each piece of evidence proves the TS and thesis.

-- An A essay relates each piece of evidence to the theme in the TS.

-- An A essay goes to the word level in the interpretation—choosing one word or a phrase in each quote to focus on—to make interpretation more deep and analytical. An A essay avoids surface-level, general interpretation.

-- An A essay has a ratio of roughly 2 sentences of interpretation for every sentence of evidence.