

DISTRIBUTED COMPETITION ASSIGNMENT SAMPLE

HISTORY

11<sup>th</sup> 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 how Russian poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko recalled the events that happened in August 1968:

*One of the scariest days in my life was when our tanks entered Prague. It was like they were moving on my spine, crushing it with their tracks. Solzhenitsyn must have been ecstatic on that day because it proved his view of anticommunism, but for me the allure of revolution and the hope to one day see the socialism with a human face were crushed. The Soviet government completely destroyed all my illusions about it, and it did so without anyone's help. It seemed to me that my life was devoid of any sense and over. To myself, I was forever disgraced. My telegram to the government and my poem "Tanks to go Prague" were not an act of courage, but of self-rescue. Had I not done this, I would have loathed myself for the rest of my life and would not have been able to live with this.*

**What do you know about the events that led to the USSR sending its troops to Czechoslovakia? What were the consequences of these events? Why do you think the poet is lamenting his dreams about socialism? What role did the events in Czechoslovakia play for the Soviet Union?**

---

---

---

---

---

**Task 4. (0 – 40 points)**

**Write an essay on one of the following topics:**

1. Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power.
2. Crusader kings: similarities and differences.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---