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AP European History
Summer Assignment 2026

Welcome to AP European History!

AP Euro is a college-level course that replaces an introductory survey course that you might take your freshman or sophomore year at a college or university. Students in this class will gain a basic understanding of the history of Europe from the Middle Ages up to the modern-day. European history is particularly important to understand since so much of the world has been shaped by European interactions. Comprehension of the course material will aid you in your quest to become a well-rounded individual as well as earn a good grade on the AP exam come May.

Your summer assignment will consist of three parts:

1. First, purchase the AMSCO book *European History*. The link to the book can be found here: <https://www.amazon.com/Advanced-Placement-European-History-2nd/dp/1663639728>
DO NOT purchase the digital version as not only are there slight differences in the text itself, but students who have used the digital version have experienced technical errors in the past.
 - After purchasing the textbook, please read the introductory chapter about how to study for the AP Euro exam. While this section does not have any course content, per se, it does have good information on how to be successful during the course.
2. Read the book *Heretics and Heroes: How Renaissance Artists and Reformation Priests Created Our World* by Thomas Cahill. Then, write a five-paragraph essay evaluating the following prompt: *To what extent did European politics and culture transform during the shift from the Medieval Era to the Renaissance Era?*
 - When writing this essay, please be sure that it mirrors the AP style as closely as possible. This link (<https://tinyurl.com/2bazzmkmj>) provides a good summary of what is expected of you when writing the long-essay question (LEQ). Furthermore, this link (<https://tinyurl.com/mu429wwb>) provides you with a simplified version of the grading rubric so you can be sure to get as many points as possible.
 - While not part of the AP grading rubric, please use parenthetical citation when referencing the text. Remember that you should cite with page numbers after using direct quotes or paraphrasing one of the authors ideas. After citing the text, be sure to add your own analysis to earn as many points as possible.
3. Finally, choose **one** of the attached DBQs to work on. You are **not required to write the full DBQ**, but you will need to analyze the documents and break them down using the attached guide as if you were writing the DBQ for real. This will help us get started with developing analytical skills which are incredibly important for success in the class. The prompts are as follows:
 - *Evaluate whether Spanish exploration in the period 1492 to 1600 was motivated primarily by economic considerations or by religious considerations.*
 - *Evaluate whether or not the Protestant Reformation was a radical challenge to established hierarchies.*

These assignments will be due on the first day of class for a grade and allow us to start the year strong. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the assignments, please send me an email and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Remember, this is a college-level class and as such, I will be expecting college-level work and maturity. Plagiarism (passing off somebody else's ideas as your own) and cheating will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Advances in artificial intelligence (ChatGPT, etc.) are changing the face of education and will continue to do so for the near future. Unless **explicitly permitted by the teacher**, students should assume **AI-generated content is not allowed** on this summer assignment or any assignments throughout the school year. If you feel overwhelmed or like you are getting behind on your assignments, please let me know and we can work out a plan to get you back on track.

Have a great summer and I look forward to getting to know every one of you when the school year begins!

Mr. Zacher

DBQs



The images contrast Christ washing his disciples' feet with the Pope having his feet kissed.

Document 3

Source: Andreas Karlstadt, Protestant theologian at the University of Wittenberg, *On the Removal of Images*, 1522

1. To have images in churches and houses of God is wrong and contrary to the first commandment given by God, "You shall have no other gods before me".
2. To have carved or painted idols upon altars is more harmful and devilish still.
3. It is good, necessary, praiseworthy, and godly to do away with them and to give the reasons found in Scripture for their removal.

All who worship God through images worship falsehood. They are focusing on the appearance and external signs of God. Yet, their heart is far from God, creating its own idol in the heart and being full of lies.

Document 4

Source: Robert Parkyn, Catholic priest, commentary on the English Reformation, compiled 1532–1546

In many places of this realm neither bread nor water was sanctified or distributed among Christian people on Sunday, but clearly omitted as things tending to idolatry. Yea, and also the sacred vessels hanging over the altars (wherein was remaining Christ's blessed body under form of bread) was spitefully cast away as things most abominable, and did not pass of the blessed hosts therein contained, but villainously despised them, uttering such words thereby as it did abhor true Christian ears for to hear.

Document 5

Source: John Calvin, biblical commentary, 1546

In so far as a wife is *a help* to her husband, so as to make his life happy, that is in accordance with God's institution. For in the beginning God appointed it that the man without the woman was, as it were, but half a man, and felt himself destitute of special and necessary assistance, and the wife is, as it were, the completing of the man. Sin afterwards came in to corrupt that institution of God; for in place of so great a blessing there has been substituted a grievous punishment, so that marriage is the source and occasion of many miseries. Hence, whatever evil or inconvenience there is in marriage, that evil arises from the corruption of the divine institution.

Document 6

Source: Testimony of Anne Askew, executed for professing radical Protestant beliefs during the reign of Henry VIII in England, 1546

Then the bishop's representative rebuked me, and said, that I was much to blame for uttering the scriptures. For St. Paul (he said) forbade women to speak or talk of the word of God. I answered him that I knew Paul's meaning as well as he, which is in 1 Corinthians 14, that a woman ought not to speak in the congregation by the way of teaching. And then I asked him, how many women he had seen go into the pulpit and preach? He said he never saw none. Then I said, he ought to find no fault in poor women, except that they had offended the law.

Document 7

Source: Ordinance [law] of the Protestant Danish city of Malmö, 1549

First it was gravely determined, decided and agreed upon that no one should be sitting and drinking alcohol during the sermon on Sundays or other holy days, nor should anyone wander around in the street or in the chapel behind the choir during the sermon. Nor should any drinking establishment be opened on aforesaid days before the noonday sermon is over, unless it is done for the sake of strangers and travelers who arrive and want to leave at once. Whoever breaks this rule will be punished accordingly.

Similarly, all single men and unemployed manservants should swear an oath to Council acting on behalf of His Royal Majesty and the city of Malmö or they should be expelled from the city.

Similarly, all girls who are self-supporting should enter into service again or be expelled from the city at once.

DBQs

4. In your response you should do the following.

- Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
- Support an argument in response to the prompt using at least four documents.
- Use at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt.
- For at least two documents, explain how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
- Demonstrate a complex understanding of a historical development related to the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.

Evaluate whether or not the Protestant Reformation was a radical challenge to established hierarchies.

DBQs

Directions: This question is based on the seven accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

Document 1

Source: Declaration that the Spanish monarchy required to be read to Native Americans, 1513

If you become Christians, we shall receive you in all love and charity, and shall leave you, your wives, and your children, and your lands, free without servitude.

We shall not compel you to turn Christians, unless you yourselves, when informed of the truth, should wish to be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith, as almost all the inhabitants of the rest of the islands have done. And, besides this, we will award you many privileges and exemptions and will grant you many benefits.

But, if you do not do this, and maliciously delay, we promise that, with the help of God, we shall enter into your country in great strength and make war against you.

Document 2

Source: Hernán Cortés, leader of the Spanish conquest of the Aztec empire, description of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, sent to Charles I, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, 1520

There are many public squares that hold the markets. There is one square twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca

[in Spain], where more than sixty thousand assemble daily, engaged in buying and selling. Here are all kinds of merchandise that the world offers — the necessities of life, as well as jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones, bones, shells, snails, and feathers.

The grand temple contains the principal pagan idols, of wonderful size and admirable workmanship, adorned with figures sculptured in stone and wood. I threw these idols off their pedestals, and cast them down the steps of the temple, purifying the chapels in which they had stood, as they were all polluted by sacrifices. In the place of these I put images of Our Lady and the Saints.

Document 3

Source: Pedro de Cieza de León, Spanish leader who participated in the conquest of Peru, *Chronicles of the Incas*, 1540

In all major cities, the Incas had temples of the Sun, and many goldsmiths and silversmiths. Large garrisons were stationed there, and a steward who was in command of them. The tribute paid by each of the provinces, whether gold, silver, clothing, arms or anything else, was entered in the accounts.

In each of the many provinces there were many storehouses filled with supplies. Under their system in all the kingdom, if someone had his health, he worked and lacked for nothing; and if someone was ill, he received what he needed from the storehouses. No rich man could deck himself out in more finery than the poor, or wear different clothing, except the rulers and their officials.

Document 4

DBQs

Source: Excerpts from the “New Laws of the Indies,” issued by the Spanish monarchy in 1542, though never fully implemented in the Americas

For many years we wished to occupy ourselves with the affairs of the Indies, on account of their great importance, and on account of the service of God our Lord and the increase of his holy Catholic faith, [and to work] for the preservation of the natives of those lands.

Accordingly, we ordain and command that from now on, no Indian can be made a slave, either through war or rebellion, or by ransom or any other means, and we order that they be treated as vassals of the Crown of Spain since that is what they are.

Those who until now have been enslaved against all reason and right and contrary to the provisions, we ordain and command that the Audiencias [courts] having first summoned the parties to their presence, free them without any further judicial proceeding or delay.

Document 5

Source: Phillip II, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, official correspondence sent to Luis de Velasco, governor of New Spain [Mexico], 1559

To provide what seems best for the service of God, our Lord, and ourselves, and with the least possible cost to our treasury, I order you to dispatch two ships for the exploration of the western islands near the Moluccas [Spice Islands in the East Indies, held by Portugal].

You shall stipulate that they try to acquire some spice there in order to make an estimate of the value of that trade; and that afterwards they return to New Spain, so that it may be known whether the return voyage is practicable. [These ships must go] to islands, such as the Philippines, that are not claimed by the King of Portugal, and that lie within our demarcation,* and are said likewise to contain spice.

*A reference to the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, which divided the world into Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence

Document 6

Source: Bernardino de Sahagún, Franciscan missionary, history of New Spain [Mexico], 1588

[In New Spain], the Catholic Faith has very shallow roots, and with much labor little fruit is produced, and what is planted and cultivated withers easily. It seems to me the Catholic Faith can endure only a little while in these parts.

We can be certain that, though we have preached to the Indians for more than fifty years, if the inhabitants were now left alone, and if the Spanish nation were not to intercede, in less than fifty years from now there would be no trace of the preaching which has been done for their benefit.

Document 7

Source: Theodore de Bry, Protestant artist originally from the Spanish Netherlands, illustration of Incas bringing gold and

DBQs

silver objects to ransom their emperor Atahualpa who was captured by Francisco Pizarro, in 1532. The illustration was made about 1590.



DBQs

2. In your response you should do the following.

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Evaluate whether Spanish exploration in the period 1492 to 1600 was motivated primarily by economic considerations or by religious considerations.
