

Answers:

1. Explain the term Historiography and how it is important to the study of history.

According to the WordNet Search engine at Princeton University, historiography is defined as “a body of historical literature” or “the writing of history.”¹ According to the Concordia University of Wisconsin, historiography is “the written record of what is known of human lives and societies in the past and how historians have attempted to understand them.”² In combining these two definitions, the term ‘historiography’ ultimately means the writing of history and how historians come to understand written records.

This is obviously very important to the study of history because written records make it possible for history to be studied, and interpretations of historical documentation by historians provide the opinion of an expert in the field on a given topic. History is arguably the hardest subject to define precisely because many other disciplines influence and contribute to it. Historians dedicate their careers to collecting historical evidence through primary and secondary resources. It is important that these views are studied to increase our knowledge of human nature and to help us answer important questions about human life.³

Piecing together parts of history for the purpose of study is not easy: evidence is often biased, incomplete or inaccurate. This makes it difficult for researchers and historians to come to factual conclusions based on information from intermediary sources. There is also much room for interpretation in the study of history, thus it becomes important for historians to present coherent and specific records to prevent misunderstanding.⁴

Historians often disagree over why events happen and the ways in which history happens, according to various schools of thought. These are important facts to determine because they lead to a better understanding of the world’s current affairs and how to respond to them. Historical writers must be critical in their work to avoid errors while deciphering historical facts. They strive to also discover new facts in their research.⁵

It is beneficial to anyone studying history to also study historiography and the works of several historical experts. An overwhelming amount of information is available on any given historical topic, therefore it is imperative that the most reliable and informative sources are used to develop an understanding of the broad subject of history. It is also important to be aware of the way in which history is recorded, in order to avoid being misled by bias and incomplete facts.

The study of history and historiography will lead to a greater understanding of humanity, and the mistakes and misjudgments of mankind. It has often been said that history will repeat itself. In many cases, the hope is that this will not be true, because many horrible events have taken place in the past. Without history and historiography, we would be blindly venturing into the future without considering past mistakes or

¹ "WordNet Search." Princeton University.
<<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=historiography>>.

² "Historiography." Concordia University (2008) 15 Jun 2008
<<http://www.cuw.edu/Academics/programs/history/historiography.html>>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

successes, having not studied how and why events occur. Mistakes in history can be very valuable. If we can learn from past mistakes it is less likely that we will make the same ones over again. This can only be done through the preservation and review of historical records written by historians devoted to providing the public with reliable and factual information.

2. By using the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 as a starting point, describe the British colonial experience in Africa.

The Scramble for Africa officially began at the Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884-1885, marking the beginning of the spread of British imperialism.⁶ European powers had been continuously striving to expand their territory in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Having taken control of Asia, the colonial powers, Britain among them, turned to Africa. Their goal was to not only increase their colonial reach, but also to develop new trade relations, explore 'uncivilized' areas and add to their wealth. The Scramble for Africa is rightly named as a race between European powers to colonize as much land as possible in a short amount of time.

The process began with an invasion of African territory. Britain came to control Egypt, Sudan and Nigeria, and a large part of southern Africa, including Zanzibar, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Sierra Leone.⁷ The indigenous inhabitants of these areas were overwhelmed by the new imperial rule. What seemed like an opportunity to build positive foreign relations backfired horribly for the original populace of the Africa region.

It is true that many ideas, beliefs, customs and other aspects of European culture were exchanged between the Africans and British. However, more was taken away from Africa than was received, with the notable exception of various diseases. The people of Africa were stripped of many of their rights and forced to work for British soldiers. Many were abused and mistreated, and more still had the British culture forced upon them. Many battles occurred between African and British armies, but most were one-sided: Britain had access to modern weaponry and technology which left the Africans at a disadvantage.

Cecil Rhodes is a figure linked directly to British imperialism. He was a British colonial statesman, a leader of the diamond mining in Britain's Cape Colony and strongly believed in 'civilizing' the Africans as a part of British colonialism. He is responsible for British rule over what was once known as Rhodesia.⁸

European colonies continuously competed for territory during the Scramble. The overall result was a complete transformation of Africa, largely for the worse. The region was divided up into several divisions and ruled by different European powers. The continent was exploited for the betterment of Europe. This is not to say that Africa did not benefit from British or European colonialism. New tools, food, inventions and

⁶ Scramble for Africa," Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2008
<<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761595444>>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

technology were brought to Africa during this time. Sadly though, the main impact on Africa was a negative one.

British colonial rule continued until the mid-twentieth century, when African countries were successful in regaining independence.⁹ Africa's people only began to recover from their hardships after all European colonies had surrendered control of the country's affairs. It can be argued that the Scramble for Africa helped to integrate non-Western civilizations into the world economy through increased trade with other nations. Colonial governments also improved the infrastructure of their colonies, albeit by taxing the African people. Schools, hospitals, and elements of Western culture began to appear within Africa.¹⁰

The colonization of Africa is arguably a significant part of globalization. Regardless, Africa's leaders were limited in their success in stabilizing their countries after independence. The process thus far has been long and difficult, and it can be argued that it is still continuing today. The colonial legacy left a stain on Africa: war and genocide occur far more frequently than they should, and the AIDS epidemic is slowly taking over all of Africa. The path that has led Africa to its current state is clear; responsibility for these issues has yet to be established. The amount of aid owed to Africa by Europe has yet to be determined, and the region is running out of time.

3. Please create a short answer question and answer it based on what you believe is the most significant event in modern western history. You will be evaluated on your question, choice of topic and your answer.

Question: Explain the significance of the European Age of Exploration, which began in the early 1400s, in relation to the process of globalization.

The European Age of Exploration began in the 1400s for three main reasons. Portugal was in need of natural resources, Europeans wanted to find an alternate route to Asia to increase trade with other countries and Europe wanted to spread Christianity.¹¹ The Age of Exploration was a collection of voyages by European explorers sponsored by private investors or governments. This exploration movement led to the discovery of North and South America, as well as new trade routes.

Portugal was one of the poorer countries in Europe, and it therefore had reason to want to discover new territory. Portuguese explorers were especially interested in finding land that would be suitable for farming, as much of their existing land could not be used to cultivate enough crops to feed the people of Portugal.¹² Their first conquest was the Muslim port of Ceuta on the African side of the Straits of Gibraltar in 1414. They soon

⁹ "Scramble for Africa," Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2008
<<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761595444>>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ McKinney, Brennan. "The Age of European Exploration: 1400 - 1800." Associated Content 19 Feb. 2008
16 Jun 2008

<http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/601735/the_age_of_european_exploration_1400.html?cat=37>.

¹² Ibid.

also discovered the Canary and Azores islands, which brought a wealth of new resources to Portugal. This was the beginning of the European Age of Exploration.¹³

European trade had become very expensive after the collapse of a series of trading routes that spanned from Italy to Asia, known as the Silk Roads. This forced Europeans to trade with Asia through Turkey, and prompted Christopher Columbus to find an alternative path to trade with China at a lower cost. However, he mistakenly discovered other areas in the Caribbean and West Indies, which led to further exploration by others in the years to come.¹⁴

Europeans also thought it was their duty to spread Christianity to other areas of the world. They therefore imposed the religion on the indigenous people of the lands they discovered, using any means they deemed necessary. In some cases, this meant the use of violence to convert native inhabitants of a region to the Christian faith.¹⁵

This 'event' relates directly to globalization in that this is arguably where the process of globalization began. There has been much debate over the time at which the process started, therefore it is reasonable to say that this initial crossing of borders was the first step in modern history towards a borderless world. Europe, being the dominant world power at the time, was one of the few areas in the world that had the means to travel great distances. They also had various motives for wanting to explore the other areas of the world. The discovery of new land encouraged others to voyage into unknown territory, thus beginning an on-going desire to travel.

This was also a prominent advance for trade and foreign relations, as it opened new markets. It can also be argued that the Age of Exploration encouraged 'civilization' in areas that had not developed to the same extent that Europe had. Today, these areas are known as Less Developed Countries or the developing world. There is no way of knowing for sure, but it is likely that these regions would be at a lesser stage of development if they had not been 'discovered' by Europe when they were.

The European Age of Exploration was significant to global development and to modern western history. Portugal's capture of Ceuta started this movement in 1414, and the process that resulted is still continuing today. The world is undoubtedly deconstructing its barriers at an ever-accelerating rate, and will continue to do so until the world is truly borderless.

¹³ McKinney, Brennan. "The Age of European Exploration: 1400 - 1800." Associated Content 19 Feb. 2008 16 Jun 2008

<http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/601735/the_age_of_european_exploration_1400.html?cat=37>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.