

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade US History Common Assessment Rubric for Essays

### 1. A strong thesis

/10 – Thesis is a one-sentence statement that directly answers the question (1)

/10 – Thesis contains three themes that are creative and well-defined. (2)

\* 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 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. Each theme should be a sub-point of your thesis that, by proving, helps you take one concrete step toward proving your overall thesis.

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

### 2. Strong topic sentences for each body paragraph

/10 -- TS is 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.) (3)

/10 -- TS repeats theme from thesis. (4)

/10 -- TS organizes the paper: the first thesis theme should be in the first TS, the second thesis theme should be in the second TS, etc. (5)

### 3. Strong evidence

/10 -- All of the evidence in each paragraph proves the TS of that paragraph and the thesis of the essay. No evidence is included randomly that doesn't prove the TS and thesis. (6)

/10 -- Creative, logical and convincing evidence proves the TS of its paragraph beyond a doubt. (7)

/10 -- Each paragraph integrates evidence from many different sources. (8)

/10 -- Essay as a whole integrates evidence from many different sources. (9)

/10 -- Essay makes good choices about when to quote or paraphrase. (10)

/10 -- Essay cites all sources that aren't common knowledge in proper MLA format. (11)

### 4. Strong interpretation

/10 -- Essay explains how each piece of evidence proves the TS and thesis. (12)

/10 -- Essay relates each piece of evidence to the theme in the TS. (13)

/10 -- 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 and to avoid surface-level, general interpretation. (14)

/10 -- Essay has a ratio of roughly 2 sentences of interpretation for every sentence of evidence. (15)

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_ out of 150 Points