

**Unit  
3****The Great Divergence Between  
the East and West****Filtering and Editing**

**Note: the following information corresponds to Chapter 3 in your textbook.**

It is important to be able to extract main ideas from a reading, filter out the less important data, and condense the reading into an edited and more focused version. In a paragraph, the main idea is the equivalent of a topic sentence. In a more extended section, two or more main ideas are the equivalent of the foundation of a thesis statement. Most social science textbooks are basically written as a series of essays. With this in mind, it is important to realize that good essay writing techniques are frequently modeled for you.

**Generating Main Ideas from a Reading (or Filtering and Editing):**

Generating a main idea through filtering and editing requires active reading because you must *create* a sentence, rather than underline or copy an existing one. To clarify, filtering is what you do when you are actively reading and taking the information in. You focus more on the big picture – the main idea of the paragraph you are reading – and less on the details. Editing is when you analyze the reading and express the main idea in a more condensed written (or spoken) form.

**How to Generate Main Ideas from a Reading:**

The reading comprehension exercise below requires you to generate a main idea, not a summary, for each paragraph in a series of topic sentences and a thesis statement for the entire selection. Read the following paragraphs, and for each one:

- Write one clear and complete sentence that expresses the main idea of each paragraph.
  - Look for a cause and effect relationship, a comparison or contrast, a connection, or a generalization addressed within the paragraph.
  - Avoid simply summarizing the paragraph or listing facts.
- Write one clear and complete thesis statement that expresses the main idea of all paragraphs.

**Guided Practice:**

**A)** It has been the goal of virtually all states and empires throughout history to provide the most stable situation for their survival, which usually results in the pursuit of establishing a unified nation-state. In the sixteenth century both Europe and Japan were broken up into multiple states. However, Europe was a region possessing scores of nationalities, whereas Japan was predominantly a single nation. As a result, Japan was logically in a more conducive situation for establishing a nation-state as opposed to the continent of Europe.

**B)** Nation-states are often more stable than multinational states, because people tend to be more compatible with those who are similar to themselves in terms of language, religion, ethnicity, or cultural tendencies. Initially, Japan welcomed the Westerners from Europe and the increased trade they generated. However, the leaders of Japan despised the efforts of the Jesuits and other foreigners in disrupting their traditional beliefs. As time progressed, animosity grew between the Japanese government and the Europeans, who were increasingly seen as unwelcome outsiders.

**Stronger:** Establishing a nation-state is ideal for the survival of a country, and in the sixteenth century, both Japan and Europe consisted of several different states. However, the Japanese were in a better situation than the Europeans, since they were a single nation, whereas Europe consisted of multiple nationalities.

**Weaker:** The goal of all states is to make nation-states, and Japan and Europe were broken up into multiple states. Europe had scores of nationalities, whereas Japan was a single nation, so Japan was better off than Europe. *(Reducing unnecessary words and establishing more precise connections would strengthen this sentence)*

**Stronger:** While Europeans in Japan increased trade and prosperity, many also spread their faith, disrupting traditional Japanese values. Over time, the Japanese leaders grew to dislike the effect the Europeans had in unhinging their unified nation.

**Weaker:** Nation-states are better than multinational states; people like other people who are more like themselves. Japan initially welcomed Westerners and their trade, but Jesuits made them mad, so they were seen as unwelcome outsiders. *(Emphasizing a cause/effect relationship and connecting all the key concepts in the paragraph would strengthen this sentence)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Practicing the Skill:**

1. At the onset of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was a region organized into separate nations and states, but dominated by a singular entity in the Catholic Church. Within the Holy Roman Empire was the German Confederation; a multi-state nation consisting of one people, but divided among hundreds of smaller states and territories. It was here that Martin Luther protested against the corruption of the Church, and weakened its supremacy in Europe. This Protestant Reformation destabilized the entire region of Europe, plunging it into chaos, and ultimately bringing Europe into a massive international conflict.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Japan was a multistate nation; one common population, but divided by regional warlords fighting for dominance. During the time of the onset of the Reformation, the Japanese mainland was a singular nation, but separated into warring states each led by rival warlords. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Japan was united under a single ruler through warfare. Seeking more power and resources, the newly unified nation-state of Japan invaded Korea with the goal of overtaking China, but ultimately failed to do so.

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Multiple European conflicts merged into the Thirty Years' War in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, fought primarily in the Holy Roman Empire, but involving virtually all European nations. The calamity ended with the Peace of Westphalia that stabilized Europe, assembling it into several states with inviolable borders. By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was a region divided into multiple states ruled by powerful monarchs. These monarchs worked to form their countries into cohesive nation-states

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. In Japan, a new regime under the Tokugawa family at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> century faced unprecedented intrusion by European merchants, as well as Catholic missionaries who converted thousands of Japanese to their faith. In response, the leaders of Japan outlawed Christianity. Additionally, they isolated themselves from the outside world to protect their nation and maintain their power. For the next two and a half centuries, Japan was a cohesive nation-state dominated by a singular ruling family.

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Combine all main ideas of the four paragraphs in *one* or *two* clear sentences (thesis statement):**

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