

AP European History

Sample LEQ (Comparison)



PROMPT: Evaluate the extent to which the Italian Renaissance differed from the Northern Renaissance.

PREWRITING (I've drawn on this body of evidence to create all of the samples):

Italian Renaissance	Northern Renaissance
<p>Individualistic and Secular</p> <p>Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> Castiglione, <i>The Courtier</i> Michelangelo's <i>David</i></p>	<p>Social Reform and Christianity</p> <p>Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i> Erasmus, <i>The Praise of Folly</i></p>
<p>Both movements influenced by humanism and classical texts</p> <p>More (Plato's Republic) Machiavelli (Roman Emperors)</p>	

Good prewriting should include points and evidence, setting up the thesis and creating the basis for the body paragraphs.

SAMPLE FULL CREDIT ESSAY:

Petrarch's discovery of Cicero's forgotten writings brought about a renewed interest in the classical writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The invention of the printing press led to widespread circulation of classical texts, which formed the foundation of humanistic education during the Renaissance. Specific approaches to humanism differed in Italy and Northern Europe.

The Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance were different from each other because Italian humanists focused on the individual and on secular concerns, while Northern humanists focused on reforming society based on Christian principles. Both movements were similar because of their shared focus on classical studies.

Italian Renaissance humanists used classical texts to help prepare individuals for public service and political leadership. Civic humanists like Machiavelli and Castiglione used the classics to help prepare people for careers at court. In his classic work, *The Prince*,

CONTEXTUALIZATION: Useful background concerning the origins of Renaissance humanism – includes key details and buzzwords (Petrarch, Cicero, printing press, classical texts, humanism)

THESIS: The Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance are clearly contrasted (individual and secular vs. social and religious).

COMPLEXITY: The second sentence notes a similarity, setting up the essay for the complex understanding point.

BODY PARAGRAPH #1
(Italian Renaissance)

The topic sentence spells out the argument to be made in the paragraph.

Machiavelli gave advice to individuals seeking to be effective rulers. He famously wrote that it is better to be feared than loved, urging rulers to use a strong hand rather than to try to do what the people will like. This is not a very Christian idea, but it is good advice for a ruler who seeks to be strong and not get overthrown. In *The Book of the Courtier*, Castiglione instructed men on how to behave themselves as gentlemen and use good manners while serving in a ruler's court. These Italian Renaissance texts both focused on advancing an individual's political career.

Northern Renaissance humanists were more concerned with using classical texts in order to try to bring reforms to society using Christian principles. In *Utopia*, Sir Thomas More created a society that was based on Christian principles where the inhabitants shared resources instead of hoarding wealth. In *The Praise of Folly*, Erasmus criticized the wealth of the Catholic Church, pointing out that the Apostles were all poor in the Bible. If the leaders of the Church sought to be like the Apostles, they should not live in luxury. Although Erasmus criticized the Church, he was a devout Catholic and sought to improve the Church through his criticism.

Although the Italian Renaissance and Northern Renaissance writers had different goals, they were all humanists who used the classics to try to help humans improve themselves. Thomas More was inspired by Plato's *Republic*, which depicted an ideal state where individuals sacrificed their individuality to help the community. Similarly, Machiavelli looked to Roman emperors for examples of what a strong ruler should be.

The Italian Renaissance writers focused on secular concerns and advancing the individual, while Northern Renaissance writers focused on reforming society based on Christian principles. Both movements were similar because they were based on humanistic studies of ancient Greek and Roman writers.

The works of Machiavelli and Castiglione are both used as evidence to support the claim in the topic sentence.

BODY PARAGRAPH #2
(Northern Renaissance)

The topic sentence spells out the argument to be made in the paragraph.

The works of More and Erasmus are both used as evidence to support the claim in the topic sentence.

BODY PARAGRAPH #3
(Complex Understanding)

The **complex understanding** point is earned here by pointing out a similarity between the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance. This paragraph is only necessary if the student is trying to earn the **complex understanding** point.

RE-STATE THESIS

There is no additional credit given for a conclusion, but it is a good idea to re-state the thesis here (without looking at the original thesis).

SAMPLE 3/6 ESSAY (Thesis, Specific Evidence, Historical Reasoning):

A six point essay may be beyond the reach of many students and this is okay since a student only needs to score three points on the LEQ in order to be on track to passing the exam. The average LEQ scores for AP Euro students in 2018 were between 2.3 and 2.6. On an LEQ with comparison as the targeted historical reasoning skill, average can be exceeded by writing an essay with a clear thesis that makes a valid comparison and backs that comparison with two substantive pieces of evidence.

The Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance were different from each other because Italian humanists were more secular, while Northern humanists focused more on Christianity.

Italian Renaissance humanists used classical texts to help individuals become leaders. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli gave advice to individuals seeking to be effective rulers. He famously wrote that it is better to be feared than loved, urging rulers to use a strong hand rather than to try to do what the people will like. This is not a very Christian idea.

Northern Renaissance humanists were more concerned with using classical texts in order to try to bring reforms to society based on Christianity. In *The Praise of Folly*, Erasmus criticized the wealth of the Catholic Church, pointing out that the Apostles were all poor in the Bible. If the leaders of the Church sought to be like the Apostles, they should not live in luxury. Although Erasmus criticized the Church, he was a devout Catholic and sought to improve the Church through his criticism.

Unlike Erasmus, Machiavelli didn't care so much about the Church as he did about developing the traits of a strong leader of a secular government. This is what makes the Italian and Northern Renaissance different.

The Italian and Northern Renaissance were different because the Italian Renaissance writers focused on secularism, while Northern Renaissance writers focused on reforming society based on Christian principles.

THESIS: The thesis makes a clear, historically defensible comparison between the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance.

BODY PARAGRAPH #1
(Italian Renaissance)

The topic sentence spells a defensible argument, which is backed by a valid and substantive reference to Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

BODY PARAGRAPH #2
(Northern Renaissance)

The topic sentence spells a defensible argument, which is backed by a valid and substantive reference to Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*.

Having presented and developed two pieces of valid evidence, the **specific evidence** point is earned.

HISTORICAL REASONING

Although the implicit comparisons in the previous paragraphs may have already earned this point, an **explicit comparison** could not hurt.

RE-STATE THESIS

There is no additional credit given for a conclusion, but it is a good idea to re-state the thesis here (without looking at the original thesis).

SAMPLE 3/6 ESSAY (Thesis, Specific Evidence, Historical Reasoning):

This is a slightly different take on the three point essay in order to highlight that there is no requirement for evidence to be balanced. While it certainly looks better for a student to earn the evidence point by presenting a piece of evidence for each point, two pieces of evidence can be used to support by the same point, with the other point being made by a general comparison. It is possible that a student might be much more comfortable with the Italian Renaissance than with the Northern Renaissance; if so, their three point essay might look something like this:

The Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance were different from each other because Italian humanists was more secular, while Northern humanists focused more on Christianity.

Italian Renaissance humanists used classical texts to help individuals become leaders. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli gave advice to individuals seeking to be effective rulers. He famously wrote that it is better to be feared than loved, urging rulers to use a strong hand rather than to try to do what the people will like. This is not a very Christian idea. Families like the Medici commissioned works of art in order to show off the greatness of their families and cities that competed against each other for influence. Even statues of biblical figures, like David, had political messages in them.

In comparison to the Italian Renaissance, Northern Renaissance humanists were more concerned with using classical texts in order to try to bring reforms to society using Christian principles.

The Italian Renaissance was different from the Northern Renaissance because Italian Renaissance embraced secularism, while Northern Renaissance writers focused on reforming society based on Christian principles.

THESIS: The thesis makes a clear, historically defensible comparison between the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance.

BODY PARAGRAPH #1
(Italian Renaissance)

The topic sentence spells a defensible argument, which is backed by two pieces of valid evidence, which include a substantive reference to Machiavelli's *The Prince* and a reference to the underlying political purposes of Italian Renaissance art.

Having presented and developed two pieces of valid evidence, the **specific evidence** point is earned.

BODY PARAGRAPH #2
(Historical Reasoning)

The Italian and Northern Renaissance are compared to earn the Historical Reasoning point.

RE-STATE THESIS

There is no additional credit given for a conclusion, but it is a good idea to re-state the thesis here (without looking at the original thesis).

SAMPLE 4/6 ESSAY (Thesis, Specific Evidence, Argument, and Historical Reasoning):

While students writing three or four point essays are typically more likely to emphasize differences rather than similarities, the Historical Reasoning point only requires the student to discuss one or the other. Here is an example of how a student can score four points by emphasizing similarities between the Italian and Northern Renaissance.

The Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance were not really that much different because both the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance were inspired by the study of classical Greece and Rome.

Italian Renaissance humanists used classical texts to help individuals become leaders. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli gave advice to individuals seeking to be effective rulers. He famously wrote that it is better to be feared than loved, urging rulers to use a strong hand rather than to try to do what the people will like. Machiavelli was inspired by the ancient Romans, who he believed had built the greatest civilization in history because of their strength and leadership skills. Italian Renaissance art was also inspired by ancient Greece and Rome. Michelangelo's David, although it was a sculpture of a biblical figure, was modeled after Greek and Roman sculptures that idealized the human form..

Just like with the Italian Renaissance, Northern Renaissance humanists were also inspired by ancient Greece and Rome. In *The Praise of Folly*, Erasmus personified Folly, which was a style that was common in Greek and Roman writing. Greeks and Romans personified ideas like love and inspiration in the forms of cupids and muses. Erasmus used a similar style to give his critique of problems facing his society. In *Utopia*, Thomas More modeled his writing after Plato, who had conceived an ideal state in the *Republic*. More's quest for an ideal society was directly inspired by the classical tradition.

The Italian Renaissance was actually very similar to the Northern Renaissance because both movements were inspired by imitating the classics of ancient Greece and Rome.

THESIS: The thesis makes a clear, historically defensible comparison between the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance.

BODY PARAGRAPH #1
(Italian Renaissance)

The topic sentence spells a defensible argument, which is backed by two pieces of valid evidence, which include a substantive reference to Machiavelli's *The Prince* and a reference to the underlying political purposes of Italian Renaissance art.

Having presented and developed two pieces of valid evidence, the **specific evidence** point is earned. The evidence also **supports an argument**.

BODY PARAGRAPH #2
(Historical Reasoning)

The Italian and Northern Renaissance are compared to earn the Historical Reasoning point.

At this point, **four pieces of evidence** have been presented that **support an argument**. While the argument point is not tied to the volume of evidence, four pieces of evidence is a safe bet for this point (as long as all four pieces clearly support the argument).

RE-STATE THESIS

There is no additional credit given for a conclusion, but it is a good idea to re-state the thesis here (without looking at the original thesis).