

Formative Assessment: Evaluating Evidence



Thinking historically means identifying the evidence related to a claim, assessing its validity, and corroborating it by comparing multiple sources' interpretations of events, developments, or processes.

Directions: Review the following documents and answer the questions on evaluating evidence that follow. The multiple choice questions for this formative assessment are Weighted Multiple Choice (WMC) questions. This means that there is only one *incorrect* answer, but the other 3 choices are weighted. The *best* answer is 3 points, the *second-best* answer is 2 points, and the *third-best* answer is 1 point. The *incorrect* answer is 0 points.

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Source: Laozi, "Chapter 37" of *Daodejing*.

Translated by Bruce R. Linnel (2015) Project Gutenberg.

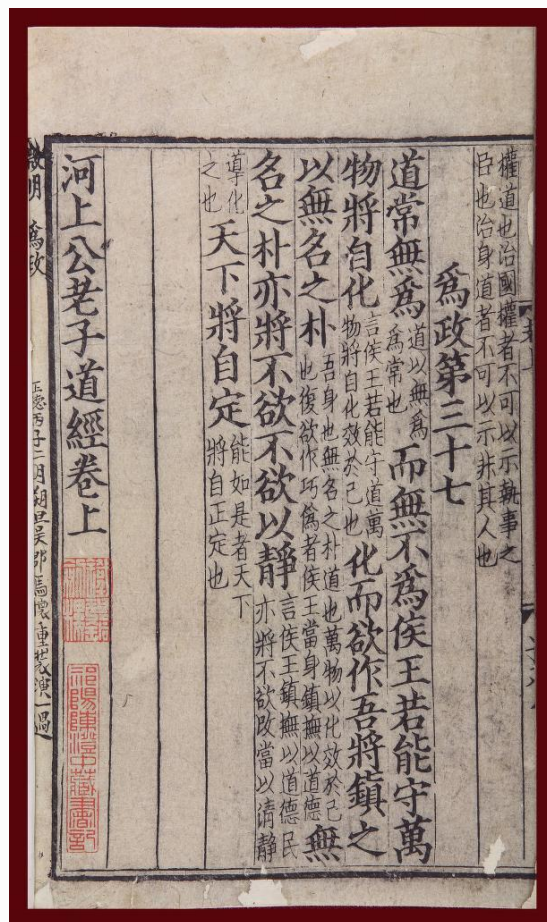
Note: The *Daodejing* was written sometime in the 3rd century B.C.E. Although it is attributed to the mysterious Lao Zi, it was written by several authors and is the central document to Daoist philosophy.

Dao ever-constantly practices
non-action,
Yet nothing is left undone.

If nobles and kings could
maintain it,
The ten thousand creatures
would naturally transform.
Transform, and if desire arises,
I would restrain it by means of the
nameless uncarved block.

In the state of the nameless
uncarved block*,
Men also would be
without-desire.
Not desiring, thus they would be
still –
And the world would naturally
settle.

*The nameless uncarved black is a metaphorical representation of the natural state of being, which is characterized by its simplicity and authenticity.



The above page is Chapter 37 of the Heshanggong version of the *Daodejing*, named after the legendary Heshanggong, who is said to have lived during the reign of Emperor Wen of Han (180--157 BC). This particular copy was published between 1127-1279 c.e. by the Yu Family School in Jian'an, in the Fujian province of China. It is available to view online at the [Library of Congress](#).



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1. Select the piece of evidence from the above document that *best* represents the Daoist idea of obtaining peace and harmony.
 - A. "Dao ever-constantly practices non-action"
 - B. "If nobles and kings could maintain it, The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform."
 - C. "Transform, and if desire arises, I would restrain it by means of the nameless uncarved block"
 - D. "Not desiring, thus they would be still – And the world would naturally settle."

2. Justify your choice in the space below.



1. Select the piece of evidence from the above document that *best* represents the Daoist idea of obtaining peace and harmony.
 - A. "Dao ever-constantly practices non-action" **(1 point)**
 - B. "If nobles and kings could maintain it, The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform." **(0 points)**
 - C. "Transform, and if desire arises, I would restrain it by means of the nameless uncarved block" **(2 points)**
 - D. "Not desiring, thus they would be still – And the world would naturally settle." **(3 points)**

2. Justify your choice in the space below.

Choice D, worth 3 points, is the best piece of evidence to represent the Daoist idea of obtaining peace and harmony, because it best expresses the idea of letting nature take its course, or harmony, which results in the world naturally settling, or peace. This is accomplished through a lack of action or emotional labour. Choice C, worth 2 points, while not as direct as Choice D, is also a clear expression of Daoist ideas, in that turbulent emotions, such as desire, should be restrained or mitigated, through wise decision-making. Decision-making centered in concepts of simplicity and authenticity rather than emotional complexity. Choice A is less of an example of Daoist ideas and more of a directive, so it is worth 1 point. Lastly, Choice B, which does not address the ideas of harmony or peace, is worth 0 points.



1. Weighted Multiple Choice

3 points (Choice D)	2 points (Choice C)	1 point (Choice A)	0 points (Choice B)
			Subtotal: _____ / 3

2. Short Answer: Justify Your Answer

3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
Student thoroughly justifies their choice of the <i>best</i> piece of evidence—which is worth three points as shown on the teacher key—that supports the claim.	Student thoroughly justifies their choice of either the 1 or 2 point option from the WMC question. OR Student's justification of the 3 point option needs deeper analysis.	Student's justification of their choice (either the 1 or 2 point option) lacks deep analysis.	Student either makes no attempt to justify their choice OR try to justify the 0 point option.
			Subtotal: _____ / 3

Total: _____ / 6

