

2025



AP[®] European History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Short-Answer Question 3

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Question 3: Short Answer No Stimulus**3 points****General Scoring Notes**

- Each point is earned independently.
- **Accuracy:** These scoring guidelines require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam responses should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.
- **Describe:** Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic. Description requires more than simply mentioning an isolated term.
- **Explain:** Provide information about how or why a historical development or process occurs or how or why a relationship exists.

A Describe one significant cultural characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Artists and writers of the Renaissance frequently used classical Greek and Roman ideas, models, and images for their work.
- The Italian Renaissance stressed the value of individual excellence and achievement.
- Renaissance artists revived and improved techniques such as geometric perspective and lifelike sculpture.
- Renaissance writers and artists often set themselves in opposition to earlier medieval ideas and techniques.

B Describe one political or economic factor that facilitated the Italian Renaissance. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Italy was fragmented into several city-states whose rulers often competed to support the arts.
- Italy was gaining wealth from trade and manufacturing and some of that wealth was devoted to creating art.
- Wealthy Italian families sponsored and patronized the arts.
- The papacy had a great deal of political power and wealth, and popes commissioned paintings, buildings, and works of literature.

C Explain one way the Northern Renaissance differed from the Italian Renaissance. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The Northern Renaissance was more focused on religion and the development of Christian humanism, while the Italian Renaissance sought to shift education away from theology and toward classical texts.

- Northern Renaissance humanists focused more on social reform while the Italian Renaissance focused on literature, art, and scientific inquiry.
 - Art of the Northern Renaissance was often focused on daily peasant or urban life while Italian Renaissance art frequently depicted elites.
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Sample 3A:

A) One significant cultural characteristic of the Italian Renaissance was the Humanist focus. Humanism was revived by Petrarch in the 14th century and soon became the basis for much of the cultural change of the Renaissance. Humanism is the focus on the Greek and Roman civilizations. Humanism contributed to the development of new artworks, as well as the development of more secular thought. For example, Machiavelli's political works, a fundamental part of the culture of the Italian Renaissance, were based on his humanist studies. As for art, it led to the creation of important paintings such as *The School of Athens*, which depicts and epitomizes the Italian Renaissance's focus on Humanism.

B) One economic factor that facilitated the Italian Renaissance was the development of a wealthy trading elite due to Italy's prime geographic position that allowed it to act as the "middle man" between Europe and Asia, and thus acquire wealth. One such family that benefited from this system was the Medici family. The Medici family facilitated the Italian Renaissance by patronizing not just the work of several artists of the time, but also patronizing the studies and work of the important intellectuals of the time. This allowed for the development of the Italian Renaissance.

C) The Northern Renaissance differed from the Italian Renaissance in its focus on Christianity. In the Northern Renaissance, Christian Humanism developed as a way of reconciling the newly discovered "pagan" works of the Romans and the Greeks with Christian theology. This is in contrast to the Humanism of the Italian Renaissance in which there was an increasingly secular focus and a separation of Christianity from intellectual exploration. The Northern Renaissance also started later than the Italian Renaissance simply due to the gradual spread of ideas over time from the Italian Renaissance.

Sample 3B:

One significant cultural characteristic of the Italian Renaissance was the revival of ancient Greek literature. The Crusades brought ancient Greek literature to the philosophers of the time, leading to the integration of classical ideas in the context of the present times. This led to a change in the culture to focussing on ancient ideas.

One political factor that facilitated the Italian Renaissance was the opposition to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church held a lot of political power at the time and the opposition to its strict ideas by people like Martin Luther, weakened their power and facilitated the room for other non-religious ideas to take root.

One way the Northern Renaissance differed from the Italian Renaissance was that the North focused more on Christian humanism rather than the humanism of Italy. Humanism in Italy was a focus on the greatness of man and a study of ancient Greek literature that eluded to man's accomplishments. Christian humanism was similar but put into the context of the Christian faith and the studies were on old Christian texts. Since this was a huge difference in the way that these Renaissances happened, it stands to reason that this is how they differed.

Sample 3C:

One significant cultural characteristic of the Italian Renaissance was the dowry system, where fathers would offer their daughter's hand in marriage in return for a title. Sons would always be the ones with the title because when they married, the title would go to the wife as well. This was not common in the 3rd estate during the Renaissance, because the 3rd estate didn't own a title. This was a unique system specifically for the elites because they were the ones who cared about the titles and the arranged marriages.

One economic factor that facilitated in the Italian Renaissance was trade, and how the Italian city states made most of their power and money off of trade. For example, after the Hanseatic league disbanded, the Italian city states flourished because of the Medici family and because of the richest city state, Florence. The Medici family made their money off of wool trade, and they funded the arts and banking with their money.

One main way Northern Renaissance differed from the Italian Renaissance was the types of art being created. In the Northern Renaissance, the art focussed around religious themes like frescos painted in churches. For example, in churches, painters would paint on the ceilings and on the walls religious scenes, which defined the Northern art during the Renaissance. In the Italian Renaissance, the art was more about talent rather than religious. It was common to see art of how water moved or nature with perspective and depth during the Italian Renaissance.

Short Answer Question 3

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses on AP Central*.

Sample: 3A

SAQ Part A Score: 1

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for Part A with the description of humanism and specifically describing the School of Athens artwork.

The response earned 1 point for Part B by describing that increased trade in Italy created a merchant class with wealth to support artists and intellectuals.

The response earned 1 point for Part C by explaining the focus on Christian humanism in the Northern Renaissance as opposed to the secular focus of the Italian Renaissance.

Sample: 3B

SAQ Part A Score: 1

SAQ Part B Score: 0

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Score: 2

The response earned 1 point for Part A with the description of the study of Ancient Greek literature and the revival of classical ideas.

The response did not earn the point for Part B because the description of religious opposition does not address the prompt.

The response earned 1 point for Part C by explaining that the Northern Renaissance was focused on Christian humanism while the Italian Renaissance was focused on the greatness of man.

Short Answer Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3C

SAQ Part A Score: 0

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 0

Score: 1

The response did not earn the point for Part A because the description of the dowry system is not related to the prompt.

The response earned 1 point for Part B for the description of wealth generated by trade being used to fund the arts.

The response did not earn the point for Part C because the explanation of the Italian Renaissance art was not accurate.