Essay Example, Outline, and Introduction Sample

Here are the instructions you will see for the essay outline and introduction section of the test: Answer the following question to the best of your ability. Construct an outline and introduction that addresses and fulfills the requirements of all parts of the essay question. Enough information and data must be included to receive full credit. You should present a cogent argument based on your critical analysis of the question posed and your understanding of history as well as geography.

The essential elements of an introduction:
1. Restate the question by paraphrasing, and include solid background information (who?, what?, when?, where?)
2. Indicate the major points to be discussed in the body paragraphs. Do not just simply list the points, but develop them sufficiently.
3. State your defendable, all-encompassing thesis that connects all the major points together. Underline your thesis statement.

Here is a sample question, outline and introduction:

Question:
In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue, beginning an era of exchange between two previously unconnected worlds.
A) Define the Columbian Exchange
B) Identify TWO things transported from the New World to the Old World, and discuss their impact.
C) Identify TWO things transported from the Old World to the New World, and discuss their impact.

Outline:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Columbian Exchange</th>
<th>Movement of people, specie, plants, animals and disease from Europe to the Americas (and vice versa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>- precious metals</td>
<td>- gold, silver; used for currency (made mother countries extremely wealthy &amp; powerful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- tomatoes</td>
<td>- one of several plants brought; improved nutrition &amp; variety (but minimal impact on environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>- horses</td>
<td>- used as beasts of burden &amp; transport; improved productivity, travel &amp; communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- smallpox</td>
<td>- killed as many as 90% of Amerinds; easier for Europeans to conquer; increased demand for slaves (from Africa) (Europeans had better immunity due to domestication)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction samples:

1. Columbus transported precious metals and tomatoes, and horses and smallpox during in the Columbian exchange. This was good for some people and bad for some others.

   Grade: D; no background information; major points simply listed and not developed or connected with their points of origin; no basic statement of what the Columbian exchange was; incorrect information ("Columbus transported"… implies that Columbus alone did this (in fact, thousands of Spanish people initiated this process)); thesis is weak, ambiguous, and fails to make any defendable argument.

2. In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue, beginning an era of exchange between two previously unconnected worlds. Precious metals and tomatoes were transported from the New World to the Old World, and horses and smallpox were transported from the Old World to the New World. Columbus’ voyages began an exchange of many things that changed the world forever.

   Grade: C; little background information; just restating the question; no paraphrasing; major points listed, but not developed; thesis begins decently, but is ambiguous and fails to make any significant or defendable argument.

3. In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. He began to exchange people, plants, animals, and diseases. Two things that were transported from the New World to the Old World were precious metals and tomatoes. Two things that were transported from the Old World to the New World were horses and smallpox. The Columbian Exchange was better for the Old World and worse for the New World.

   Grade: B-; little background information; mostly just restating the question and not paraphrasing; major points listed, but not developed; some statement of the meaning of the Columbian Exchange, but with incorrect information ("He began to exchange"…ignores thousands of others); the thesis presents a defendable argument, but fails to connect all the main points of the essay question.

4. In 1492, Christopher Columbus, a Genoese sailor, set out for the newly unified kingdom of Spain and discovered a New World in the Western Hemisphere. Through subsequent European expeditions Columbus and the Spanish people began a massive exchange of people, plants, specie, animals and disease between the continents of the Americas and Europe. The Europeans acquired valuable raw materials from the Americas such as gold, silver, and new and nutritious plants such as tomatoes. In turn, the Europeans transferred valuable beasts of burden such as horses to transform the New World, and inadvertently transmitted the deadly disease smallpox, which decimated the native populations. Columbus’ voyage ushered in a new era of globalization between Europe and the Americas, transferring resources and organisms which greatly benefited the Europeans, but proved disastrous for the Native Americans.

   Grade: A+; solid and succinct background information; essay question paraphrased and originally interpreted; major points identified and developed in a concise narrative; strong thesis that connects all the elements of the question (pretty snazzy if I do say so myself 😊)