**Review Period 1 LEQ Question 1**

**Question 1.** Many historians maintain that the Renaissance can be viewed as a turning point in European society. Support, modify, or refute this interpretation, providing specific evidence to justify your answer.

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| **Learning Objective** | **Historical Thinking Skill** | **Key Concepts in the**  **Curriculum Framework** |
| **OS-5** Analyze how the development of Renaissance humanism, the printing press, and the scientific method contributed to the emergence of a new theory of knowledge and conception of the universe.  **OS-11** Explain how and why religion increasingly shifted from a matter of public concern to one of private belief over the course of European history.  **SP-1** Explain the emergence of civic humanism and new conceptions of political authority during the Renaissance, as well as subsequent theories and practices that stressed the political importance and rights of the individual. | Periodization  Historical Argumentation  Appropriate use of Relevant Historical Evidence | 1.1.I |

**ANSWER**

**Thesis:** Possible thesis statements supporting, modifying, or refuting the interpretation may include the following:

* The Renaissance was a dramatic turning point in the history of western civilization.
* The Renaissance was not a significant turning point in history.
* The Renaissance had a profound impact upon some aspects of western civilization but maintained continuity in major aspects of life and society.

**Support for argument:** Possible evidence that could be used for an argument supporting the interpretation includes the following:

* The Renaissance produced fundamental changes in all areas of European society and knowledge.
  + The main focus of Renaissance study is often art; in which there was dramatic change in the approach and style.
    - Renewing classical skill in representing the human form, Renaissance art was more lively and realistic than its predecessors of the Middle Ages as illustrated by the works of Michelangelo, Raphael, and others.
    - The application of perspective and other new artistic approaches allowed for greater expression in art.
  + Renewed interest in and study of classical philosophers spurred a better understanding of the world and motivated further scientific investigation.
    - Classical scholars rediscovered Greek and Roman ideas about the universe as well as mathematics and engineering.
      * Works by Archimedes, Eratosthenes and others inspired and challenged Renaissance scholars.
    - During the Renaissance, debates about the merits of various classical philosophers/scientists and their conflicting ideas about the world sparked the Scientific Revolution.
  + The rise of secular humanism shifted the focus of society away from the Church and toward the state and individual.
    - Challenges to Church authority through the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution helped to inspire the Reformation.
  + Renaissance art and architecture enlivened churches and cathedrals, providing inspiration and wonder in the lives of everyday citizens.
    - Architecture of Renaissance greats, such as Brunelleschi still dominate Italian cities.

**Support for argument:** Possible evidence that could be used for an argument refuting the interpretation includes the following:

* The changes of the Renaissance were not a significant turning point because they simply marked a return to the advances and discoveries of ancient Greece and Rome.
  + Renaissance art was, in many ways, just beginning to equal work the ancients had done a thousand years earlier.
  + Renaissance advances in science and philosophy were attempts to understand and reclaim knowledge which the ancients had already possessed.
  + Renaissance art and architecture were reliant upon classical works for inspiration and technical applications.
* Christianity remained the dominant force in the lives of almost all people during and after the Renaissance.
* The great art and advances of the Renaissance benefited the wealthy and ruling elites and had little impact upon the lives and knowledge of the average European.
  + Most people remained ignorant of ideas put forth by ancient or Renaissance philosophers and scientists; continuing to attribute natural phenomena to supernatural or superstitious origins.

**Application of Historical Thinking Skills**

Students earn points by using the evidence offered in support of their argument to identify and illustrate continuity and change over time. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

* The medieval Age of Faith was shattered by the Renaissance which began a steady progress toward the modern world.
* The Renaissance returned continuity between the ancient world and Europe which had been lost for centuries.

**Synthesis**

Students can earn the point for synthesis by crafting a persuasive and coherent essay. This can be accomplished by providing a conclusion that extends or modifies the analysis in the essay or by connecting to another historical period or context. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following:

* The Renaissance signified a shift in the functioning of European society and understanding, much as the collapse of the Roman Empire had done.
* The Renaissance parallels the Industrial Revolution in regard to the changes in all aspects of society that would be instigated in each instance.