

“For and Against” Instructions

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These instructions are an updated version of the instructions for the exam format described in David J. Voelker, “Assessing Student Understanding in Introductory Courses: A Sample Strategy,” *The History Teacher* 41 (Aug. 2008): 505–518.

- Use the available space to write 2 separate paragraphs labeled “For” and “Against.” Write paragraphs (not lists) in complete sentences.
- One paragraph should provide the best evidence that you can give FOR, or in support of, the statement. The other paragraph should provide the best evidence that you can give AGAINST the statement. (The order does not matter.)
- Include only accurate historical evidence. Do not exaggerate the facts or use sarcasm.
- Keep counter-factual speculation to a minimum: it is fine to speculate briefly about how things might have happened differently, but limit it to 1-2 brief sentences.
- Explain how the evidence you present supports or undermines the statement. Insofar as possible, write a coherent paragraph for each side. (In other words, try to connect your various points together.)
- Show me what you know about the material that we have been studying: be as detailed as you can, making reference to specific historians, people, places, and historical documents if possible. It is fine to bring in additional information not covered in the course, but must also draw thoroughly on course materials.
- To earn a “B” or higher, you must refer to at least one historian's interpretation and at least one primary source. For most exams, you should have the resources to cite several such sources.

Source: <http://davidjvoelker.com/history-sotl/>

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