

Urbanization in America **DBQ Essay**

Instructions:

- Read the **Documents** in **Part A** and answer the questions in the spaces provided after each document.
- Once completed, begin your **Essay** which is **Part B**.
- You must use **ALL of the seven documents** in your answer.
- Your essay must include a **solid thesis statement** in the introduction paragraph, **several body paragraphs** and a **sound conclusion** validating your thesis statement.

Some of the documents have been edited for the purpose of better reading and comprehension. As you read and analyze the following documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view.

Historical Context:

During the second half of the 19th century, the United States as a nation was undergoing great changes. Major transformations were taking place in the urban landscape. The American city was in a constant state of change, some for the better, and some for worse.

Essay Question:

- Describe four of the changes occurring in the U.S. cities between 1850 and 1900
- Explain why these changes were happening
- Discuss the impact of these changes on life in the cities during this period.

Use ALL of the seven documents in your answer

Please continue to the next page and begin **Part A** – Short answer questions

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Part A – Documents for Urbanization in America DBQ Essay

Document 1

| URBAN – RURAL POPULATION AND NUMBER OF URBAN PLACES, 1850-1890 | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Source: Historical Statistics of the United States | | | |
| YEAR | NUMBER OF URBAN PLACES | TOTAL URBAN POPULATION (IN MILLIONS) | TOTAL RURAL POPULATION (IN MILLIONS) |
| 1850 | 236 | 3.5 | 19.6 |
| 1860 | 392 | 6.2 | 25.2 |
| 1870 | 663 | 9.9 | 28.7 |
| 1880 | 939 | 14.1 | 36.0 |
| 1890 | 1348 | 22.1 | 40.8 |

Compare the urban population to the rural population for this time period. What trends are indicated by the information on the chart? Use two (2) different examples.

1 _____

2 _____

Document 2

“...It used to be a matter of pride with the better sort of our country people that they could raise on their own land or manufacture within their own households almost everything needed for domestic consumption. But now if you leave the rail, at whatever remote station...and make your way to the house of any long-settled and prosperous farmer, and the intimacy of his family with the town will constantly appear, in dress, furniture, viands [food], in all conversation... [For example:]...If the baby has outgrown its shoes, the measure [size] is to be sent to town....”

Frederick Law Olmsted, 1871

Quoted in Hoogenboom and Hoogenboom [ed.], *The Gilded Age*

How does Olmsted think life has changed in America by 1871?

Document 3

“Before 1895 the streets [of New York City] were almost universally in a filthy state. In wet weather they were covered with slime, and in dry weather that air was filled with dust. Artificial sprinkling in summer converted the dust to mud...Rubbish of all kinds, garbage, and ashes lay neglected in the streets, and in the hot weather the city stank with the emanations of putrefying organic matter. It was not always possible to see the pavement, because of the dirt that covered it...[Now]...New York is...clean...Few realize [the changes]...For example, there is far less injury from dust to clothing, to furniture...children make free use as a playground of streets which were formally impossible to them. “Scratches” a skin disease of the horses to mud and slush...is now almost unknown...”

NYC Commissioner George E. Waring, Jr. 1897,
Quoted in Hoogenboom and Hoogenboom [ed.], *The Gilded Age*

According to the above document, name two problems that city life had:

1 _____

2 _____

According to this same article, name two ways that city life has improved:

Document 4

“...By 1900 [urban Americans] found themselves living in a communal setting...they now turned toward the impersonal government or corporation to provide them with water and heat, sewerage and light, elevators and elevateds, machine-made clothes and factory-canned goods. It was a life of interdependence accentuated by technology, rather than a life of independence assured by [rural] distance...”

Robert H. Walker, “The Changing Community”
The Age of Enterprise, 1865-1900, 1971

According to the author, how did urban life make Americans more interdependent?

What role did technology play in this interdependence?

Document 5

“The sheer size of cities helped create a new form of politics...Many city problems were handled by local political bosses who traded in patronage favors and graft. Big city political machines were not altogether sinister [threatening] in their effects; they provided food and money for the poor, fixed problems at city hall, and generally helped immigrants in their adjustment to a new life...”

Tindall and Shi, “*City Politics*” America, A Narrative History, 1999

According to the author, What new form of politics was created in the cities?

What was the relationship between immigrants and urban political machines?

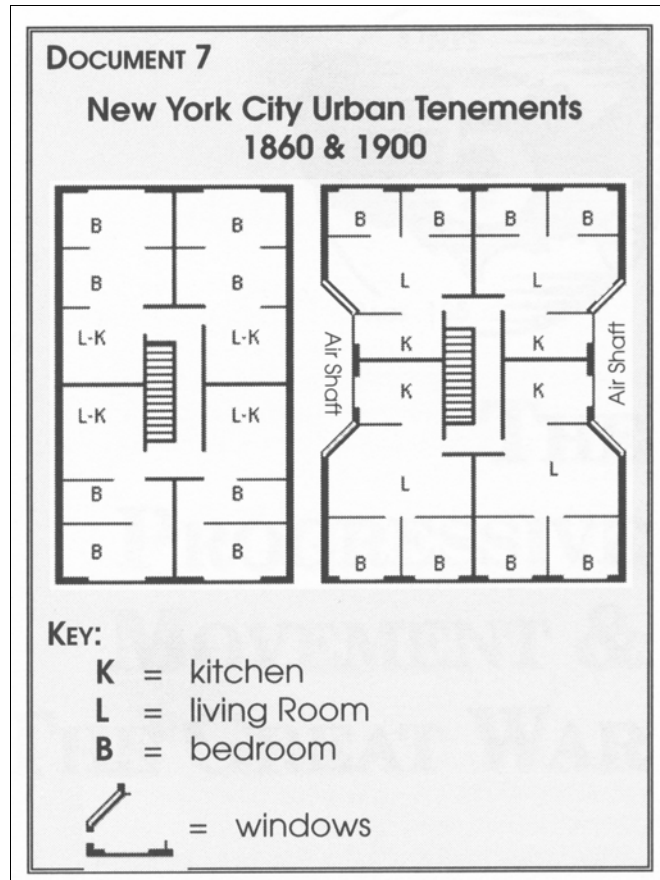
Document 6

“By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, [the walking city, so named for the necessity of walking to work] disappeared. Where once substantial houses, businesses, and small artisan dwellings had stood side by side, central business districts emerged...Few people lived downtown, although many worked or shopped there. Surrounding the business center were areas of light manufacturing and wholesale activity with housing for workers. Beyond these working-class neighborhoods stretched middle class residential areas. Then came the suburbs...Scattered throughout the city [was] industrial activity surrounded by crowded working-class housing...Better transportation increasingly allowed middle-and upper-class residents to live away from their work and from the grimy industrial districts...”

Nash, et. al., *The American People*, 1998

According to Nash, how did urban geography change in the last half of the 19th century?

Nash focuses on changes in technology in his article; describe the role that technology had in that change



According to the above diagram, how do the two floor plans, one from 1860 and the other from 1900, represent a change in urban living?

Explain if the changes from 1860 to 1900 are beneficial or harmful to these urban residents?

Part B – Essay Question

- Describe four of the changes occurring in the U.S. cities between 1850 and 1900
- Explain why these changes were happening
- Discuss the impact of these changes on life in the cities during this period.

Use ALL of the seven documents in your answer