

# **DOCUMENT-BASED ESSAY ON U.S. REACTIONS TO NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR POLICY**

**GRADES:** 9–12

**AUTHOR:** David Leong

**SUBJECT:** Social Studies

**TIME REQUIRED:** One to two class periods

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To interpret primary texts and images
2. To write a five-paragraph essay interpreting and synthesizing the documents provided

## **MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- Handout 1: Document-Based Essay (attached)
- Handout 2: Document-Based Essay Scoring Rubric (attached)

## **BACKGROUND:**

Since the first use of atomic weapons against Japan in World War II, the world has lived in fear of nuclear Armageddon. As more and more countries have developed nuclear capabilities, this risk has seemed to rise. In October of 2006 North Korea announced that they had successfully developed and tested nuclear weapons. The attached documents describe some of the ways the United States has reacted to North Korea's nuclear program, both before and after the test.

## **PROCEDURE:**

1. Have students brainstorm what they already know about North Korea.
2. Have students share their brainstorms.
3. Distribute the handout and go over instructions.
4. Have students answer Part A (document short answers) either alone or in groups.
5. Have students complete Part B (essay) alone.
6. Distribute the rubric so students know how they will be graded.
7. Anonymously copy high-, medium- and low-quality student essays for the class. Have students critique the essays in order to better understand primary documents and document-based essays.

## **EVALUATION:**

Grade student essays in accordance with the scoring rubric.

## **HANDOUT 1: DOCUMENT-BASED ESSAY**

Enclosed are six documents relating to North Korea's nuclear program and the United States' reactions to it. These documents include speeches, news articles, charts and political cartoons. This assignment is designed to develop your ability to work with historical documents, charts and newspaper articles.

### **Historical Context:**

America has had a difficult relationship with North Korea since its creation. Even with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, America and North Korea's relationship has been characterized by persistent tension. This tension has intensified with North Korea's nuclear testing. Different segments of America have responded to the testing with skepticism, fear and anger.

### **Part A: Short-Answer Questions**

The documents that follow relate to America's response to North Korea's nuclear program. Examine each document closely and answer the questions that follow.

#### Document 1

“North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom. Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror ... States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.”

President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002

1. Why did Bush and his speechwriters specifically use the word “axis”?
2. North Korea was labeled part of the Axis of Evil over four years before it successfully tested a nuclear weapon. What are some possible explanations?

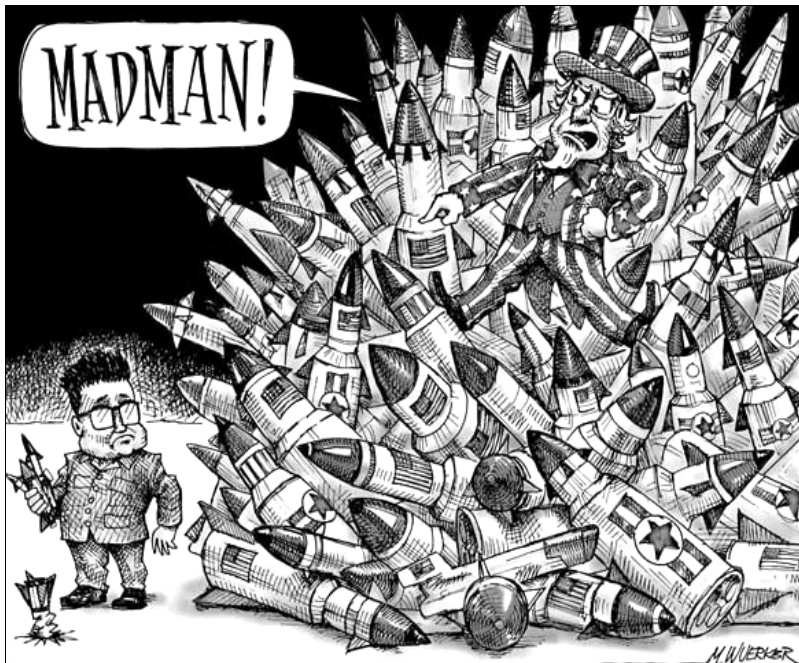
Document 2



Nick Anderson, July 6, 2006

1. Kim Jong-il's saber sheath is titled "Taepodong 2," the name of North Korea's long-range missile system. What statement is the cartoonist making about the Taepodong 2 missile?
2. Think about a country possessing nuclear weapons. Why are long-range missiles necessary?

Document 3



Matt Wuerker, July 12, 2006

1. Who does the figure on the left represent? The figure on the right?
2. Why is it hypocritical for the figure on the right to be calling the figure on the left a madman?

Document 4

“North Korea came under international condemnation today after boasting that it had tested a nuclear weapon, with strong criticism even from its allies, but there were doubts in the intelligence community about the strength of the device. The United Nations Security Council today began working on a resolution condemning North Korea’s action, shortly after President Bush denounced the announcement of the test as a ‘provocative act,’ one that requires an ‘immediate response.’”

Stout, David, “North Korea’s Claim is Met with Doubt and Anger,” *New York Times*, October 9, 2006

1. Look back at Document 1. How does the United States’ response in 2006 differ from that reaction?

2. Is it consistent to doubt North Korea's weapons, but say it requires an “immediate response”?

### Document 5

For each of the following countries, please say whether you consider it an ally of the United States, friendly but not an ally, unfriendly or an enemy of the United States.

	Ally	Friendly	Unfriendly	Enemy	Not Sure
Iran	3	12	36	46	3
North Korea	4	17	28	45	6
Syria	5	27	35	19	14
Venezuela	12	38	26	14	10

*Source: Opinion Research Corporation / CNN, May 4 to May 6, 2007*

1. Add together the “unfriendly” and “enemy” responses for each country. Which two countries do Americans view as far more unfriendly and enemy-like? Why do you think this is so?
2. Since America is a democracy, why does it matter how Americans view other countries?

### Document 6

What are the objectives for each country involved in the Six-Party Talks?

- **United States:** For Washington, the Six-Party Talks serve as a means to make North Korea’s nuclear weapons program a multinational problem rather than an issue to be solved through bilateral discussion. Although Washington worries about the Communist state’s poor human rights record, the chief U.S. concern remains Pyongyang’s nuclear program and possible sale of nuclear materials and technology to hostile states and terrorist groups. As part of any agreement, Washington wants the reclusive state to accept IAEA monitors in the country.
- **North Korea:** The regime of Kim Jong-Il seeks a nonaggression security pledge from the United States, which maintains more than twenty-five thousand troops in South Korea. Pyongyang also wants normalized relations with Washington and to be removed from the U.S. State Department’s state sponsors of terrorism list. North Korea wants unfettered access to economic aid from other Six-Party countries and hopes for the completion of the two light-water reactors promised in the Agreed Framework.

1. What are the Six-Party Talks? What is their goal?
2. Are the U.S. and North Korea's goals mutually exclusive? In other words, is it possible for both of them to get what they want?

**Part B:**

Write a well-organized, five-paragraph essay that includes an introduction with a thesis statement, several paragraphs explaining the thesis and a conclusion. You have already analyzed the documents in answering the previous questions. Use them to support your position. Do not simply repeat the contents of the documents. Include specific, related outside information.

**Historical Context:**

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**Task:**

Describe the ways the American government and American citizens have viewed and responded to North Korea's development and possession of nuclear weapons. Pay particular attention to how those views have shifted over time. Additionally, remember that America is a pluralistic society, and that Americans hold different views at the same time.

## **HANDOUT 2: DOCUMENT-BASED ESSAY SCORING RUBRIC (9-POINT SCALE)**

8-9

- Contains a well-developed thesis that addresses the entire prompt
- Supports the thesis with effective analysis
- Effectively uses all the documents
- Supports thesis with relevant outside information
- May contain minor errors
- Is clearly organized and written

5-7

- Contains a well-developed thesis that addresses most of the prompt
- Supports the thesis with limited analysis
- Uses some documents
- Supports thesis with some outside information
- May contain some errors
- Strong organization and writing; errors do not interfere with comprehension

2-4

- Contains a limited or underdeveloped thesis
- Lacks analysis; deals with the prompt in a general, simplistic, incomplete or superficial manner
- Merely paraphrases, quotes or briefly cites documents
- Contains little outside information, or information that is inaccurate or irrelevant
- May contain major errors
- May be poorly organized and/or poorly written

0-1

- Lacks a thesis or restates the question
- Exhibits inadequate or incorrect understanding of the question
- Has little or not understanding of the documents or ignores them completely
- Contains no outside information
- May contain substantial factual errors
- Is poorly organized and/or poorly written

*(Adapted from College Board's Advanced Placement U.S. History Exam Materials)*