

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

1. What was the Renaissance movement?
The Renaissance movement was a great cultural movement that began in Italy during the 1300's, overlapping the end of the Middle Ages, and continued until the late 1400's. It was characterized by a "rebirth" in the art and literature of the classical world, but its renewal also awakened interest in other fields of study such as science and government.
 2. How was the art of the early Renaissance different from that of the Middle Ages in its worldview and expression?
While the art of the Middle Ages primarily reflected religious themes, expressed in a stiff and formal style, early Renaissance art built upon previous religious emphases but gradually moved towards a more natural, life-like portrayal. In these portrayals, Renaissance artists increasingly stressed the inherent worth, dignity, and beauty of man. This humanistic view of life pervaded the southern Renaissance and its art.
 3. Define humanism as understood in Renaissance Italy.
Humanism was the cultural movement that flourished during the Renaissance. While men in the Middle Ages focused their desires on the heavenly and spiritual realms in a strictly religious worldview, humanists shifted their focus to the study of human life. Humanists generally relied on human reason, marveling at man's goodness, beauty, and achievements. Although humanists did not necessarily reject the church or their Christian faith, they focused on human accomplishments and interests.
 4. Who was Petrarch and what was his contribution as a forerunner to Renaissance thinking?
Born in 1304 in the city of Florence, Petrarch was a poet and scholar who led the recovery and revival of classical learning. Concentrating on the study of individuals, ideologies, and languages of the past, he is regarded as the father of Humanism.
 5. Who was Cosimo de' Medici and what role did he play in the lives of Renaissance artists and writers?
In the early 1400's, Cosimo was the head of the powerful and wealthy Medici family of Florence, Italy. With his love for art and literature, he became a patron by financially supporting and commissioning works from several important Renaissance artists and writers.
- 6-10. Write the name of each of the five following Renaissance artists beside the correct description:
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|---------------------|--|
| <i>Giotto</i> | This revolutionary Florentine artist of the 1300's created paintings with emotional intensity and dramatic realism, as viewed in scenes from <i>The Kiss of Judas</i> and <i>The Mourning of Christ</i> , both of which significantly departed from the flat and formalized Byzantine style. |
| <i>Brunelleschi</i> | This artist was trained as a goldsmith and was a master architect of the Italian Renaissance as well. He is noted as the "most famous Florentine architect," who designed the huge dome of the Florence Cathedral. |
| <i>Ghiberti</i> | This Florentine sculptor and goldsmith was most famous for his masterful design of Florence's Baptistery's doors, illustrating Old Testament scenes. The cast iron reliefs show amazing skill in their illusion of perspective, wealth of detail, overall composition, and execution of the casting process. |
| <i>Donatello</i> | This great Italian sculptor is most notably acclaimed for his statue, <i>St. George</i> , which displays expressive emotion and physical realism. He also used the background of his reliefs to add depth to them through tricks of illusion and perspective. |
| <i>Alberti</i> | This architect and writer was the first to devise principles that artists could follow; he also formulated a method of perspective construction, elaborated in his treatise of 1435, <i>On Painting</i> . |

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. “The Renaissance was the fruit of the Crusades.” Assess the validity of this statement.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

NOTE: In keeping with this week’s discussion theme, this essay asks your student to articulate his own position regarding a debatable assertion. Although we support the thesis, your student need not do so, nor need he do so in the same way that we did. Look to see that his essay supports his opinion according to your instruction in class, and that he uses specific detail to demonstrate his point.

For

- Reawakened European awareness of regions beyond the borders of Europe
- Exposure to Eastern commodities incited a new birth of trade.
- Revived trade brought unprecedented prosperity to Italian trading cities.
- Wealthy Italian families patronized the arts (especially the visual arts), as a way of employing and displaying their wealth.
- Patrons also promoted intellectual advancement in literature and scholarship.
- Influx of ancient classical texts, previously preserved by the Byzantines and Muslims, inspired a new interest in classical cultures.
- Ancient philosophy challenged church teachings, leading to heated scholastic debates.
- Although the scholastics at first defended the church satisfactorily, they nevertheless created an atmosphere of inquiry and questioning.

Against

- Other factors were more important than the Crusades in bringing about the Renaissance, such as a thirst for knowledge, which the scholastics and others already possessed.
- The Renaissance might have happened eventually, even without the Crusades.
- The Crusades were damaging in many ways, particularly by causing loss of life, further damaging Europe’s relationship with the Byzantine Empire, and hurting the purity of the Western Church.

Sample Answer

The Renaissance was a fruit of the Crusades. By bringing Europeans back into contact with the East, the Crusades resulted in a broader perspective on the world, greater trade and prosperity, and the availability of classical texts.

The Crusades reawakened Europe’s interest in regions beyond her own borders. For centuries, most Europeans had lived their entire lives within the tight circle of their local communities. Very few of them traveled more than a few miles from their place of birth. They had little interaction with the rest of the world. In the Crusades, however, numbers of European soldiers traveled to regions far across the Mediterranean Sea. They came into contact with new cultures, new lifestyles, new experiences. The Crusades thus marked the beginning of the end of Europe’s isolation.

Exposure to other parts of the world led Europe into increased trade with the East. Returning Crusaders brought back a taste for Eastern luxuries. The Italian city-states stepped in to fill that market, and in the process they became very rich. Italian leaders developed extravagant courts to show off their wealth. These leaders, who had time and money to spare, patronized the artists and thinkers of the Renaissance. The trade that followed the Crusades made possible the increase in prosperity necessary for the Renaissance to occur.

Contact with the East also made the great classics of antiquity available. Crusaders and traders returned with ancient texts that had been preserved by the Byzantines and the Muslims. European scholars began to study the Greek and Roman masterpieces. As they did so, they developed an interest in the cultures behind them. The Crusades thus helped to spark the interest in classical antiquity that was so central to the Renaissance.

The Crusades made a major contribution to European history by bringing the Europeans back into contact with those outside their borders, in particular the peoples of the East. Growing out of the increased trade and prosperity and also access to classical texts, the Renaissance was the fruit of the Crusades.

2. Describe three innovations of Renaissance art as compared with the art of the Middle Ages. How do these new techniques reflect Renaissance humanism?

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Innovations of Renaissance Art

- Increased realism: emphasis on the present world as the most important thing to depict (rather than using size to depict, e.g., the spiritual stature of a saint)
- Perspective
- Foreshortening
- Shading
- Realistic landscapes as backgrounds, rather than flat gold
- Emotion: emphasized humanity, rather than symbolism, of spiritual heroes
- Inclusion of mythological, as well as biblical, subjects
- Nudity: glorification of the human form
- Movement and gestures

Humanism

- A cultural movement that flourished during the Renaissance, shifting the focus away from the spiritual realm and a strictly religious worldview to a focus on the study of human life
- Relied on human reason
- Celebrated man's goodness, beauty, and achievements

Sample Answer

Renaissance art involved many innovations that stood in sharp contrast to the art of the Middle Ages. Increased realism, depiction of space, and use of nude figures all differed from medieval art, reflecting the artists' underlying humanism, which emphasized the physical world and celebrated man's innate goodness, beauty, and achievements.

Renaissance art was much more realistic than medieval art had been. Medieval figures of saints and Bible characters were depicted as flat and stylized, like Byzantine art. Very rarely did they display emotion. In keeping with the medieval emphasis on what was otherworldly, the primary purpose of these figures was symbolic, not realistic. By contrast, Renaissance painters sought to make their people extremely lifelike. They had vivid expressions reflecting strong emotions. Even Jesus and the saints were meant to look human. Such devotion to realism reflected the Renaissance emphasis on this present world.

One means by which Renaissance painters made their work look real was the realistic depiction of space. Medieval paintings all depicted events happening on a flat plane. People were different sizes because of their importance or prestige, not their distance from the viewer. Renaissance artists, however, used such tricks as perspective and foreshortening to give their pictures the illusion of depth. For example, Giotto let his saints' halos overlap, and he created scenes in his paintings that realistically receded into space, rather than being flat. This attention to physical detail similarly reflects the Renaissance artists' emphasis on the details of this world, as perceived by man's senses.

One of the most striking evidences of humanism in Renaissance art was the frequent use of nudes. Previously, nudity had been considered indecent by Christians, a sign of shame. Medieval figures were rarely nude. The Renaissance painters, by contrast, gloried in the use of idealized nudes as a chance to show man's strength. Michelangelo thought fit to cover the Sistine Chapel with them. Nude figures presented an opportunity to depict man in all his glory. This approval of nudity strongly reflected Renaissance humanism.

Renaissance art included many elements unheard of in medieval art, of which realism, space, and nudity were only a few. These elements all emphasize man and his present world, thus reflecting Renaissance humanism.

3. “Christians should not be afraid to engage in any kind of learning.” Assess the validity of this statement.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

NOTE: This is a question asking your student to form his own argument regarding a complex issue, and ought to be graded accordingly. We found it inadvisable to offer a sample answer due to the variety of possible approaches. Instead, we present a bulleted outline of various arguments your student might employ. Look to see that he articulates and defends his own position as formulated during your class discussion, defining terms and supporting assertions along the way.

Definitions

- “Afraid”: timid terror, or careful awe?
- “Engage in”
- “Any kind” of learning: truly any kind?
- “Learning”

For

- Christians have God’s Spirit to protect them.
- We do not have a spirit of fear.
- Learning is not believing.
- If our religion is true, anything we learn about reality supposedly would only confirm it—“truth need not fear the light.” True reason, similarly, ought to confirm and not contradict our true religion.
- All truth is God’s truth. Even non-Christians may sometimes say true things or have true insights from which we can learn, due to common grace.
- Some study of evil realities may be necessary for us to reach out to unbelievers caught in the grip of those realities.
- Ephesians 5:11 says, “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather *expose them*.”

Against

- Man’s sin nature corrupts even his good efforts to learn.
- Man’s mind is finite and fallen. He can and does misperceive reality, or at least perceive it incompletely. Mistaking this limited perception for the full truth can lead him into great danger.
- Man is in a state of moral rebellion, such that falsehood is attractive to him.
- According to Romans 1:18-22, sinful men “suppress the truth by their wickedness” and “their foolish hearts were darkened.”
- We should not gaze at evil but dwell on what is good and true and lovely.
- Ephesians 5:11: “Have *nothing* to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”
- Proverbs 9:10: “The fear of the Lord [not the indiscriminate pursuit of knowledge] is the beginning of wisdom.”
- Since we are to fear God, our learning should always serve Him. Learning evil does not serve Him.
- I Corinthians 8:1: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”
- As worded, the proposition is a universal generalization (making a claim about all cases), which should make your student wary. To say that a Christian should not be afraid of any kind of learning can be proven false by a single example to the contrary, such as occult knowledge.