

CLEP Western Civilization 1 Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. Which of the following Crusades aimed to recapture Jerusalem from Saladin?**
 - A. The First Crusade**
 - B. The Second Crusade**
 - C. The Third Crusade**
 - D. The Fourth Crusade**
- 2. What term describes the city-state that developed as a form of local government in ancient Greece?**
 - A. Republic**
 - B. Empire**
 - C. Polis**
 - D. Monarchy**
- 3. What was the primary objective of the Holy Office founded by Paul III in 1542?**
 - A. To promote new theological ideas**
 - B. To monitor newly published books for heretical theology**
 - C. To create alliances with Protestant reformers**
 - D. To establish new religious orders**
- 4. What type of structure did the people of Mesopotamia build as pyramid-like constructions?**
 - A. Temples**
 - B. Ziggurats**
 - C. Fortifications**
 - D. Pyramids**
- 5. What was the term for the massive units formed by Greek citizen-soldiers?**
 - A. Centuries**
 - B. Legions**
 - C. Phalanxes**
 - D. Squadrons**

- 6. Which explorer was the first to round the Cape of Good Hope in 1488?**
- A. Vasco da Gama**
 - B. Bartholomew Diaz**
 - C. Pedro Cabral**
 - D. Alfonso de Albuquerque**
- 7. Which Greek thinker calculated the circumference of the earth accurately?**
- A. Eratosthenes**
 - B. Aristarchus**
 - C. Hipparchus**
 - D. Democritus**
- 8. What event marked the starting point for the Second Crusade?**
- A. The capture of Jerusalem**
 - B. The capture of Edessa**
 - C. The Battle of Hattin**
 - D. The proclamation by Pope Urban II**
- 9. Which poet wrote victory odes for athletic competitions and lived from 518 to 438 B.C.E.?**
- A. Pindar**
 - B. Sappho of Lesbos**
 - C. Hesiod**
 - D. Archilochus**
- 10. Who wrote the play "Medea," notable for its unconventional ending?**
- A. Sophocles**
 - B. Euripides**
 - C. Herodotus**
 - D. Thucydides**

Answers

SAMPLE

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. B
7. A
8. B
9. A
10. B

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following Crusades aimed to recapture Jerusalem from Saladin?

- A. The First Crusade**
- B. The Second Crusade**
- C. The Third Crusade**
- D. The Fourth Crusade**

The Crusade that aimed to recapture Jerusalem from Saladin was indeed the Third Crusade. Launched in 1189, it was initiated in response to the Muslim leader Saladin's successful capture of Jerusalem in 1187. Prominent leaders such as Richard the Lionheart of England, Philip II of France, and Frederick Barbarossa of the Holy Roman Empire participated in this Crusade. Their collective goal was to reclaim the city and restore Christian control over it. The Third Crusade is particularly notable for its military campaigns and negotiations, most famously Richard the Lionheart's attempts to reach Jerusalem and engage Saladin in battle. Although the Crusaders managed to secure several important victories, they ultimately did not retake Jerusalem but established a treaty that allowed Christian pilgrims access to the city. In contrast, the First Crusade, which began in 1096, succeeded in capturing Jerusalem from Muslim control but was not aimed specifically at Saladin, as he rose to prominence later. The Second Crusade (1147-1149) was a response to the fall of the County of Edessa and also did not involve Jerusalem directly in terms of recapture from Saladin. The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) deviated entirely from its

2. What term describes the city-state that developed as a form of local government in ancient Greece?

- A. Republic**
- B. Empire**
- C. Polis**
- D. Monarchy**

The term that describes the city-state that developed as a form of local government in ancient Greece is "polis." In ancient Greece, the polis was more than just a geographical area; it represented a community of citizens with their own customs, laws, and governance structures. Each polis functioned as an independent city-state, complete with its own political institutions and military organization. This allowed for a rich diversity of governance and social organization throughout Greece, with famous examples including Athens and Sparta. The concept of the polis was fundamental to Greek identity and political life, fostering civic participation among its citizens. Each polis was typically built around a fortified hill, known as an acropolis, and included an agora, or marketplace, where social, economic, and political activities occurred. This unique structure set the foundation for political philosophy and practices that have had a lasting impact on Western civilization.

3. What was the primary objective of the Holy Office founded by Paul III in 1542?

- A. To promote new theological ideas**
- B. To monitor newly published books for heretical theology**
- C. To create alliances with Protestant reformers**
- D. To establish new religious orders**

The Holy Office, established by Pope Paul III in 1542, primarily aimed to monitor newly published books for heretical theology. This institution, also known as the Roman Inquisition, was part of the Catholic Church's broader response to the Protestant Reformation and the rising tide of heretical ideas that emerged during that period. By overseeing the publication and dissemination of literature, the Holy Office sought to safeguard the orthodoxy of Catholic teachings and ensure that any works that diverged from accepted theological positions were scrutinized and potentially censored. This effort was crucial for maintaining the integrity of the Church's doctrine in the face of challenges posed by reformers and other dissenting voices. The focus of the Holy Office on monitoring publications reflects the Church's strategy to control the narrative and influence of ideas during a time of significant theological upheaval. In contrast, the other options, such as promoting new theological ideas, creating alliances with Protestant reformers, or establishing new religious orders, do not align with the primary functions and objectives of the Holy Office during that era. The Catholic Church, particularly through the Holy Office, was primarily concerned with preserving its authority and combating the spread of Protestantism, rather than fostering new theological movements or forming partnerships with reformers.

4. What type of structure did the people of Mesopotamia build as pyramid-like constructions?

- A. Temples**
- B. Ziggurats**
- C. Fortifications**
- D. Pyramids**

The people of Mesopotamia built ziggurats as pyramid-like constructions. Ziggurats are massive structures that served as temple complexes, characterized by their terraced layers and stepped design. These structures were often dedicated to the chief gods of the city-states and acted as both religious centers and symbols of political power. The design of ziggurats varied, but they typically featured a square or rectangular base with one or more levels that rose to a shrine at the top. This ascending structure was thought to symbolize a connection between the earth and the divine, allowing priests to perform rituals closer to the heavens. Unlike true pyramids, which were primarily associated with the civilizations of Egypt and used as tombs for pharaohs, ziggurats were specifically constructed for worship and to demonstrate the wealth and influence of the city-state. Their importance in Mesopotamian culture can be seen in many significant archaeological sites, illustrating the sophistication of urban planning and religious practices in ancient Mesopotamia.

5. What was the term for the massive units formed by Greek citizen-soldiers?

A. Centuries

B. Legions

C. Phalanxes

D. Squadrons

Phalanxes were the term used to describe the massive units formed by Greek citizen-soldiers, particularly during the Classical period. This military formation was characterized by tightly-packed rows of soldiers, known as hoplites, who stood shield-to-shield and fought with long spears and large round shields. The phalanx allowed Greek armies to present a solid wall of defense, making it formidable in battle. The significance of the phalanx lies in its role in Greek military strategy. Because each soldier depended on the man beside him for protection, this formation fostered a sense of unity and discipline among citizens, which was essential for the success of Greek city-states in battles such as those fought during the Persian Wars. In contrast, other terms like "centuries" and "legions" are associated with the Roman military structure. Centuries were smaller units within the Roman army that formed part of a larger cohort, while legions referred to a larger grouping of soldiers. Squadrons typically refer to units in naval or aerial contexts, rather than land-based infantry formations like those of the Greeks. Thus, phalanxes distinctly highlight the unique military organization of Greek citizen-soldiers.

6. Which explorer was the first to round the Cape of Good Hope in 1488?

A. Vasco da Gama

B. Bartholomew Diaz

C. Pedro Cabral

D. Alfonso de Albuquerque

Bartholomew Diaz was the first explorer to successfully round the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. This significant achievement opened a new maritime route to the east and marked a critical moment in the Age of Exploration. Diaz's expedition aimed to find a sea route to India and expand trade opportunities for Portugal. When he reached the southern tip of Africa, he initially named it the Cape of Storms due to the turbulent seas, but it was later renamed the Cape of Good Hope to reflect the optimism about the sea route to India. This accomplishment laid the groundwork for subsequent explorers, including Vasco da Gama, who would later follow Diaz and reach India by sea, thereby establishing a direct trade route that significantly impacted European and Indian commerce. The roles of the other explorers listed do not pertain to the first rounding of the Cape of Good Hope; they were involved in other critical discoveries and conquests in the Age of Exploration.

7. Which Greek thinker calculated the circumference of the earth accurately?

- A. Eratosthenes**
- B. Aristarchus**
- C. Hipparchus**
- D. Democritus**

Eratosthenes is renowned for his remarkable calculation of the Earth's circumference around 240 BCE. He used a clever method that involved comparing the angle of the sun's rays at noon in two different locations in Egypt—Alexandria and Syene (now Aswan). By measuring the angle difference and knowing the distance between the two cities, he applied geometry to estimate the Earth's circumference. His calculation was remarkably close to modern measurements, demonstrating not only his mathematical skills but also his understanding of the Earth as a spherical body. This accomplishment puts Eratosthenes among the early pioneers of geography and science, showcasing the advanced thinking of ancient Greek scholars. His work laid the foundation for later measurements of the Earth and established him as an important figure in the history of science.

8. What event marked the starting point for the Second Crusade?

- A. The capture of Jerusalem**
- B. The capture of Edessa**
- C. The Battle of Hattin**
- D. The proclamation by Pope Urban II**

The starting point for the Second Crusade was marked by the capture of Edessa in 1144. The city held significance as one of the first crusader states established during the First Crusade, and its fall to the Muslim forces represented a severe setback for the Christian kingdoms in the Holy Land. This event not only prompted a sense of urgency among European Christians but also served as a rallying point for advocates of the Second Crusade, including prominent leaders like King Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III of Germany. The loss of Edessa underscored the vulnerability of the crusader states and galvanized efforts to mount a new military campaign to reclaim the territories lost to Muslim forces. Thus, the situation surrounding Edessa's capture effectively initiated the call for the Second Crusade.

9. Which poet wrote victory odes for athletic competitions and lived from 518 to 438 B.C.E.?

A. Pindar

B. Sappho of Lesbos

C. Hesiod

D. Archilochus

Pindar is the correct answer as he is renowned for composing victory odes, known as epinikia, which celebrated the achievements of athletic victors in the ancient Greek games, particularly the Olympics and the Pythian Games. His work is characterized by rich imagery and intricate language, and he lived during a time when these competitions were highly esteemed in Greek culture. Pindar's odes not only honored individual athletes but also captured the spirit of competition and the values of Greek society. His poetic contributions were significant in that they reflected a blend of cultural reverence for victory, personal glory, and the gods' influence, highlighting the connection between human achievement and divine favor. Pindar's legacy as a poet of athletic victory distinguishes him from the other poets listed, each of whom had different themes and focuses in their works.

10. Who wrote the play "Medea," notable for its unconventional ending?

A. Sophocles

B. Euripides

C. Herodotus

D. Thucydides

The play "Medea" was written by Euripides, and it stands out in classical literature for its atypical conclusion, which challenges traditional notions of morality and justice. In "Medea," the protagonist, driven by betrayal and vengeance, takes extreme actions that defy societal norms—most notably, the murder of her own children as a means of revenge against her unfaithful husband, Jason. This act contrasts sharply with the more conventional resolutions typically seen in Greek tragedies, where characters often face a form of poetic justice or divine retribution. Euripides is recognized for his psychological insight into characters, often portraying them in complex, morally ambiguous situations. "Medea" is a prime example of this, as it explores themes of passion, betrayal, and the position of women in society. The play leaves the audience grappling with difficult questions about agency, punishment, and the consequences of vengeance, which was a significant departure from the themes of fate and honor prevalent in works by other playwrights from that era.