**Answers to Background Essay Questions**

**1. What is the meaning of the word "renaissance"? Describe the time period known as the Renaissance.**

Renaissance means "rebirth." The time in history known as the Renaissance was roughly 1400-1700, when European culture and scientific discovery flourished.

**2. In general terms, how would you describe the Middle Ages?**

The Middle Ages was a time dominated by the Catholic Church with a focus on the sinful nature of man. Land ownership was organized around a system where serfs worked al­ most as slaves for their lords. Serfs were illiterate and learning was in the hands of monks living in monasteries.

**3. Why did education start to increase during the 1300s?**

Improvements in farm methods increased production and allowed some peasants to move to towns and cities where they might become shopkeepers or merchants. With the need to communicate and keep records, a need for education increased.

**4. Why was the printing press so important to the spread of the Renaissance and humanist thinking?**

Before the printing press, books had to be hand-copied. With the press, multiple copies of Renaissance and humanist writing and drawings could be produced quickly and sold more cheaply to a wider audience. It was an information revolution.

**5. Define these terms:**

**Middle-Ages**: period extending from the fall of Rome to the 14th century

**monasteries:** communal living space for priests who have minimal contact with the

outside world

**illiteracy:** being unable to read or write

**serfs:** poor peasants who lived in a near slave-like condition

**humanism:** a Renaissance movement that placed new interest in the study and celebra­tion of human beings, as opposed to church ritual and human sin

**Answers to Document A Analysis Questions: The Madonna and the Mona Lisa**

**1. What two artists created these paintings and which would be considered a Renaissance painter?**

Duccio di Buoninsegna painted Madonna Enthroned Between Two Angels, Leonardo da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa. Leonardo is the Renaissance painter.

**2. How do the paintings compare in terms of their subject matter?**

The Madonna is a religious figure; the Mona Lisa is a worldly figure.

**3. In comparing the women in the two paintings, which image seems more generalized and which seems to reveal the special characteris­ tics of the individual?**

The Madonna is generalized, The Mona Lisa is one of a kind.

**4. Using hints from the text excerpt, describe three ways in which the paintings are different.**

The Madonna and child painting does not portray its subjects in a very realistic way. The face of the Madonna is flat and angular and the baby looks like a little version of a grown-up man. Shading is minimal. It is hard to tell where the light is coming from. The Mona Lisa shows a woman in a very realistic style. Her expression is utterly human and wonderfully mysterious as if she may have a secret. Her hands are very warm and quite different from the long-fingered and unnatural hand of the Madonna. In addition, the background in the Mona Lisa shows a believable landscape. The lighting bathes the entire painting in a warm, convincing light. It reflects what the excerpt says: "stron­ger emotions in the subjects ... well-defined landscapes, natural folds in drapery."

**5. How do changes in the art show that during the Renaissance, man's view of himself and his world was changing?**

The painting of the Madonna is more spiri­tual than natural. The artist seems more interested in creating a scene to illustrate a Bible than in showing a real person. The Madonna shows little or no emotion, and the Christ child looks like a little monk, not a baby. It is almost as if the artist is saying, "It doesn't really matter what they looked like, or what they were thinking. Mary and Jesus aren't so important as individual people as they are spiritual beings. Life on earth isn't that important."

The Mona Lisa, on the other hand, is filled with life and feeling. Leonardo, who was probably the Renaissance's leading figure, pulls the viewer into the painting by presenting Mona Lisa as a deeply human, intriguing, thinking, feeling human being. There is little or nothing about the painting that says "church." Everything about the painting says, "I am Mona Lisa and I am a very interesting, one-of-a-kind person."

##### **Answers to Document B Analysis Questions: Everyman and Shakespeare**

**1. Who is Everyman?**

Each of us, man or woman, boy or girl, is Everyman.

**2. How do Everyman's ideas about good times change as he gets older?**

Everyman, when young, takes sin lightly. In fact, sin is "full sweet." In other words, deca­dence is fun. As he gets older, he (we) has regrets. His soul weeps.

**3. Who is the Heaven-King and what is the "gen-eral reckoning"?**

The Heaven-King is God. The general reck­oning is Judgment Day, when God decides who will get into Heaven.

**4. What does Shakespeare mean when he says, "What a piece of work is a man!"?**

He means that man (and, we presume woman, too) is magnificent, wonderful.

**5. What are some of man's qualities, according to Shakespeare?**

Noble in reason (a clear thinker)

Infinite in faculty (without limits in ability)

Admirable in form (physically attractive)

Apprehension (ability to understand) like a god

The paragon of animals (perfect model of what an animal should be)

**6. How do these two passages show how the Renaissance changed man's view of how he should live life?**

Everyman is full of sin, wasting his life on frivolous pleasures of the flesh. This reflects the Middle Ages notion that life on earth is empty and meaningless; it's the afterlife in heaven that really matters. The passage from Hamlet, by contrast, shows man as somebody wonderful, not somebody simply doing time on earth until his body turns to clay. The human beauty that fades like a flower in Everyman is the very "beauty of the world" in Shakespeare. Whereas in Everyman, humans wait gloomily for God's verdict on the Day of Reckoning, in the Shakespeare passage, man's ability to understand is like a god. The medieval un­derstanding of man seems so dark and pes­simistic, focusing on death and damnation. The Renaissance view is bright, cheerful, and optimistic, focusing on life and possibili­ties.

**Answers to Document C Analysis Questions: Ptolemy and Copernicus**

**1. According to Ptolemy's diagram, how does the universe work? Where is the sun (solis) in his diagram?**

According to Ptolemy, the earth is at the center of the universe and the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars revolve around the earth. The solis is the 4th orbit­ing ring around the earth.

**2. According to Copernicus's diagram, how does the universe work?**

According to Copernicus, the sun is at the center of the universe and the planets, including the earth, revolve around the sun. The moon revolves around the earth.

**3. The ideas of Copernicus were upsetting to The Catholic Church. What might explain this?**

The Bible says that God created the earth and then created the sun, moon, and stars, placing them in the dome of the sky over the earth. There was no question that the earth was at the center of creation. The sun-centered model proposed by Coperni­cus challenged these teachings of the Bible. Because the Catholic Church accepted the Bible as the truth, Copernicus was ques­tioning the authority of the Catholic Church. That could cause the Church to lose some of its power.

**4. Which drawing of the universe has a habitation or home for God, the deity?**

Ptolemy's drawing shows an outer sphere labeled, "Coelum Empireum Habitaculum Dei Et Omnium Electorum". Translation: "The Empire of Heaven and Home of God and the Elect."

**5. How might the ideas of Copernicus have changed the way people thought about the na­ture of man and man's place in the universe?**

Suddenly, the earth and mankind were not at the center of the universe. Man was still interesting, but he wasn't the whole show. Perhaps this meant that man wasn't all that God thought about, that man had to use his reason and his will to get things done. On the one hand, Copernicus took man off center stage and made him part of the natural whole. On the other hand, man was now more independent, and not so tied to the Catholic Church. The world was now seen as more rational. You could see this as one step toward free will, the Protestant Ref­ormation, the scientific revolution, and even democracy.

**Answers to Document D Analysis Questions: Zodiac Man and Vesalius**

**1. Which of the drawings is more realistic? Explain.**

Vesalius's drawing is far more detailed and realistic. It features vivid depictions of muscles and bones. The only real detail in the medieval drawing is in the signs of the zodiac, not the anatomy of the body.

**2. During medieval times, what was widely believed to control the health and well being of different parts of the body? Give an example.**

The constellations in the zodiac. For ex­ ample, the Ram controlled the head.

**3: What do you suppose Vesalius thought of the zodiac theory of anatomy?**

Vesalius would have thought it was a bad idea. It wasn't grounded in evidence.

**4. How did Vesalius get his information about the makeup of the human body?**

He learned about the human body by dissecting corpses to try to understand what body parts actually look like and how they might work.

**5. In summary, how does this document reveal how the Renaissance changed man's view of the world?**

The world was a rational place. It could be understood by thinking people who used close observation to get at the truth. This was a big change from Medieval man who re­lied much more on fantasy, untested ideas, or the Church.