

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

1. Who was Charlemagne's famous grandfather?

Charles Martel, the Hammer, was Charlemagne's famous grandfather. NOTE: Students may or may not include the fact that Charles Martel halted the advance of Muslims at the Battle of Tours in 732.

2. Name two of the three main things for which Charlemagne is best remembered.

Any two of these would be correct:

- *His Christianity*
- *His large, well-administered empire*
- *His love of learning*

3. Who was Pepin the Short?

Also known as Pepin II, he was the first king of the Frankish Carolingian dynasty and the father of Charlemagne.

4. In A.D. 800, the pope crowned Charlemagne, making him the first Holy Roman Emperor.

5. What is Carolingian minuscule?

Carolingian minuscule is a style of more legible handwriting introduced by scholars in Charlemagne's court. It has distinct, well-rounded capital and small letters with spaces between words. This style later became the model for printing.

6. What was the Carolingian Renaissance?

It was the revival of learning carried out under Charlemagne.

7. Who was Egbert?

Egbert was a Wessex ruler who united much of England under his control.

8. True or False: Charlemagne's united empire lasted well into the 1200's, making possible an era of peace and stability after the horrors that occurred in the wake of Rome's fall.

False. Charlemagne's empire collapsed soon after his death.

9. What were the Strasbourg Oaths?

The Strasbourg Oaths were pledges of mutual support and loyalty between the two brothers Charles the Bald and Louis the German, in opposition to their eldest brother Lothair. The purpose of the oaths was to curtail Lothair's power, and they were written in French and German, not Latin, so that both parties and their assembled troops could understand them. The Strasbourg Oaths are the oldest written record in the vernacular French and German.

10. True or False: After much strife and quarreling by Charlemagne's grandsons over dividing his empire, they signed the Treaty of Verdun in 843, carving their grandfather's empire into three parts, one for each of them to rule.

True

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. In a well-structured essay, assess Charlemagne's success as a ruler in light of his military, religious, administrative, and cultural achievements.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Charlemagne's Achievements as a Ruler

- Military
 - A brilliant general
 - Conquered the Lombards and Saxons
 - Expanded his empire to encompass the present-day Netherlands, Belgium, France, and western half of Germany
 - Attempted to expand his rule into Spain but was generally unsuccessful
- Religious
 - Protected the pope by subduing a rebellion against him
 - Brought Christianity to conquered peoples, often by force
 - Educated clergymen
 - Set the stage for the power struggle between popes and kings by being crowned Holy Roman Empire by the pope on Christmas Day, 800
- Administrative
 - A largely successful ruler
 - Established a system of fiefs and vassals to govern his vast territory and maintain loyalty
 - Sent out messengers called *Missi Dominici* throughout his realm to observe and report what occurred and met with them yearly at a parliament called the Mayfield to be updated on the condition of his realm
 - Made wise laws and appointed judges to ensure the laws were carried out
- Cultural
 - Promoted schools throughout his realm
 - Invited scholars to his court in Aachen to teach Charlemagne himself and his children
 - Scholars developed Carolingian minuscule, a style of handwriting that later became the model for printing.
 - Promoted monastery schools, the arts, and libraries in his kingdom

NOTE: As they evaluate Charlemagne's rule, students may also note that Charlemagne's empire dissolved soon after his death, although it did inspire many later attempts to unite European nations.

Sample Answer

If any ruler deserves to be called a successful ruler, it is the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne. A successful ruler can be defined as one who provides effective leadership for his people and promotes their well-being. Although he had occasional setbacks and some of his specific achievements did not last, Charlemagne provided excellent leadership, not only caring for his people but also significantly influencing the development of medieval Europe, as his military, religious, administrative, and cultural achievements clearly show.

The vast extent of Charlemagne's empire, won primarily through his military prowess, is one obvious example of Charlemagne's success as a ruler. He was a brilliant general and was able to extend the lands he inherited from his father, Pepin the Short, by conquering the Lombards and Saxons. Although he was repelled from Spain, his empire eventually covered much of the present-day Netherlands, Belgium, France, and western Germany.

Wherever Charlemagne conquered he brought Christianity. This was particularly true of the Saxon people, whom he conquered and made into a Christian people, sometimes using force. Charlemagne also used force to defend the pope when people rebelled against the pope's rule. Although Charlemagne's use of force to spread Christianity is not a

sign of a great ruler, there is much evidence that he himself was a pious man and had a sincere desire to advance the cause of Christ. The monasteries that arose because of his conquests certainly benefited the people of the conquered lands. For these reasons, Charlemagne's religious achievements can be seen as evidence of his good leadership.

Charlemagne's skill in administration and governing is a third important aspect of his success as a ruler. He was able to keep his vast empire together by developing a system of fiefs and vassals, in which noblemen became vassals by swearing allegiance to Charlemagne, and Charlemagne in turn gave them authority over a fief. This system later developed into the feudal system and became central to medieval society. Charlemagne also employed Missi Dominici, messengers who traveled throughout his land carrying his decrees and returning with news from each fief, in order to maintain his control over his empire. By establishing laws and appointing judges, Charlemagne also ensured that his rule would be justly enforced.

Finally, Charlemagne showed his ability as a ruler through his promotion of culture and learning. He invited scholars to his court in Aachen and promoted the building of libraries and monastery schools throughout his land. During his reign, scholars developed the Carolingian minuscule script, which eventually became the model for printing.

Through his military, religious, administrative, and cultural achievements, Charlemagne promoted the welfare of his people and advanced his empire. Although the empire dissolved shortly after his death, many of his achievements, including the advances in learning, the first instance of a feudal system, and the idea of a united empire in the style of Rome, continued to fire the imaginations of Europeans for hundreds of years.

2. "Charlemagne's reign created a legacy with lasting importance for European civilization." Support or oppose this position in an expository essay that considers the statement in light of what happened to Charlemagne's empire, his effect on the relationship between kings and the church, and his influence on the medieval vision of a restored empire.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Charlemagne's Reign

- Charlemagne governed his empire with the help of loyal nobles or "vassals," to whom he granted estates called "fiefs."
- Charlemagne was crowned by the pope, raising the question of whether the one crowned (secular king) or the one doing the crowning (pope) should be supreme.
- Charlemagne's empire revived the dream in the medieval mind of a Christian empire after the style of Rome and contributed to the concept of centralized power.

After Charlemagne's Reign

- Charlemagne's empire did not last; his grandsons divided it into three parts, and the entire empire was never reconstituted.
- Monarchs actually declined in real power, while nobles' power increased greatly.
- Monarchs and popes constantly vied for supremacy throughout the Middle Ages.
- European monarchs sought to emulate Charlemagne's reign and recreate his empire.
- The dream of a powerful Christian empire never died; it helped to prepare people to embrace the idea of centralized power.

Sample Answer

Charlemagne's reign created a legacy with lasting importance for European civilization. Although his empire itself did not last, Charlemagne's influence on church-state relationships and the vision of a restored empire that his reign created had a significant impact on Europe during the Middle Ages and beyond.

Charlemagne created an empire through his power as an able general and energetic administrator, as well as the feudal system that he established to help him govern. His son Louis the Pious was not able to emulate his father, and when he divided the empire among his sons Lothair, Charles the Bald, and Louis the German, Charlemagne's empire quickly disintegrated into smaller states.

Although Charlemagne's empire itself did not remain intact, his interaction with the pope is part of his lasting leg-

acy. Charlemagne's reign foreshadowed the medieval conflict between church and state. In particular, Charlemagne's crowning raised the question of who was supreme, king or pope. The king was the one receiving the crown of the Roman Empire, but the pope was the one doing the crowning. This conflict only grew more and more pronounced as the Middle Ages progressed.

Charlemagne's reign also gave a vision for monarchies in Europe. Charlemagne was the first ruler since Rome to unite a large part of Europe under one king. Unlike earlier kings, he had real power over a vast amount of territory. His reign inspired people with the dream of a Christian empire, hearkening back to the Rome of Constantine. His example thus contributed to the strength of later monarchies.

Charlemagne's reign was a critical time in European civilization. While his empire itself dissolved, his legacy in the church-state conflict and in the vision of a restored empire had a crucial influence on the Middle Ages and lasting importance for European civilization.