

Answering “To what extent” Questions

In this Social Studies 9 course, as well as in future social studies courses you may take, you will encounter the question “**To what extent...**” in various assignments, quizzes, and/or exams.

Answering this question first requires an understanding of what “To what extent...” means. “To what extent” refers to a matter of degree. It is asking how great an effect something has (a lot, a little bit, none at all) or to what degree something is true (how much?).

For example, here is a possible question:

To what extent are people and industries responsible for global warming?

This question is asking how much (to what degree) of global warming are people and industries responsible for.

Possible alternatives or positions for answering the question are the following:

- People and industries are responsible for *all* global warming.
- People and industries are responsible for *most* global warming.
- People and industries are responsible for *some* global warming.
- People and industries are *not* responsible for any global warming.

As with all opinion or position essays, you must choose the position you will discuss in your essay. After you decide on your position, you will likely want to explain your meaning. (For example, how much is “some”?) The most important aspect of answering “To what extent...” questions is to **support your answer** with evidence (facts, reasons, and rationale).

Asking yourself the following questions will help you defend your position.

- What are my main reasons for supporting my position?
- What information will help me defend my position?
- What specific examples can I use to support my position?

Remember that your essay will be evaluated on how well you defend and support your position.