

DISTRIBUTED COMPETITION ASSIGNMENT SAMPLE

HISTORY

10th Grade

Time needed to complete the tasks – 120 minutes

Maximum number of points – 100

Task 1. (0 – 20 points)

Read the text and answer the questions.

When writing the biography of this ruler, famous Greek historian Plutarch was sure to note some of the features of the society organized by this ruler:

So seriously did the Lacedaemonian children go about their stealing, that a youth, having stolen a young fox and hid it under his coat, suffered it to tear out his very bowels with its teeth and claws and died upon the place, rather than let it be seen.

The iren used to stay a little with them after supper, and one of them he bade to sing a song, to another he put a question which required an advised and deliberate answer; for example, Who was the best man in the city? What he thought of such an action of such a man? They used them thus early to pass a right judgment upon persons and things, and to inform themselves of the abilities or defects of their countrymen. If they had not an answer ready to the question, Who was a good or who an ill-reputed citizen, they were looked upon as of a dull and careless disposition, and to have little or no sense of virtue and honour; besides this, they were to give a good reason for what they said, and in as few words and as comprehensive as might be; he that failed of this, or answered not to the purpose, had his thumb bit by the master. Sometimes the Iren did this in the presence of the old men and magistrates, that they might see whether he punished them justly and in due measure or not, and when he did amiss, they would not reprove him before the boys, but, when they were gone, he was called to an account and underwent correction, if he had run far into either of the extremes of indulgence or severity.*

*Irenes were the young men no older than 20 years who were made to serve in rank and file and had the right to oversee boys' units, their games and physical exercises.

What do you think were the reasons for such methods of upbringing? What is the most surprising thing to the author? Why were the questions noted by the author addressed to children? What was a “good citizen” like in this society?

Task 2. (0 – 20 points)

Read the text and answer the questions.

Here is how Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates described the background of one of the most tragic events in country's history:

...Later, the emperor released Issakios's son, Alexios, from prison and allowed him to move about freely. When he was about to march out against the protostrator and had taken up quarters at Damokraneia, he took Alexios along as a companion in travel. The latter, presumably following his father's instructions, negotiated his escape with a certain Pisan, the captain of a huge round ship. The Pisan waited for the opportune moment to put out to sea without delay, concealing his tracks in the teeming waves. As soon as the weather was favorable for sailing, the ship unfurled her sails and, borne along by a fair breeze, ran ashore on Avlonia on the Hellespont, where its small boat put in at Athyras to pick up Alexios. To escape detection, it was filled with a load of sand to be used as ballast in the ship, which supposedly had been emptied of its wares. Alexios arrived from Damokraneia, entered the boat, and was transferred to the ship. When his escape became known, the emperor dispatched men to search through the ship, but they failed to capture Alexios; by clipping his hair round about and donning Latin raiment, he was able to mingle with the throng and escape the notice of his pursuers. When he reached Sicily, his presence was made known to his sister, who dispatched a considerable bodyguard. She embraced her brother and beseeched her husband Philip to do his utmost to succor her father, who had been deprived of both sight and power by his kinsmen, and to help her brother, who was homeless and without a country and wandered about like the planets, taking with him no more than his body.

...Once the fleet was ready to put out to sea, evil was heaped upon evil, and wave after wave rolled in upon the Romans, for Alexios, the son of Isaakios Angelos, was supplied with letters from the pope of elder Rome and Philip, king of Germany, that pledged their profound gratitude to these piratical gangs if they would welcome Alexios and restore him to his paternal throne. Later, when Alexios appeared, and most willingly, before the fleet, his presence was thought to provide not only an opportune camouflage for sailing out to plunder the Romans but also a specious reason for sating the Venetians' avaricious and money-loving temperament. As they were all-cunning in their ways and troublemakers, they laid hold of Alexios, who was juvenile in mind rather than in age, and prevailed upon him to agree under oath to demands which were impossible to fulfill. The lad consented to their requests for seas of money and, in addition, agreed to assist them against the Saracens with heavy-armed Roman troops and fifty triremes.

What do you know about the events described by the historian? What were the consequences? What was the role of the Venetians in these events? How did this crusade impact Europe?

Task 3. (0 – 20 points)

Read the text and answer the questions.

Here is what a well-known political figure had to say regarding the current state-of-affairs in France on April 9, 1800:

...2. *I want to strengthen the republic. I know I do not have neither salvation nor glory without it. However, I think the idea of the republic may be toned down by counterbalancing the popular and the aristocratic, or rather royalist, tendencies. – In this regard, current constitution seems to be the most well-suited for France, considering that it permits various changes.*

3. *Today’s public opinion rejects the very idea of whitewashing the nobility, the heredity, the privileged strata of society, the total inequality... Everyone wants equality and alternation of high-rank state officials. This was my opinion yesterday and this is my opinion today, when I am a public officer; however, I will mingle with the crowd tomorrow.*

4. *Public opinion is like a horse that I am trying to break in.*

5. *When a government ignores public opinion, it perishes. This is what led to the Coup of 30 Prairial and the Coup of 18 Brumaire.*

6. *I had been chosen to be a doctor but found a cadaver that needed to be brought back to life.*

7. *I needed to find the inner strength to talk and act like a statesman. I also must lead a rough life and use to my advantage the people around me who I do not like and do not respect.*

Which public post did this political figure occupy after the Coup of 18 Brumaire? What did he do for his country when he “had been chosen to be a doctor”? Why do you think he paid attention to what was going on in England and Russia?

Task 4. (0 – 40 points)

Write an essay on one of the following topics:

1. Student movement of the 1960s and its role in European history.
2. Crusades in literature and the cinema.
