

A.P. Essay Questions
Most Questions from 1983 - 1998

1. To what extent is the term "Renaissance" a valid conception for a distinct period in early modern European history?
2. What were the responses of the Catholic authorities in the sixteenth century to the challenges posed by the Lutheran Reformation?
3. "In the seventeenth century England the aristocracy lost its privileges but retained its power; in the seventeenth century France the aristocracy retained its privileges but lost its power." Assess the accuracy of this statement with respect to its political events and social developments in the two countries in the seventeenth century.
4. Compare and contrast the roles of the peasantry and of urban workers in the French Revolution of 1789 to those of the peasantry and of urban workers in the Russian Revolution of 1917.
5. To what extent did Marx and Freud each challenge the nineteenth century liberal belief in rationality and progress?
6. Compare and contrast the efforts to ensure European collective security that were made by the victorious powers between 1815 and 1830 (after the Napoleonic Wars) with those made by the victorious powers between 1918 and 1933 (after the First World War).
7. "The Reformation was a rejection of the secular spirit of the Italian Renaissance." Defend or refute this statement using specific examples from the sixteenth century Europe.
8. In the seventeenth century, how did England and the Dutch Republic compete successfully with France and Spain for control of overseas territory and trade?
9. To what extent and in what ways was the French Revolution during the period 1789 through the Reign of Terror (1794) an attempt to create a government based on Enlightenment ideals?
10. Evaluate the effectiveness of collective responses by workers to industrialization in Western Europe during the course of the nineteenth century.
11. To what extent and in what ways has the twentieth century physics challenged the Newtonian view of the universe and society?
12. Assess the strength and weaknesses of the economic revival of Western Europe between 1945 and 1970.
13. Compare and contrast the views of Machiavelli and Rousseau on Human nature and the relationship between government and the governed.
14. How did the developments in the scientific thought from Copernicus to Newton create a new conception of the universe and humanity's place within it?

15. Defend or refute the following statement. "The essential cause of the French Revolution was the collision between a powerful, rising bourgeoisie and an entrenched aristocracy defending its privileges."
16. Compare and contrast the attitudes of Martin Luther and John Calvin toward political authority and social order.
17. Analyze the influence of the theory of mercantilism on the domestic and foreign policies of France, 1600-1715.
18. Identify four specific changes in science and technology, and explain their effects on Western European family and private life between 1918 and 1970.
19. Compare and contrast the extent to which Catherine the Great and Joseph Stalin were "Westernizers."
20. Discuss the ways in which European Jews were affected by and responded to liberalism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century.
21. Analyze the key developments that characterized the European economy in the second half of the nineteenth century.
22. In 1490 there was no such country as Spain, yet within a century it had become the most powerful nation in Europe and within another had sunk to the status of a third-rate power. Describe and analyze the major social, economic, and political reasons for Spain's rise and fall.
23. Describe and analyze the changes in the role of Parliament in English politics between the succession of James I and the Glorious Revolution.
24. Describe the ways in which conservative political and social views shaped the peace settlement of the Congress of Vienna. Explain the consequences of the peace settlement for the period 1815 to 1848.