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## 12. Christianity

The birth of Jesus Christ in an animal stable over 2,000 years ago heralded the beginning of the world's largest religious belief, Christianity. Approximately 33 years after this birth, the Roman governor in Palestine Pontius Pilate ordered this man to be put to death on a cross. From such small beginnings started the religious belief with over two billion believers in our present day.

From its beginning, Christianity has been a persecuted religion. Followers of Christ were tortured and fed to gladiatorial animals in the Roman circus by the Roman Emperors. However, as time went on, the relationship between the Christian Church and the Roman Empire changed.

In your essay, answer the question "Why did the Roman Empire change from persecuting Christians at the time of the death of Jesus to supporting Christians by the Fourth Century?"

In your answer, you should be familiar with these terms:

Messiah      Jesus    Christ                  New Testament      St. Paul      St. Peter Apostle  
                Trinity                          resurrection                  salvation      Pope  
Constantine    Theodosius                  missionary                  Gentile

This essay has six assignments:

Assignment	Due Date		Due Date
1. Prewriting Activities	_____	4. Works Cited	_____
2. Thesis Statement	_____	5. Rough Draft	_____
3. Outline	_____	6. Final	_____

**Prewriting Activities for Essay #12**  
**A. Taking Notes**

Following the structure below, write notes. Research as many terms as your teacher requires. Keep in mind you have to use five or more sources in your essay.

Messiah
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
Did this term change the way the Roman Empire got along with the Christian Church? _____
_____
_____

Jesus Christ
What? _____
Who? _____
When? _____
Where? _____
Why? _____
Did this term change the way the Roman Empire got along with the Christian Church? _____
_____
_____

## B. What is Christianity?

In this activity you will research the basic facts and beliefs of Christians. Using your textbook or readings provided by your teacher answer these questions.

<b>Christianity</b>	
1. When did Christianity begin?	_____
2. How did Christianity begin?	_____ _____
3. What does it mean to be a Christian?	_____ _____
4. What is the primary book for Christians?	_____ _____
5. What did the Old Testament say about a Messiah?	_____ _____
6. For a Christian, what does salvation mean?	_____ _____
7. Who is Saint Peter?	_____ _____
8. Who is Saint Paul and what did he do?	_____ _____
9. How did Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire?	_____ _____
10. What is your opinion of Christianity?	_____ _____

**Paraphrase:** Here is a quote from Jesus in the New Testament (John 15:13) “No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.” In your own words, write what Jesus said:

_____
_____
_____

### C. Change over Time

Change over time refers to the idea that people, countries, groups, knowledge, and just about everything change over time. As students of history we should be aware of this idea of change. We should be able to analyze these changes and decide how the changes affect people. Just think how much the invention of the car changed how people travel. Similarly, imagine a life where our society would still have slavery. To understand change in societies is important as a historian.

For this exercise, research and write how the relationship of the Roman Empire with Christianity changed from the death of Jesus to the year A.D. 395.

#### Questions

1. Who was Saul of Tarsus, and how did he change his mind about Christians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Saint Paul do to spread Christianity? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. According to tradition, how did Saint Peter and Saint Paul die? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did the Roman Emperor Nero (A.D. 64) do to Christians when he believed Christians had set fire to Rome? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did the Roman Emperor Decius (A.D. 250) order his soldiers to do to Christians who refused to worship Roman gods? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Emperor Constantine do in A.D. 313 that was good for Christians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Emperor Theodosius declare in A.D. 395 regarding the Christian faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **D. Class Discussion**

When you share ideas with other students, your ideas may be reinforced, rejected, or slightly changed. Listening to your classmates' ideas will help you form your own judgment.

Each student must interview at least three classmates who do not sit next to one another. The answers to the following questions must be written down on a piece of paper.

1. What is your name?
2. What caused the Roman Empire to change from persecuting Christians to supporting them?
3. What evidence do you have that supports what you think?

### **Reflection**

After you have written down all your classmates' responses, think about them and ask yourself the following questions. Write down your answers under your classmates' responses.

1. What do I think of my classmates' answers?
2. Which are the best three answers to question #2 above?
3. Have I changed the way I think?
4. How have I changed the way I think?

You should now have a chance to present your ideas in a class discussion. If somebody says something with which you disagree, speak up! In your discussion, you may find out they are actually right and you are wrong. All possible viewpoints should be stated and defended out loud. Test your ideas in class.

# 1. Fact or Opinion?

## Fact

A **fact** in history is a statement that is accepted as true and is not debatable. A fact often refers to a date, a person, or a document. For example, “The Declaration of Independence was written and signed in 1776.” We know this happened because we have the original document, the men who wrote and signed this document wrote about it, and observers wrote about it as well. There is no doubt in anybody’s mind whether the facts in this statement are true.

Which of these sentences are facts and which are not?

### Fact or Not a Fact?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The first Egyptian settlements were near the Euphrates River.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Early civilizations often settled near major rivers.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Another way of saying Old Stone Age is Paleolithic.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Early man used guns to hunt buffaloes.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ California has the best waves to surf in the United States.

## Opinion

An **opinion** is an expression of somebody’s ideas and is debatable. Opinions that are based on facts and good reasoning are stronger than opinions not based on facts. In history, opinions alone tend to be less persuasive than when a person supports his opinions with facts.

Are the following opinions or facts?

### Opinion or Fact?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Life for early man was more peaceful than our life today.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Teachers who are nice don’t assign homework.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Almost everybody’s favorite food is pizza.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Mesopotamia means “the land between two rivers.”
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Sumerians were the first people to use wheeled vehicles.



## 9. Outline for a One-Paragraph Essay

An outline helps you organize your thoughts and shows if you have enough evidence to support your thesis statement. An outline does not need to be written in complete sentences, except for the thesis statement and the conclusion. In a one-paragraph essay, the more evidence you include, the stronger your argument will be.

An example outline follows to the essay question “What were the two most important Roman contributions to world civilizations?”

### I. Thesis Statement:

Two most important Roman contributions to world civilizations were language and law.

### II. Supporting Evidence:

1. Latin—mother of languages—French, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish
2. Latin and English—“surrender,” “champagne”
3. Roman law—“innocent until proven guilty”
4. R.L.—“habeas corpus”

### III. Conclusion:

In conclusion, Roman civilization contributed to the world its rich Latin language and Roman law. With contributions such as the words “surrender” and “champagne,” and with legal concepts such as “habeas corpus” and “innocent until proven guilty,” many world civilizations are better off because of the Romans.

Following this page are two forms. One is a “Basic Outline Form for a Paragraph,” the other an “Advanced Outline Form for a Paragraph.”

**Basic Outline Form for a One-Paragraph Essay**

(Use complete sentences for the thesis statement and the conclusion.)

I. Thesis Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

B. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

C. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

II. Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

**Advanced Outline Form for a One-Paragraph Essay**

(Use complete sentences for the thesis statement and the conclusion.)

I. Thesis Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

B. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

C. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

D. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

E. Supporting Evidence \_\_\_\_\_

II. Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

