

**How to answer the 1st question of a DBQ :
How useful are Documents A and B for
understanding..., for an historian
studying... ?**

How can we train students to improve the quality of their
answer ?

Agnès Perraud

Methodology

A document might be seen as **useful** in a number of ways:

- a source of information (about politics, economics...)
- provenance (especially in History) :
- a primary source gives **insight** into attitudes at the time
- a secondary source allows **hindsight**, gives a perspective
- In Geography, documents are usually recent (maps, figures...) and reliable, unless it is a cartoon. Comment on the measures (HDI, GDP...) and factors of explanation given.
- inferences made
- the author and its views about the question (especially in history)

A document may not be useful in that :

- it is the author's own interpretation or a snapshot from a cartoonist/journalist/politician trying to make one particular point
- may be partial or brief (rarely the work of an historian)
- needs a good understanding of context to interpret well so other sources needed
- doesn't deal with all the aspects of the question (may be only on one sector, one TNC, one country/region of the world)
- may show something but not help explain

What we often find in students answer

- The document is biased (when a biased document can be very useful...)
- It is not precise enough/lacking details (without explaining what important information is missing)
- Statement made without evidence (especially when there is a map or stats)

Students tend to focus on the nature/reliability of the document without looking at the command word and 2nd part of the question.

Remind students that :

- A full response covers usefulness in terms of what each document does and does not do.
- Their answer shall analyse rather than describe (what the documents are, what they show and the sources...).
- Support the answer with evidence from the documents (quotes, figures...).
- Look at the command word to give a precise answer

DBQ Exercise

Prepare several documents (6 at least)

- of different nature : maps, stats, texts...
- showing different points of view on a topic (positive/negative)
- With different focus (global, regional or national scale)

Make them work in pair (or by group) on 2 documents using a table to help them be more precise on their answer.

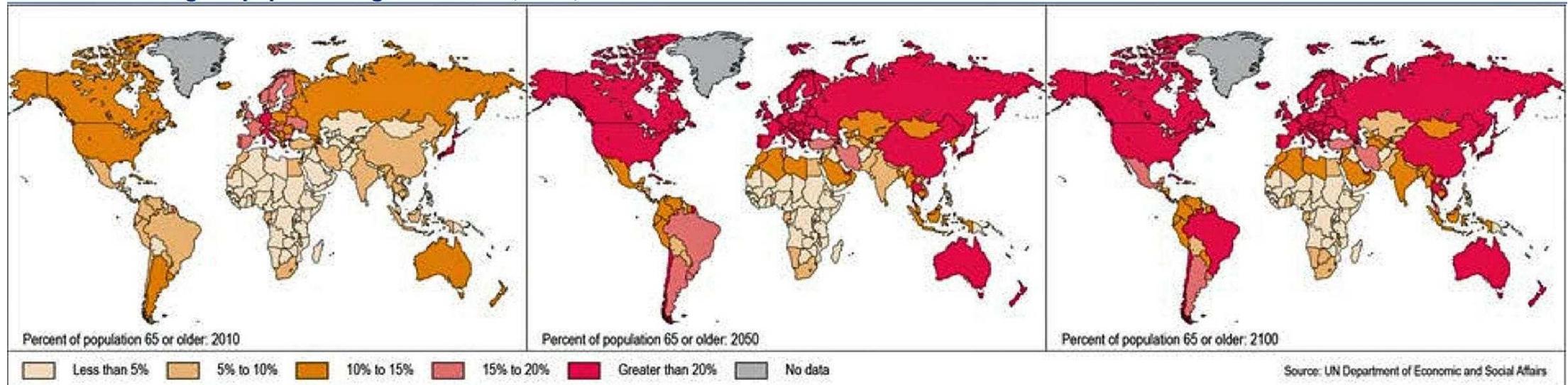
Then they can explain to another pair (group) the strengths and limitation of their documents.

Ageing population (2^{nde}) : is the document useful...

	Useful		Less useful	
	Global scale	National or local scale	Global scale	National or local scale
To describe and evaluate the rate of growth of the ageing population				
To explain the reasons for the ageing population				
To analyse the positive consequences of the ageing population : On the economy ? on politics ? On society ?				
To analyse the negative consequences of the ageing population : On the economy ? on politics ? On society ?				
To provide solutions to manage ageing population : which one ?				

Example of sources on Ageing population

Chart 2: Percentage of population aged 65+: 2010, 2050, 2100



Source B Why Japan's Aging Population Is An Investment Opportunity

[Japan](#) BRANDVOICE | Paid Program

Source C : Why an ageing population might be good news for the economy

Daily Financial Times, Wednesday, 8 February 2017

Source D : The Aging World

The world's oldest populations, mapped. *By Kate Blair* April 24 2014 <https://www.slate.com>

Can be adapted to many topics such as migration

	Useful		Less useful	
	Global scale	National or local scale	Global scale	National or local scale
To describe and evaluate the importance of migration flows				
To explain the reasons for migrations flows				
To analyse the advantages of migration flows : for the host country ? Country of origin ? On the economy ? on politics ? On society ?				
To analyse the disadvantages of migration flows : for the host country ? Country of origin ? On the economy ? on politics ? On society ?				
To provide solutions to manage better migration : which one ?				

You can change the focus of the question to make them compare dates and figures in geography :

- Which document shows a situation at a certain date ?
- Which one shows a change ? For which period of time ?
- Which one give prediction ?

Can be adapted in history : Example on the influence of the French revolution

How useful are the documents...

	Useful	Less useful
To explain the methods used by Napoleon to spread the ideals of the Revolution in Europe		
To evaluate the success/limits of Napoleon's reforms		
To analyse the (positive/negative) reaction of European people/ country(ies) to Napoleon's domination		

- Source A : Napoleon's letter to his brother Jerome, King of Westphalie

- Source B

CARTOON: NAPOLEON, 1806. 'Tiddy-Doll, the Great-French-Gingerbread-Baker: Drawing out a New Batch of Kings.'

Commentary on Napoleon's conquest of Europe and installation of puppet monarchs.

Etched cartoon by James Gillray, 23 January 1806.



TIDDY-DOLL, the great French-Gingerbread-Baker, drawing out a new Batch of Kings. — his Man Hopping Talley, missing up the Dough

Source C

<https://www.research.com/napoleon-directly-ruled-germany>
Source_fig1_2634608

Source D

Text by Fichte to show
German nationalism ?

