



# CSE: The All-Purpose Way to Teach Theses, Context, and Body Paragraphs

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# Why Claim, Support, and Explain (CSE)?

ACE is great, but CSE is more flexible

- CSE is different in terminology
  - More descriptive, more flexible, more applicable to other uses
  - Specifically applicable to Theses, Context, and Body Paragraphs
  - Provides a consistent approach
  - Building block of a historical argument
- One-Stop acronym
  - ACE implies there is a question to answer
  - CSE provides a framework for many different kinds of arguments
  - CSE is *what historians do*

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# CSE and SAQs without a stimulus

Works like ACE, but in terms more precise, and more flexible

Directions: Answer **A**, **B**, and **C**.

- (A) Briefly explain how ONE historical development led to European exploration between 1400 and 1600.
- (B) Briefly explain ONE result of European exploration on European society between 1400 and 1600.
- (C) Briefly explain ONE result of European exploration on Native Americans between 1400 and 1600.

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(A) Political and financial support from monarchs in Portugal and Spain allowed both countries to begin voyages of exploration and conquest in the 1400s **[claim]**. In Portugal, Prince Henry brought together sailors, mapmakers, and shipbuilders and encouraged explorations of the African coast, and in Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella sponsored Columbus's first transatlantic crossing in 1492 **[support]**. The early success of Portugal and Spain brought great wealth to both countries and encouraged other European countries to explore and conquer **[explain]**.

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(B) One result of Spain's success in exploration and conquest was the inflation that it caused in the Spanish economy **[claim]**. The large amounts of gold and silver brought back on Spanish ships from the New World led to higher prices **[support]**. The decline of purchasing power in Spain mostly hurt ordinary people and contributed to growing economic inequality in the country **[explain]**.

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(C) The Columbian Exchange introduced new foods and animals to the Americas, affecting the ways many Native Americans farmed, hunted, and ate **[claim]**. Over time, Old World crops such as wheat and rice and Old World animals such as cattle and chicken became major sources of food for many native peoples **[support]**. These crops and animals, as well as other Columbian Exchange imports, changed diets, farming habits, and ecosystems throughout the Americas **[explain]**.

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# CSE for Thesis Statements

**Prompt:** Evaluate the extent of difference in American political attitudes before and after the Mexican War.

**Thesis:** U.S. involvement in the Mexican War marked a turning point in American politics and set in motion a decade of political disagreements that led to the Civil War. **[claim]** Although debates over the extension of slavery into western territories were not a new phenomenon, the war reopened the contentious issue, sparked the growth of a free-soil movement in the North, and set a precedent of popular sovereignty, which raised the possibility of more proslavery representation in the federal government. **[line of reasoning]**

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**C**



**S**



**E**



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# CSE for Contextualization

**Prompt:** Evaluate the extent of difference in American political attitudes before and after the Mexican War.

In the years before the Mexican-American War, manifest destiny had swept the country, leading many Americans to believe that expansion to the Pacific Ocean was preordained by God. **[preceding context claim]** The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded the lands between Texas and the Pacific Ocean to the United States, represented a fulfillment of this ideology. **[preceding context support]** Differing positions between Northerners and Southerners over the status of slavery in the newly conquered territory created a context for growing political disagreements in the 1850s. **[preceding context explanation]**

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# CSE for Introductory Paragraphs

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# CSE for Body Paragraphs

Let's start with a prompt and a possible thesis statement.

Evaluate the extent to which the market revolution lead to better working lives for laborers in the United States between 1820 and 1840.

A decent thesis that responds to this question could look like this:

The market revolution improved the lives of workers by providing jobs with wages, even for women **[claim]**. However, the market revolution's most lasting effects were the difficult working conditions endured in factories and the acceleration of a cycle of prosperity and recession, a boom-bust cycle, that led to high unemployment and depressed wages during economic downturns **[line of reasoning]**.

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Here's an example of a body paragraph for the sub-argument, "The market revolution provided jobs with wages, including for women."

*The market revolution created jobs that paid wages, and this provided income for laborers, including women, who were often excluded from wage work before this period* **[sub-argument]**. For example **[transition word]**, starting in the 1820s, the textile factories in Lowell, Massachusetts, typically hired women to work for wages **[claim]**. While these wages were not substantial enough for these women to achieve financial independence, they did provide some economic freedom **[support]**. These women likely would not have had the opportunity to work for wages before the market revolution **[explain]**.

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# CSE for Body Paragraphs

Here's how the whole paragraph with CSE could look with the rest of the paragraph highlighted.

The market revolution created jobs that paid wages, and this provided income for laborers, including women, who were often excluded from wage work before this period **[sub-argument]**. For example **[transition word]**, starting in the 1820s, the textile factories in Lowell, Massachusetts, typically hired women to work for wages **[claim]**. While these wages were not substantial enough for these women to achieve financial independence, they did provide some economic freedom **[support]**. These women likely would not have had the opportunity to work for wages before the market revolution **[explain]**. Furthermore **[transition word]**, Harriet Robinson recalled that the relatively high wages paid to the working women and girls in Lowell were known throughout the countryside **[claim]**. The spread of this information encouraged farm families to send their daughters to work in the mills for additional wages, which supplemented family income **[support]**. In this way **[transition word]**, wage work also transformed the life of laborers in the countryside who had daughters who went to work in the mills, thus enhancing the income of agricultural laborers who did not traditionally earn wages **[explain]**. In sum **[transition word]**, the wage work stimulated by the market revolution transformed the economic lives of both the women who worked in the textile mills, and their agricultural families back home **[summary that explains how the claims prove the sub-argument]**.

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# CSE for Body Paragraphs

Now you try. Using this prompt, write a context statement, thesis statement, or first half of a body paragraph using CSE

Evaluate the extent to which the market revolution lead to better working lives for laborers in the United States between 1820 and 1840.

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# CSE to incorporate primary sources in DBQs

CSE can be an aid to sourcing!

Let's look at a new prompt and thesis statement.

**Prompt:** Evaluate the extent to which the actions of President Lincoln impact American ideals during the Civil War.

**Thesis:** *As president and commander in chief during the Civil War, Lincoln had a significant impact on American ideals of freedom and democratic rule. **[claim]** Lincoln's rhetoric broadened the meaning of freedom to include formerly enslaved people, while his Emancipation Proclamation and the expansion of federal power extended civil rights and changed the relationship between the U.S. government and its citizens. **[line of reasoning]***

# CSE to incorporate primary sources in DBQs

Let's CSE a familiar document, the Gettysburg Address.

**Document Sourcing Statement:** In his *Gettysburg Address*, Lincoln honored the Union soldiers who died on the bloodiest battlefield of the Civil War. **[Claim: document summary]** In the speech, Lincoln reminds the audience that the nation was founded on the principle that “all men are created equal” and then argues that the Civil War is a test of that principle. Since the war is now being fought to end slavery, Lincoln is clearly expanding the meaning the freedom beyond how the founders had envisioned it. **[Support: connection to the argument]** Lincoln’s perspective as a Republican who believes slavery is immoral and as his actions as president to preserve the Union, are evident as he links the war to preserving a government of, by, and for the people. **[Explain: point of view]**



# CSE to incorporate primary sources in DBQs

Now you try. Here's a prompt, a sub-argument, and a primary source. Make a claim, support it, and explain your reasoning using the primary source.

**Prompt:** Evaluate the relative effects of federal Reconstruction policy during the period 1865 to 1877.

**Sub-Argument:** *Even as the federal government took unprecedented steps to begin the process of Reconstruction shortly after the Civil War ended, southern whites began to resist those efforts and started to mythologize the "Lost Cause" of the Confederacy.*

**Source:** Photograph at the Site of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson's Grave, 1866



Virginia Military Institute Archives

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# To Recap:

**CSE is a one-stop framework for context, thesis statements, and body paragraphs, and document analysis**

- CSE is different in terminology
  - More descriptive, more flexible, more applicable to other uses
  - CSE provides a framework for many different kinds of arguments
  - Specifically applicable to Theses, Context, and Body Paragraphs
  - Provides a consistent approach
  - Building block of a historical argument



# Questions and Discussion



# Thank You

**MEET THE AUTHORS / AP® U.S. History** ♦ 2:30 - 3:30 / Booth 204  
**Meet & Greet with:** Jason Stacy, Matthew Ellington

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Jason Stacy, [jasonstacy@mac.com](mailto:jasonstacy@mac.com)

