

Points are lost to essays that narrate instead of argue, and to rubric rows nobody attempted because they were not known to be separate. Contextualisation, sourcing and complexity each carry their own point. 欧洲史失分多因“叙事而非论证”，并遗漏独立评分项。

The essay rubric

Writing a thesis that restates the prompt. It must make a defensible claim AND establish a line of reasoning the essay then follows.

Folding contextualisation into the thesis as a clause. It is its own point and needs sentences describing the broader situation before or after the period.

Narrating chronologically instead of arguing. Accurate sequence is not an argument.

Leaving complexity unattempted. It is earned by qualifying the claim, weighing multiple causes, or explaining continuity alongside change – never by adding more facts.

Using evidence from outside the prompt's date range, which cannot count.

Answering only half a continuity-and-change prompt by describing change alone.

The document-based question

Walking through the documents one at a time. Group them by the argument they support and cite them inside your own sentences.

Calling identification 'sourcing'. Sourcing needs purpose, audience, point of view or historical situation AND how it affects what the document evidences.

Offering outside evidence that is vague, or that a document already mentions. It must be specific and new.

Citing six documents without explaining how any supports the argument – the second evidence point is for the reasoning, not the count.

The short-answer question

Writing a thesis or an introduction. Label the parts and answer directly in one or two sentences each.

Reusing the same evidence across parts when the prompt asks for a different development, region or group.

Describing where the verb was EXPLAIN. An explanation needs a causal connective and a consequence.

Content that is routinely muddled

Treating the Renaissance as a rejection of religion. Humanism recovered classical learning within a Christian framework; most patrons were clerical.

Confusing the Reformation's theology with its politics. Princes adopted Lutheranism for reasons that included church lands and independence from the Emperor.

Describing absolutism as unlimited power in practice. Louis XIV negotiated constantly with nobles, provinces and courts; the theory and the practice differ, and that gap is usually the question.

Dating the Scientific Revolution's influence to its own century. Its method reached politics and society through the Enlightenment, a hundred years later.

Treating the French Revolution as one event. The 1789 constitutional phase, the Terror and the Napoleonic settlement had different aims and different supporters.

Explaining nationalism as a single force. It unified Italy and Germany while dissolving Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire – the same idea with opposite effects.

Describing the World Wars' causes as alliance systems alone, with no reference to imperial rivalry, domestic politics or the war plans themselves.

Argument habits

Asserting causation from sequence. Name the mechanism by which one development produced the other.

Treating a model or a label – feudalism, absolutism, modernisation – as an explanation rather than as something itself needing evidence.

Generalising about a whole continent or century where the prompt names a region or a decade.