Topic:

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The essay should be approximately 1000-1500 words. Please use one inch margins and double-space or space and a half. Make sure the title of your essay

clearly refers to the specific question you're addressing. In writing the essay make sure you have a clear introduction, main body paragraphs, and a

conclusion. Make sure that you support all main points with specific examples.

Topic:

In the 19th century many people thought of the United States as a place with unlimited individual economic opportunity and a place where social equality and

political democracy reigned supreme. Organization (how well you structure your argument)

You should have an introductory paragraph that briefly summarizes your answer to the question.

The body of the essay should be logically organized to support your argument. Usually a topical organization is best. For instance, if the question asks you to

talk about economics, politics, and social structure, a logical form of organization would be to have a paragraph on economics, a paragraph on politics, etc.

Each paragraph in the body should begin with a clear topic sentence. A topic sentence indicates the main point you’re making in that paragraph. As a general

rule of thumb, never start a paragraph with a statement of fact or a quote. Your paragraph should stay focused on proving that central point. For instance, if

you indicate in your topic sentence thatyou will be making an argument about politics, don’t wander off into talking about economics.\

Your essay should have a clear conclusion that summarizes the main points of your argument (your answer to the question)

II. Use of Evidence (how well you support your argument with historical facts)

Key assertions should be supported by specific historical facts rather than generalizations.

Evidence should be integrated into the argument. Just throwing out facts is not enough – you need to explain HOW the facts help prove your argument.

Facts should be CORRECT and RELEVANT. The first point is obvious. In the second case, students often dump a large quantity of facts into a paper without

any regard to whether they relate to answering the question. This indicates that the student doesn’t really understand the significance of the evidence.

III. Overall Effectiveness of the Argument (Does your answer make historical sense)

The essay should actually make an analytical argument, not just provide a narration of events. In history we look at not just WHAT happened in the past, but

WHY it happened and WHY it’s significant.

All elements of the question should be addressed. If the question has two components and you only address one, that’s not a complete answer.

Overall, the essay should reflect a good understanding of the historical material being discussed.

TOPIC QUESTION:

In the 19th century many people thought of the United States as a place with unlimited individual economic opportunity and a place where social equality and

political democracy reigned supreme. Do you think this accurately describes real conditions in the United States between 1865 to1900? Why or why not?