

Big Question Synthesis Essay Rubric

To convert scores derived from this rubric to numerical scores for your gradebook, see “**Scoring the Honors Assessments**” on the **Honors Assessment Resources** page.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging intro that builds background, introduces question and thesis. Sophisticated thesis articulates a precise central argument that is supportable, arguable and shows depth of thinking. Writer evaluates and/or refutes counter arguments or alternative perspectives on the BQ Conclusion accounts for thesis, synthesizes artifacts, and argues the universality of the BQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro provides some background/context for the question. Succinct and narrowed thesis; focuses on a central argument. Writer discusses counter arguments or alternative perspectives on the BQ Conclusion highlights thesis, summarizes artifacts and begins to argue the universality of BQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underdeveloped intro with little background info. Somewhat broad thesis that highlights an argument. Counter arguments or alternative perspectives on the BQ are identified but underdeveloped. Conclusion acknowledges thesis and begins to summarize but may be unclear/abrupt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ineffective intro. Does not provide background info for BQ. Vague or hard to distinguish thesis. Counter arguments or alternative perspectives on the BQ are not acknowledged. Conclusion is underdeveloped or no conclusion present
Use of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses strong and compelling textual evidence from <i>at least</i> 3-4 meaningful and varied artifacts that require the writer to assess and evaluate the supporting evidence Skillfully incorporates quotes, examples, and/or paraphrases to advance the thesis and build the analysis Sophisticated analysis of specific details to support and extend argument. Analyzes the how, why, and what to enhance and express the writer’s critical thinking and central argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses 3-4 relevant artifacts that support critical thinking. Effectively incorporates quotes, examples, and/or paraphrases to support thesis and analysis. Analyzes evidence to support/extend argument; elaborates to show some critical thinking and relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses 2-3 artifacts used to support some critical thinking. Inconsistently incorporates quotes, examples, and/or paraphrases to support thesis and analysis. Some analysis of evidence, but lacks thoroughness and elaboration; rarely goes beyond what the artifacts say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-1 artifacts used and they may be used only superficially. Quotes and paraphrasing are not handled correctly at all Little analysis or elaboration of evidence. Mostly summarizes artifacts.

Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifacts are cohesively and sophisticatedly synthesized to support central argument; makes connections between artifacts. • Comprehensive and well-developed argument is built throughout the essay with related subtopics/ assertions, generally demonstrated through argumentative topic sentences • Strong and effective transitions throughout essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifacts reflect a basic level of synthesis around a central argument. • Consistent argument is built throughout the essay with related subtopics/assertions, demonstrated through some clear topic sentences • Transitions evident throughout essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to synthesize artifacts but may be too general at times. • Inconsistent argument is built through the essay; topic sentences are broad and general and do not make clear claims • Weak transitions or inconsistent use of transitions throughout essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little synthesis • Argument is underdeveloped or confusing; weak topic sentences • Missing or ineffective transitions.
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinct and consistent writer's voice is evident through the use of varied sentence structure and sophisticated vocabulary as grade level appropriate • Expresses authentic voice and tone (as appropriate to grade level) rather than simple adherence to a formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinct and consistent writer's voice is attempted, although inconsistent and still emerging through the use of some varied sentence structure and attempts at sophisticated vocabulary, as grade level appropriate • Occasionally demonstrates authentic voice and tone (as appropriate to grade level) but the essay may feel formulaic at times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinct and consistent writer's voice may be lacking • Rarely demonstrates authentic voice and tone (as appropriate to grade level); the essay generally adheres to a set formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attempt at a writer's voice or the voice is simply that of a student struggling with the concept of the assignment • The essay is formulaic and does not demonstrate authentic voice or tone
Grammar & Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong mechanics and grammar as appropriate for grade level • May have a few minor mistakes but does not inhibit meaning. • All sources are correctly cited as directed by the teacher (either in MLA format or as "Source A") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good mechanics and grammar as appropriate for grade level • May have a few patterns of mistakes but they do not inhibit meaning. • Most sources are correctly cited as directed by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning is somewhat diminished by consistent errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and/or agreement. • Most sources are not correctly cited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial errors in grammar and punctuation that interfere with meaning. • No clear evidence of source documentation is

		teacher (either in MLA format or as "Source A")		present
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