

# CLEP® Western Civilization I: Ancient Near East to 1648: At a Glance

## Description of the Examination

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The Western Civilization I: Ancient Near East to 1648 examination covers material that is usually taught in the first semester of a two-semester course in Western Civilization. Questions deal with the civilizations of Ancient Greece, Rome and the Near East; the Middle Ages; the Renaissance and the Reformation; and early modern Europe. Test-takers may be asked to choose the correct definition of a historical term, select the historical figure whose political viewpoint is described, identify the correct relationship between two historical factors or detect the inaccurate pairing of an individual with a historical event. Groups of questions may require test-takers to interpret, evaluate or relate the contents of a passage, a map or a picture to other information, or to analyze and utilize the data contained in a graph or table.

The examination contains approximately 120 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored.

## Knowledge and Skills Required

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Questions on the Western Civilization I examination require candidates to demonstrate one or more of the following abilities:

- Understanding important factual knowledge of developments in Western Civilization
- Identifying the causes and effects of major historical events
- Analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating textual and graphic historical materials
- Distinguishing the relevant from the irrelevant
- Reaching conclusions on the basis of facts

The subject matter of the Western Civilization I examination is drawn from the following topics. The percentages next to the main topics indicate the approximate percentage of exam questions on that topic.

### 8–10% Ancient Near East

Political evolution

Religion, culture and technical developments in and near the Fertile Crescent

### 15–17% Ancient Greece and Hellenistic Civilization

Political evolution to Periclean Athens

Periclean Athens through the Peloponnesian Wars

Culture, religion and thought of Ancient Greece

The Hellenistic political structure

The culture, religion and thought of Hellenistic Greece

### 15–17% Ancient Rome

Political evolution of the Republic and of the Empire (economic and geographical context)

Roman thought and culture

Early Christianity

The Germanic invasions

The late empire

### 23–27% Medieval History

Byzantium and Islam

Early medieval politics and culture through Charlemagne

Feudal and manorial institutions

The medieval Church

Medieval thought and culture

Rise of the towns and changing economic forms

Feudal monarchies

The late medieval church

### 13–17% Renaissance and Reformation

The Renaissance in Italy

The Renaissance outside Italy

The New Monarchies

Protestantism and Catholicism reformed and reorganized

### 10–15% Early Modern Europe, 1560–1648

The opening of the Atlantic

The Commercial Revolution

Dynastic and religious conflicts

Thought and culture

## Study Resources

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Most textbooks used in college-level Western civilization courses cover the topics in the above outline, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphases given to them may differ. To prepare for the Western Civilization I exam, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks, which can be found for sale online or in most college bookstores. You may also find it helpful to supplement your reading with books listed in the bibliographies found in most history textbooks. In addition, contemporary historical novels, plays and films provide rich sources of information. Actual works of art in museums can bring to life not only the reproductions found in books but history itself.

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A recent survey conducted by CLEP® found that the following textbooks are among those used by college faculty who teach the equivalent course. You might find one or more of these online or at your local college bookstore. HINT: Look at the table of contents first to make sure it matches the Knowledge and Skills Required for this exam.

Chambers et al., <i>The Western Experience</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Coffin and Stacey, <i>Western Civilizations</i> , Brief Edition (W. W. Norton)
Goff, <i>A Survey of Western Civilization</i> , Vols. I and II (McGraw-Hill)
Greer and Lewis, <i>A Brief History of the Western World</i> (Wadsworth)
Hunt et al., <i>The Making of the West</i> (Bedford/St. Martin's)
Kidner et al., <i>Making Europe: People, Politics, Culture</i> (Wadsworth)
King, <i>Western Civilization: A Social and Cultural History</i> (Prentice-Hall)
Kishlansky et al., <i>Civilization in the West</i> (Pearson Longman)
McKay et al., <i>A History of Western Society</i> (Wadsworth)
Merriman, <i>A History of Modern Europe</i> (W.W. Norton)
Noble et al., <i>Western Civilization: Beyond Boundaries</i> (Wadsworth)
Sherman and Salisbury, <i>The West in the World</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Spielvogel, <i>Western Civilization</i> (Wadsworth)

Additional details and differing interpretations can be gained by consulting readers and specialized historical studies. Pay attention to visual materials (pictures, maps and charts) as you study.

These resources, compiled by the CLEP test development committee and staff members, may help you study for your exam. However, none of these sources are designed specifically to provide preparation for a CLEP exam. The College Board has no control over their content and cannot vouch for accuracy:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/>  
(Fordham's Internet History Sourcebooks Project)

Visit [www.collegeboard.com/clepprep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clepprep) for additional Western civilization resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

## Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test-takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and info about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.

1. Between the 13th and the 17th centuries, the Hanseatic League functioned as
  - (A) a religious organization that worked to ensure the election of favored popes
  - (B) an alliance of trading cities and merchants that promoted its members' economic dominance over Northern Europe
  - (C) a political power-sharing arrangement whose leadership rotated among its members' heads of state
  - (D) the primary military partnership that organized and led several Crusades in the Middle East
  - (E) a consortium of craftsmen's guilds whose goals foreshadowed the socialist ideals of the 19th century
2. Which of the following philosophical schools was most identified with the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius?
  - (A) Stoicism
  - (B) Agnosticism
  - (C) Platonism
  - (D) Empiricism
  - (E) Epicurianism
3. The Black Death of the 14th century was responsible for
  - (A) strengthening the authority of medieval kings to raise armies and revenues
  - (B) weakening peasants' feudal obligations to remain tied to the land
  - (C) minimizing hostilities against minority groups including Jews and Gypsies
  - (D) the launching of the first European explorations of other continents
  - (E) new medical techniques and tools that ultimately would eradicate the disease

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4. The image above was created in which of the following periods?

- (A) Ptolemaic Egypt
- (B) 2nd century BCE Greece
- (C) 4th century CE Byzantium
- (D) 13th century Western Europe
- (E) 15th century Ottoman Empire

5. The late Roman Empire faced military conflicts with all of the following groups EXCEPT the

- (A) Visigoths
- (B) Vandals
- (C) Greeks
- (D) Franks
- (E) Huns

6. The 1648 Peace of Westphalia was significant because it represented the first time that

- (A) national boundaries based on ethnic settlement patterns and identity were established
- (B) a diplomatic congress was convened representing the interests of most European powers
- (C) European nations entered into formal, binding military alliances with one another
- (D) military agreements were separated from political and economic treaties
- (E) the powers of Europe developed a systematic plan for dividing up their overseas colonies

7. The Protestant Reformation began as a response to

- (A) official policies barring Protestants from holding elective office
- (B) perceived abuses of the Catholic Church including simony and the sale of indulgences
- (C) the excessive interrogations of the Inquisition
- (D) the discovery of large numbers of people in Asia and the Americas who had not been exposed to Christianity
- (E) the efforts of a number of monarchs to establish their own national churches

8. The Hellenistic period in which Greek culture and peoples spread throughout Southern Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia began after

- (A) Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and established rule over its territories
- (B) Roman conquest of Greece led to a mass exodus of Greeks from their homeland
- (C) early Christian missionaries brought Greek ideals and philosophy along with their religious doctrines
- (D) economic prosperity in Southern Europe led to a rise in trade along the Silk Route
- (E) improvement of transportation systems throughout the regions made greater cultural exchange possible

## Credit Recommendations

The American Council on Education has recommended that colleges grant 3 credits for a score of 50, which is equivalent to a course grade of C, on the CLEP Western Civilization I exam. Each college, however, is responsible for setting its own policy. For candidates with satisfactory scores on the Western Civilization I examination, colleges may grant credit toward fulfillment of a distribution requirement, or for a particular course that matches the exam in content. Check with your school to find out the score it requires for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted and the course that can be bypassed with a passing score.

*Answers to Sample Questions:* 1-B; 2-A; 3-B; 4-D; 5-C; 6-B; 7-B; 8-A.

King David playing on the Lyre surrounded by four Musicians — Costumes of the 13th Century (from a Miniature in a Manuscript Psalter in the Imperial Library, Paris).

*Source:* Lacroix, Paul, and Robert Naunton, *Manners, Customs and Dress During the Middle Ages and During the Renaissance Period* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004).