Your prompt asks you to evaluate and argue at a high level of historical reasoning, which is a complex skill. I think we could support them by breaking down the writing expectations into smaller, more manageable steps, for example:

1. Thesis Check-In (Quick Write)
   * Before you draft the full essay, just write a one-sentence thesis in response to the prompt.
   * We can skim 3–4 examples with the class and point out what makes them defensible vs. vague.
   * This keeps the focus on historical argument, not grammar or style (you should be working on these anyway).
2. Evidence Bank
   * Brainstorm specific evidence (events, acts, people, policies), for example, with mercantilism… British and American colonial views of mercantilism.
   * Put them in a T-chart or list before writing.
   * That way, when you draft, you aren’t stuck thinking of evidence.
3. Analysis Stems
   * Use sentence starters like:
     + “This demonstrates that…”
     + “This differs from…”
     + “This shows continuity because…”
   * These keep the focus on historical reasoning without requiring you to teach writing structure in depth.
4. Mini Rubric Focus
   * Instead of grading every part equally, you might tell students: “For this essay, I’m especially looking at thesis + evidence.”
   * Then, on the next essay, you can shift the focus to analysis and complexity.
   * This makes the learning incremental instead of overwhelming.

I know we don’t want this assignment to turn into an English class, so maybe the best move is to focus on just one or two writing skills within the content. For example, we can practice crafting defensible theses and building an evidence bank before diving into the full essay. That way, you’re still engaging deeply with history, but still getting a little writing support along the way.