

Take a Stand!®

Modern World History

Reading, Discussing, and Writing

by John De Gree

**The Classical Historian
San Clemente, California**

DEDICATION

Dedicated to students willing to take a stand

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Part One: Social Studies Curriculum

Chapter I: Social Studies Essay Questions and Prewriting Activities

1. Western Political Thought

The political and legal worlds of ancient Greece and Rome, and the religions of Judaism and Christianity, are commonly considered the beginnings of Western political thought. It is from these lands and religions that much of the western world received the ideas of government, law, philosophy, morality, and religion. Europeans who founded the United States were very aware of the fact that western political thought inspired laws, religions, and customs in the new country.

In your essay, support or reject the statement "Western political thought and the societies from which it originated are based on ideas that are detrimental to humanity."

You should be familiar with these terms and people to answer the question:

Athens Athenian democracy Plato suffrage
citizenship Pericles Roman Republic Judeo-Christian
the Ten Commandments Roman law equality
the Stoics and "law of nations"

This essay has six assignments:

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

Prewriting Activities for Essay #1
A. Views of Law and Religion
Judeo-Christian Views of Law and Religion

1. According to the Ten Commandments, are there different rules for the rich and the poor? _____
2. According to the Ten Commandments, did kings have to follow the same rules as servants? _____
3. Based on the teachings of Christianity, is salvation open to everyone, regardless of financial position or race? _____
4. According to Judaism and Christianity, do all people have to follow the same laws of God, or do some people not have to follow them? _____
5. In Judaism and Christianity, are believers in God treated equally, or are there different rules for different people? _____
6. Did Jews and Christians believe in one God, or many gods? _____
7. Did Jews and Christians believe their God had a moral code that humans should follow? _____
8. In which American documents is *equality* referred to? _____

Greco-Roman Views of Law

1. In ancient Athens, did all citizens have the same political rights? _____
2. In the Roman Republic, did all citizens have the same rights? _____
3. In the Roman Republic, what were the Twelve Tables? _____
4. What was similar in the ancient Greek and Roman Republic views of law? _____
5. Were laws in ancient Greece or the Roman Republic written? _____
6. Who were the Stoics of the Roman Republic? _____
7. Who introduced Stoicism in Ancient Athens? _____
8. According to the Stoics, should a society view all people as equals, or should some people have more rights? _____
9. What were the *Twelve Tables* in Roman law? _____
10. In what American documents is *equality* referred to? _____

B. Greco-Roman Traditions of Government

While both Greek and Roman governments had periods of dictatorship, they both also had the world's first elements of democracy. In this exercise, write how democratic Greece and republican Rome functioned.

Athenian Democracy

Five Branches of Government

Assembly

Council

Board of
Generals

Board of
Officials

Juries

1. Briefly list the duties of each of these branches.

Assembly: _____

Council: _____

Board of Generals: _____

Board of Officials: _____

Juries: _____

2. In Athens, democracy reached its high point under Pericles (461–429 B.C.). Who could vote during this time? _____

3. Was there another government in the world where people voted for its leader? If so, where? _____

The Roman Republic

Three Branches of Government

Executive Branch:
Two Consuls

Lawmakers:
1. The Senate
2. The Assembly of Tribes
3. The Assembly of Centuries

Judges:
Praetors

1. Which modern country has three branches? _____

2. Why did the Romans think it a good idea to have power in different groups of men? _____

C. Summary of Western Political Thought

1. What are a few basic ideas of Western political thought? _____

2. Where did these ideas originate? _____

3. In what countries or societies do we see Western political thought today, and how do we see these ideas in practice? _____

4. Are the ideas of Western political thought exclusive to one ethnic or racial group? For example, are Western political ideas only good for Greeks (as Plato was Greek) or Jews (as Moses was Hebrew)? _____

Explain your answer. _____

5. Are the ideas of Western political thought too hard for today's student to understand? Were people a few thousand years ago more intelligent than we are today? _____

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. Are western political thought and the societies from which it originated based on ideas that are detrimental to the human race?
3. Which facts do you have that support 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 questions are the best to questions #2 above?
3. Have I changed the way I think? How?

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.

2. The Age of Revolution

For most of the medieval ages (c. A.D. 476–1500), Europeans did not question the divine right of kings and queens. Europeans believed that God personally chose their leaders, and therefore following the rulers was both a political and a religious act. In some lands the king exercised absolute power, that is, power without limits.

From the 1600s through the mid 1800s, however, revolution swept through many of the great countries of Europe and its large colonies. Kings were violently deposed from power, in some cases losing their heads in public executions. The era of divine right was forever broken, and the age of revolution heralded new ideologies.

In your essay, answer the question "What was the key factor in destroying the idea of the divine right of kings?" Explain what ended the power of the great absolute monarchs and brought in a radically different kind of state.

As you write your essay, you should be familiar with the following ideas and terms:

nationalism absolute monarch limited monarchy
Enlightenment self-government English Bill of Rights
Magna Carta Declaration of Independence

This essay has six assignments:

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

Prewriting Activities for Essay #2
A. Important Documents on the Rights of the Individual

Research the following documents and provide a short summary for each. Then answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

The Magna Carta (1215): _____ _____
The English Bill of Rights (1689): _____ _____
The American Declaration of Independence (1776): _____ _____
The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789): _____ _____
The American Bill of Rights (1791): _____ _____

Questions
1. Did these documents grant more power to the king (or government), or less? _____ _____
2. Which of the documents guarantees the most individual freedom from government? _____ _____

B. The Enlightenment

Research these philosophers of the Enlightenment and write down their main ideas involving the ideas of good government.

Political Philosophers
John Locke: _____ _____ _____
Thomas Hobbes: _____ _____ _____
Charles Louis-Montesquieu: _____ _____ _____
Jean-Jacque Rousseau: _____ _____ _____

Economics and the Enlightenment
Research the following economic term and its most known proponent.
Laissez faire: _____ _____ _____
Adam Smith: _____ _____ _____

Questions
1. Did the philosophers of the Enlightenment want a stronger King? _____ _____
2. Do you think that most kings were in favor of or against philosophers of the Enlightenment? Why or why not? _____ _____ _____

C. Nationalism

1. What is nationalism? _____ _____
2. When did the idea of nationalism become a major factor in European politics? _____ _____
3. How did Napoleon Bonaparte spread ideas of nationalism in Europe? _____ _____
4. Did the idea of nationalism support having empires controlled by a king from a different nationality? _____ _____
5. In England, under King Henry VIII, what did the British king do to the Roman Catholic Church? _____ _____
6. In the German speaking lands, during the life of Martin Luther, describe what was happening in Europe. _____ _____
7. Did the Protestant Reformation support the idea of divine right, or weaken it? _____ _____
8. Did the idea of nationalism make kings of multinational countries stronger, or weaker? Why? _____ _____ _____

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 was the key factor in destroying the idea of the divine right of Kings?
3. How did you find your answers?

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 answer to question #2 above was the best?
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.

