

NAME:

DATE:

CLASS:

DBQ FOCUS: The Renaissance



Document-Based Question Format

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying Documents (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.) This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents.

Write a response that:

- Has a relevant **thesis** and **supports that thesis with evidence** from the documents.
- Cites evidence from included source perspectives.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible. Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the author's points of view.

Historical Context: *During the late Middle Ages, Europe suffered from both war and plague. Those who survived wanted to celebrate life and the human spirit. They began to question institutions of the Middle Ages, which had been unable to prevent war or to relieve suffering brought by the plague. Some people questioned the Church, which taught Christians to endure suffering while they awaited their rewards in heaven. In northern Italy, writers and artists began to express this new spirit and to experiment with different styles. These men and women would greatly change how Europeans saw themselves and their world.*

Question

How is the Renaissance movement characterized, in thought, writing, and art, as the evolutionary bridge between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period (1300-1600 CE)?

Document 1

Source: This excerpt comes from Baldassare Castiglione in *The Courtier*. Baldassare describes the type of accomplished person who will later be described as a Renaissance man.

Let the man we are seeking be very bold, stern, and always among the first, where the enemy are to be seen; and in every other place, gentle, modest, reserved, above all things avoiding ostentation [showiness] and that impudent [bold] self-praise by which men ever excite hatred and disgust in all who hear them...

I would have him more than passably accomplished in letters, at least in those studies that are called the humanities, and conversant not only with the Latin language but for Greek, for the sake of the many different things that have been admirably written therein. Let him be well versed in the poets, and not less in the orators and historians, and also proficient in writing verse and prose.

Student Analysis

Document 2

Source: Letter written by Isabella D'Este, *Letters: Mantua*: May 14, 1504.

To Master Leonardo da Vinci, the painter:

Hearing that you are settled at Florence, we have begun to hope that our cherished desire to obtain a work by your hand might at length realized. When you were in this city and drew our portrait in carbon, you promised us that you would some day paint it in colors. But because this would be almost impossible, since you are unable to come here, we beg of you to keep your promise by converting our portrait into another figure, which would be still more acceptable to us; that is to say, a youthful Christ of about twelve years... executed with all the sweetness and charm of atmosphere which is the peculiar excellence of your art.

Student Analysis

Document 3

Source: Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1516

Gold and silver, of which money is made, are treated... that no one values them more highly than their true nature deserves. Who does not see that they are far inferior to iron in usefulness since without iron mortals cannot live any more than without fire and water?

Student Analysis

Document 4

Source: Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 1405.

I am amazed by the opinion of some men who claim that they do not want their daughters, wives, or kinswomen to be educated because of their mores [morals] would be ruined as a result... Here you can clearly see that not all opinions of men are based on reason and that these men are wrong.

Student Analysis

Document 5

Source: Excerpt from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2. 1603

Student Analysis

What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties [inherent mental or physical power], in form and moving, how express and admirable; in action how like an angel, in apprehension [understanding] how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals.

Document 6

Source: This excerpt is from *A History of Europe from 1378 to 1494* written by W.T. Waugh

Student Analysis

It has become evident that there was no suspension of intellectual life in medieval Europe. If there was a Revival of Learning, it occurred about the year A.D. 1000, since human knowledge has never ceased to advance. It cannot even be said that the Humanists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries revived the study of the classics. Scholars had been nourished on the centuries for the centuries. In the first place, the classical writer most studied in the Middle Ages was A Greek, Aristotle... And actually the medieval scholars of western Europe were acquainted with most of the Latin authors familiar to us.

The merits of the artists and the influence of the Humanist scholars must be acknowledged. But one must beware of exaggerating the practical results of their work. It is undeniable that very few people knew or cared anything about the sayings or doings of the Humanists... [and] the plain fact remains that the masterpieces of Renaissance sculpture can have been seen by few, those of the Renaissance painting by fewer. And in those days, unless you actually saw them, you could not tell what they were like.

Document 7

Source: This excerpt is from *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, by Jacob Burchhardt, 1878.

Student Analysis

In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession... Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation— only through some general category. In Italy this veil first melted into air... man became a spiritual individual, and recognized himself as such. In the same way the Greek had once distinguished himself from the barbarian...

When this impulse to the highest individual development was combined with a powerful and varied nature,.. Then arose the "all-sided man"... in Italy at the time of the Renaissance we find artists who in every branch created new and perfect works, and who also made the greatest impression as men.

Document 8

Source: This excerpt is from *Life and Letters of Erasmus* by A. J. Froude, 1894.

Student Analysis

The world is waking out of a long deep sleep. The old ignorance is still defended. Time was when learning was only found in religious orders. The religious order nowadays care only for money and sensuality [indulgence of the appetites], while learning has passed to secular princes and peers and courtiers. Where in school or monastery will you find so many distinguished and accomplished men as form your English Court? Shame on us all! The tables of priests and divines run with wine and echo with drunken noise and scurrilous jest, while in princes' halls is heard only the grave and modest conversation on points of morals or knowledge... That king of yours [Henry VIII of England] may bring back the golden age. Though I shall not live to enjoy it, as my tales draws to an end.

Document 9

Source: The following is an excerpt from *Petrarch's Secret*, translated by W.H. Draper, 1911.

Student Analysis

My principle is that, as concerning the glory from which we may hope for here below [on earth], it is right for us to seek it while we are here below. One may expect to enjoy that other more radiant glory in heaven, when we shall have there arrived, and when one will have no more care or wish for the glory of earth. Therefore, as I think, it is in the true order that mortal men should first care for mortal things...

Document 10

Source: This excerpt is from *The Renaissance* by Wassace K. Ferguson (New York: Holt, 1940, pp. 1-3.)

Student Analysis

The idea that there was a great revival or rebirth of literature and the arts, after a thousand years of cultural sterility, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries originated with the Italian writers of the Renaissance themselves. Finding the feudal and ecclesiastical literature and Gothic art of the Middle Ages uncongenial to their taste, they turned for inspiration to the civilization of Roman and Greek antiquity... Thus, from the beginning, the double conception of medieval darkness and subsequent cultural rebirth was colored by the acceptance of classical standards.

**Generic Core-Scoring Guide for AP World History
Document-Based Question**

Basic Core: Competence	Points	Historical Thinking Skills Assessed
1. Has acceptable thesis.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Argumentation ➤ Depending on the topic of the question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Causation • Comparison • Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time
2. Addresses all of the documents and demonstrates understanding of all or all but one.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use of Historical Evidence
3. Supports thesis with appropriate evidence from all or all but one document. [Supports thesis with appropriate evidence from all but two documents.]	2 (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Argumentation ➤ Depending on the topic of the question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Causation • Comparison • Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time
4. Analyzes point of view in at least two documents.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use of Historical Evidence
5. Analyzes documents by grouping them in two or three ways, depending on the question.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Argumentation ➤ Use of Historical Evidence ➤ Depending on the topic of the question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Causation • Comparison • Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time
6. Identifies and explains the need for one type of appropriate additional document or source.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Argumentation ➤ Use of Historical Evidence
Subtotal	7	Essay as a whole: Synthesis
Expanded Core: Excellence	Points	Historical Thinking Skills Assessed
Expands beyond basic core of 1–7 points. A student must earn 7 points in the basic core area before earning points in the expanded core area. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has a clear, analytical, and comprehensive thesis. ➤ Shows careful and insightful analysis of the documents. ➤ Uses documents persuasively as evidence. ➤ Analyzes point of view in most or all documents. ➤ Analyzes the documents in additional ways — groupings, comparisons, syntheses. ➤ Brings in relevant “outside” historical content. ➤ Explains why additional types of document(s) or sources are needed. 	0–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Same skills as noted in basic core ➤ Other historical thinking skills may be demonstrated depending on the question and the documents
Subtotal	2	
TOTAL	9	

TOTAL POINTS BASIC CORE	
TOTAL POINTS EXPANDED CORE	
TOTAL POINTS EARNED	
FINAL GRADE	

RUBRIC	PERCENT	POINTS
9	100	50
8	95	48
7	90	45
6	85	43
5	80	40
4	75	38
3	70	35
2	65	33
1	60	30
0	0	0

Comments: