

**Directions:** The following question is based on your evaluation of Documents 1-5. (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.) This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents.

Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the documents.
- Demonstrates an understanding of all of the documents
- Uses all of the documents to prove the thesis
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible. Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Is well organized and coherent
- Utilizes proper grammar

Questions

1. What did the intellectuals of the European Renaissance value?

**Historical Background:** The Renaissance was a cultural movement that spanned the period roughly from the 14th to the 17th century, beginning in Italy in the Late Middle Ages and later spreading to the rest of Europe. As a cultural movement, it encompassed innovative flowering of Latin and vernacular literatures, beginning with the 14th-century resurgence of learning based on classical sources (Greek and Roman), the development of linear perspective and other techniques of rendering a more natural reality in painting, and gradual but widespread educational reform. In politics the Renaissance contributed the development of the conventions of diplomacy, and in science an increased reliance on observation. Historians often argue this intellectual transformation was a bridge between the Middle Ages and the Modern era. Although the Renaissance saw revolutions in many intellectual pursuits, as well as social and political upheaval, it is perhaps best known for its artistic developments and the contributions of such polymaths as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, who inspired the term "Renaissance man".

#### DOCUMENT 1

Here the question arises: whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved. The answer is that it would be desirable to be both but, since that is difficult, it is much safer to be feared than to be loved, if one must choose. For on men in general this observation may be made: they are ungrateful, fickle, and deceitful, eager to avoid dangers and avid for gain and while you are useful to them they are all with you, offering you their blood, their property, their lives, and their sons so long as danger is remote, as we noted above, but when it approaches they turn on you. Any prince, trusting only in their words and having no other preparations made, will fall to his ruin.

Machiavelli, The Prince 1513 (an Italian historian, diplomat, philosopher, humanist and writer based in Florence during the Renaissance.)

#### DOCUMENT 2

Just as it is disgraceful and sinful to be unmindful of God so it is reprehensible and dishonourable for any man of discerning judgement not to honour you as a brilliant and venerable artist whom the very stars use as a target at which to shoot the rival arrows of their favour. You are so accomplished, therefore, that hidden in your hands lives the idea of a new king of creation, whereby the most challenging and subtle problem of all in the art of painting, namely that of outlines, has been mastered by you that in the contours of the human body you express and contain the purpose of art...And it is surely my duty to honour you with this salutation since the world has many kings but only one Michelangelo.

Pietro Aetino. "Letter to Michelangelo" 1537

### DOCUMENT 3

I have always possessed extreme contempt for wealth...I have on the contrary led a happier existence with plain living and ordinary fare...the pleasure of dining with one's friends is so great that nothing has ever given me more delight than their unexpected arrival.

I possess a well-balanced rather than a keen intellect--one prone to all kinds of good and wholesome study, but especially to moral philosophy and the art of poetry. The later I neglected as time went on, and took delight in sacred literature...Among the many subjects that interested me, I dwelt especially on antiquity, for our own age always repelled me, so that, had it not been for the love of those dear to me, I should have preferred to have been born in any other period than our own. In order to forget my own time, I have constantly striven to place myself in spirit in other ages, and consequently I delighted in history...

Francesco Petrarch. "Letter to Posterity" 1372 (an Italian scholar and poet, and one of the earliest humanists. Petrarch is often called the "Father of Humanism")

### DOCUMENT 4

So, man cannot know where his cognizance  
of primal concepts comes from—or his bent  
for those primary objects of desire; 57

these are a part of you, just like the zeal  
of bees for making honey; the primal will  
is neither laudable nor blamable. 60

That other wills conform to this first one,  
you have the innate faculty of reason,  
which should defend the threshold of consent. 63

This is the principle on which is based  
the judgment of your merit—according as  
it winnows out the good love from the bad. 66

Those men who with their reason probed the depths,  
perceived this liberty innate in man,  
thereby bequeathing ethics to the world. 69

Dante Alighieri. The Divine Comedy 1321 (a major Italian poet)

### DOCUMENT 5

The world is waking out of a long deep sleep. The old ignorance is still defended. Time was when learning was only found in the religious orders. The religious orders nowadays care only for money and sensuality [indulgence of the appetites], while learning has passed to secular princes and peers and courtiers. Where in school or monastery will you find so many distinguished and accomplished men as form your English Court? Shame on us all! The tables of priests and divines run with wine and echo with drunken noise and scurrilous jest, while in princes' halls is heard only grave and modest conversation on points of morals or knowledge....That king of yours [Henry VIII of England] may bring back the golden age, though I shall not live to enjoy it, as my tale draws to an end.

Erasmus. *Life and Letters* c. 1300 (a Dutch Renaissance humanist, Catholic priest, social critic, teacher, and theologian.)

