

Summer Assignment: Global Studies

SUBMISSION DIRECTIONS: MAKE YOUR OWN COPY OF THE GOOGLE DOCUMENT and print the document. Answer all of the focus questions for Parts III and IV of the assignment. You may choose to type or handwrite your responses but be prepared to submit a hardcopy of the assignment on the opening day of class.

PART I: Historical Thinking Skills

When historians analyze the past, they often divide their thinking into categories like **political**, **economic**, and **sociocultural** to better understand different aspects of historical events and developments. There are terms in each category that students of history should be familiar with in order to better understand those events and developments. Below is a brief description of each of the categories and a list of terms that are important in each category.

Political - This category focuses on power, governance, and authority. It includes:

- Forms of government (e.g., monarchy, democracy, dictatorship)
- Laws and legal systems
- Wars, revolutions, and treaties
- Territorial disputes and borders
- Imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization
- Alliances and rivalries between nations

Economic - This category deals with resources, trade, and labor—how wealth is produced, distributed, and consumed. It includes:

- Agriculture and industry
- Trade networks and markets
- Taxes and currency
- Labor systems (e.g., slavery, feudalism, capitalism)
- Class structures based on wealth

Sociocultural - This broad category looks at innovations, ideas, beliefs, and ways of life. It includes:

- Religion and philosophy
- Art, literature, education, science and technology
- Customs and traditions
- Ethnic and racial identities
- Social norms and values

PART II: Historical Background - Early European History

Read the background essay carefully, situating the Classical and Medieval periods within the broader history of Europe and noting the key differences between them.

BACKGROUND TIMELINE - European History

European history is often divided into broad periods to show long-term patterns of change. It begins with the Classical Age of Greece and Rome and continues through the Medieval period, both of which laid the foundations for the Renaissance. The Renaissance, a time of advances in art, science, and exploration, marks the start of modern Europe. Later periods include democratic, industrial, and technological revolutions, the rise of nation-states, and imperial competition. More recent European history is shaped by World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the spread of democratic capitalism. The goal of this summer assignment is to provide background on the Classical and Medieval periods in order to better understand the Renaissance and its place more broadly in European history. Understanding how each period functioned politically, economically, and culturally helps explain why the Renaissance emerged when and where it did.

READING - Classical Period vs. Medieval Period

The Classical Period:

Political life in the Classical period was characterized by centralized systems of government that emphasized citizenship, law, and civic participation. In ancient Greece, especially Athens, direct democracy allowed male citizens to participate personally in government by voting in assemblies, serving on juries, and holding public office. This system was predicated on the belief that citizens had a responsibility to govern themselves. Although limited in who could participate, democracy introduced the idea that political authority could rest with the people rather than a monarch.

Political organization in ancient Rome further developed classical ideas through republicanism, where citizens elected representatives to legislate and govern. The Roman Republic replaced monarchy with a centralized government based on elected officials, representative assemblies, and written laws. Power was divided among consuls, the Senate, and popular assemblies to prevent one person or group from having too much power. Roman republicanism emphasized civic duty, separation of powers and rule of law, ideas that later Renaissance thinkers admired and studied. Even after Rome became an empire, governance remained highly centralized through bureaucracy and legal codes.

Economic life in the Classical period depended on agriculture, enslaved labor, and extensive trade networks supported by centralized authority. The Roman Empire created one of the most interconnected economies of the ancient world by building roads, ports, and shipping routes that linked Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Standardized coinage and political stability encouraged long-distance trade in goods such as grain, olive oil, wine, and luxury items. This economic interconnection generated wealth that supported cities, public buildings, education, and the arts.

Culturally, the Classical world emphasized human reason, education, and achievement. Greek and Roman thinkers studied philosophy, politics, and ethics, but they also made important advances in science and math, exploring astronomy, medicine, and engineering. Mathematics was used in architecture and understanding nature, while artists applied balance, proportion, and realism in their work. Education in philosophy, science, and rhetoric prepared citizens for public life, and these ideas later became the foundation of Renaissance humanism.

The Medieval Period:

Political structures changed dramatically during the Medieval period as centralized authority collapsed following the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Without a centralized Roman government or military protection from its legions, Europe fragmented into smaller regions governed by local leaders in the feudal system. Feudalism grew out of people's need for protection. With no strong kings to maintain law and order, people turned to local lords for help. Kings offered land, called fiefs, to lords in exchange for loyalty and military service. In turn, lords would provide protection to peasants, some called serfs and some called freedmen, in exchange for labor.

Economic organization in the Medieval period shifted away from long-distance trade toward local self-sufficiency. The manor system became the foundation of medieval economic life, organizing production around large estates. Manors were individual economic units, nearly self-sufficient due to medieval warfare, the difficulties of travel, and the resultant lack of trade. The manor featured a manor-home, usually a fortified castle surrounded by protective walls, belonging to the lord, surrounded by fields, herds and villages where peasants called serfs lived and worked. Serfs were bound to the land and worked the fields in exchange for protection from the lord, providing everything needed on the estate. Because most goods were produced and consumed locally, money was used far less frequently than in the Greek or Roman economies. This represented a major departure from the vast trade networks of the Classical world.

Culturally, the Roman Catholic Church was extremely influential during the Middle Ages. Indeed, it was the only authority that covered much of Europe. The Catholic faith was central to life in the medieval period with its influence reflected in much of the art, architecture, literature and social institutions of the time. Monasteries helped preserve knowledge by copying books, keeping records, and teaching. Art and architecture were mostly religious, from Romanesque churches to tall Gothic cathedrals. Literature included religious texts, epic poems, and romances. Music ranged from church chants to songs by troubadours about chivalry and courtly love. Science was largely rooted in religious beliefs, with scholars seeking to understand the natural world as part of God's creation. Education was typically controlled by clergy, and Latin served as the language of scholarship and communication across regions. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church not only shaped spiritual life but also influenced intellectual pursuits and cultural expression throughout medieval Europe.

After the collapse of Roman institutions, much classical knowledge was lost, fragmented, or inaccessible in Western Europe, especially Greek texts. Rather than preserving ancient learning, medieval scholars often limited or reshaped classical ideas to fit

Christian beliefs. Many classical works that later influenced the Renaissance were reintroduced through contact with the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic world, where scholars had translated and expanded upon ancient texts.

PART III: Collating Historical Evidence

Using the information provided in the historical background, identify the political, economic and sociocultural characteristics of the Classical and Medieval periods of European history in the organizer below. In addition, answer the synthesis questions. The goal of this part of the assignment is to highlight differences between the two time periods, and ultimately to note their influence on the Renaissance period that follows.

	CLASSICAL PERIOD	MEDIEVAL PERIOD
Political Features		
Economic Features		
Sociocultural Features		

Synthesis Questions:

1. What are key political, economic and sociocultural differences between the classical and medieval periods in European history?
2. Which medieval conditions would have made the Renaissance difficult to emerge?

Part IV: Interpreting Historical Evidence

A number of events that took place during the late Medieval period that created conditions for a shift in worldview during the Renaissance period. Below are documents that discuss the Crusades, the Hundred Years War and the Bubonic Plague, all events that ushered in significant change in Europe. Use the information provided to answer the document based questions.

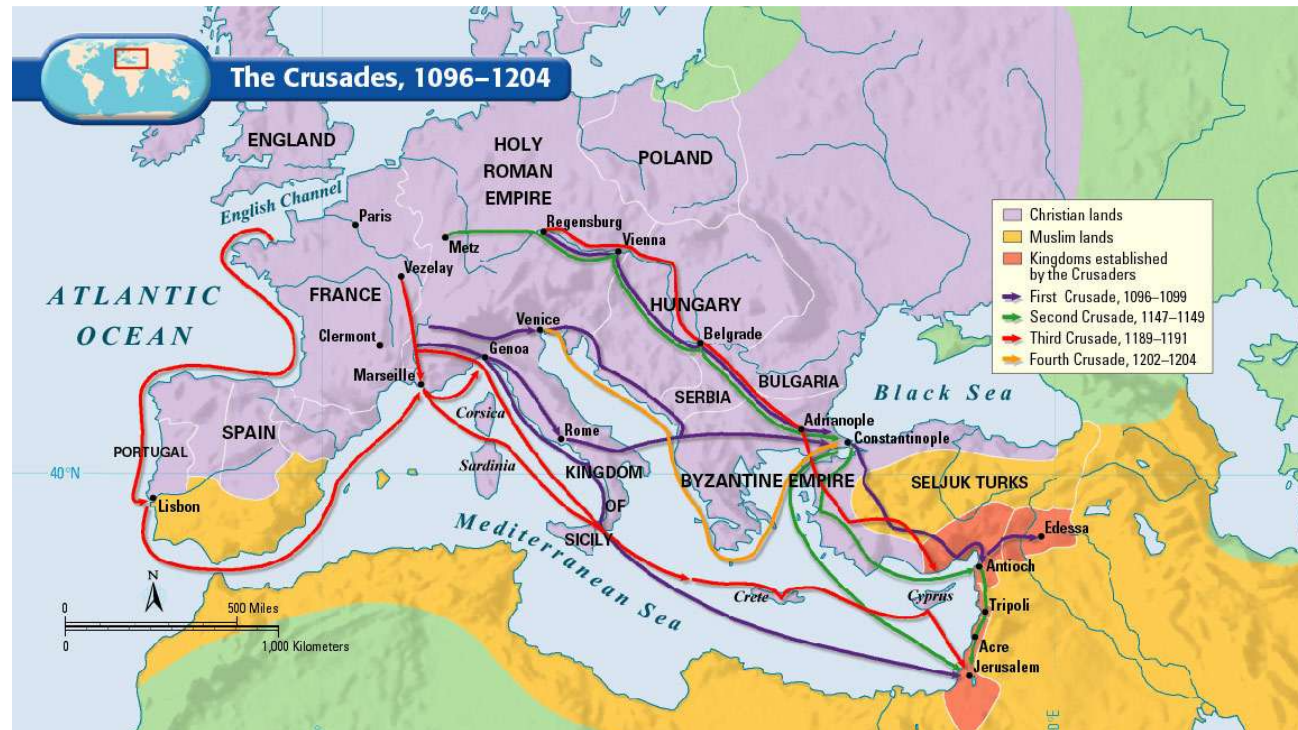
CONTEXT:

Crusades: A series of medieval religious wars (1096–1291) in which European Christians sought to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim control.

Hundred Years' War: A long conflict (1337–1453) between England and France over royal succession and territory in France.

Bubonic Plague: A deadly bacterial disease (mid-1300s) spread by fleas on rats that killed millions across Europe, Asia, and North Africa.

Document A - Crusader Routes



DBQ 1 - What regions of the world were connected by the crusader routes?

DBQ 2 - Many of the crusader routes later became trade routes connecting Europe to the Middle East and Asia. Given what we know about the Medieval period, how might access to global trade change Europe?

Document B - Causes and Effects of the Crusades

Source: Terry, Janice. 2016. "Crusades." *Encyclopedia of the Medieval World: 600 to 1450*. Facts On File.
online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=17296&itemid=WE49&articleId=215525.

"In 1095 Pope Urban II incited the Crusades with a speech urging Christian armies to free the holy sites, especially Jerusalem, from Muslim control. The Crusades sparked a fire of religious fervor among thousands of young knights and other Christian believers. Other crusaders were adventurers, fortune seekers, and the poor and destitute....The Crusades marked almost 200 years of intermittent warfare and sporadic coexistence between Christian Europe and the Muslim East. The exchanges fostered many negative cultural and religious stereotypes. Positive results included the introduction of many new goods, including brocades, perfumes, soaps, and foodstuffs, especially spices, to the West."

DBQ 3 - What motivated the Pope and European Christians to embark on the Crusades?

DBQ 4 - Using the evidence provided in the source, evaluate the impact of the Crusades on Europe.

Document C - Fighting the Hundred Years War

Source: Sider, Sandra. 2023. "Warfare during the European Renaissance." *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe, Second Edition*. Facts On File. online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=17296&itemid=WE49&articleId=425581.

"Mercenaries are soldiers who fight because they are paid for their services, and usually they are employed by countries to which they have no allegiance. During the Renaissance the majority of fighting soldiers were mercenaries. The total number of mercenary troops in Europe in the 16th century has been averaged at 500,000."

DBQ 5 - Because kings in the medieval feudal system could not raise armies to protect their territories, instead they offered land to lords in exchange for military service. According to the source, how were kings providing protection by the time of the Hundred Years War? How did this increase their power?

DBQ 6 - How might the economic changes of the Crusades help provide kings with the means to hire professional armies rather than rely on local lords for protection?

Document D - New Technology in the Hundred Years War

Source: Sider, Sandra. 2023. "Warfare during the European Renaissance." *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe, Second Edition*. Facts On File. online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=17296&itemid=WE49&articleId=425581.

"Advances in technology and architecture, the European manufacture of gunpowder, and fort design, led to changes in battle tactics, armor, and weaponry. French small artillery proved to be a decisive factor in the Hundred Years' War, effectively moving the fighting into the open field. More soldiers were needed because casualties increased, and more mercenaries (paid soldiers) were hired as the 16th century progressed. By 1550, fortifications were being renovated with the addition of bastion forts (rather than castles), again making it possible to withstand siege warfare waged with cannons and other similar artillery. Military medicine progressed somewhat, in that amputations were performed with a greater degree of accuracy as anatomical knowledge advanced. Nevertheless wounds continued to threaten the lives of soldiers because the nature of infection was not understood."

DBQ 7 - What new technologies were used in the Hundred Years War? To what effect?

Document E - Bubonic Plague Casualties

Area	Pre-Plague Population	Post-Plague Population	Population Decline
England/Wales	3.7 million	2.5 million	32%
Scotland	500,000	400,000	20%
Ireland	800,000	600,000	25%
France	13 million	8.2 million	37%
Belgium/Luxembourg	2 million	800,000	33%
Holy Roman Empire	17 million	12.5 million	26%
Spain	7 million	5 million	29%
Italy	10 million	7 million	30%
Total (selected areas)	53.2 million	37 million	30%

DBQ 8 - On average, what percentage of the European population died of the plague? What impact might this have on survivors of the plague?

Document F - The Black Death

Source: Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Decameron*. Translated by G. H. McWilliam. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

"In 1348, there came into the noble city of Florence, the most beautiful of all Italian cities, a deadly [disease], which,... several years earlier had originated in the Orient [China], where it destroyed countless lives, scarcely resting in one place before it moved to the next, and turning westward its strength grew monstrously. No human wisdom or foresight had any value: enormous amounts of refuse and manure were removed from the city by appointed officials, the sick were barred from entering the city, and many instructions were given to preserve health; just as useless were the humble [prayers] to God given not one time but many times in

appointed processions, and all the other ways devout people called on God....To cure these infirmities neither the advice of physicians nor the power of medicine appeared to have any value or profit; perhaps either the nature of the disease did not allow for any cure or the ignorance of the physicians . . . did not know how to cure it; as a consequence, very few were ever cured; all died three days after the appearance of the first outward signs, some lasted a little bit longer, some died a little bit more quickly, and some without fever or other symptoms.”

DBQ 9 - According to Boccaccio, how effective was the medical response to the plague? How effective was the religious response? Cite specifics from the passage.

DBQ 10: What does Boccaccio mean when he says, “No human wisdom or foresight had any value”? How does this statement help us understand the fear people experienced as the plague spread across Europe?