



Western Civilization from Prehistory to 1650

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ACTIVITIES 1.1-1.3 ORIENTATION DISCUSSION TOPICS

During the first week of class, you are required to complete the following three activities and post your responses in the appropriate area of the discussion board under **Week One – Orientation Discussions**. You can earn up to 30 points for these activities. The evaluation criteria are the same as for regular discussions. In each category, you must post your own response and reply to at least one other person's response.

These Orientation Discussions are in addition to our regular weekly discussion for which you can earn 20 additional points. During Week One, the regular discussion topics (there are only two) may be found in: **Week One – Introduction to Historical Research**. Everyone needs to post responses to these topics to earn regular weekly discussion points.

In short, you can earn up to 50 points for discussions during Week One: 30 points are possible for **Week One – Orientation Discussions** and 20 points are possible for **Week One – Introduction to Historical Research**.

These are the three **Orientation Discussion Topics**:

1. How Would You Do? (10 pts)

The results of a telephone survey, conducted a few years ago, revealed that 65 percent of the college seniors surveyed failed to pass a high-school level American history test.

Details of the survey may be found at the Education World web site

(http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/issues100.shtml)

along with the questions (http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/TM/WS_college_history_survey.shtml) and

the answers (http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/TM/WS_college_history_survey_answers.shtml).

Please read the article, take all or part of the test (don't spend too much time on this), check your answers, and post your thoughts on why so many students failed. Give as many reasons as you can and be as frank as you like as long as you are courteous.

2. Personal Course Objectives (10 pts)

The syllabus contains my course objectives. Now you have an opportunity to develop your own course objectives. Please think about what you would like to get out of this class (besides a few credit hours and a satisfactory grade) and answer the following questions:

(1) What subjects are you most interested in learning about in this class? (Please use your textbook or other source as a reference and be specific and detailed).

(2) What skills are you most interested in developing in this class?

3. Textbook Evaluation (10 pts)

This exercise will orient you to the textbook and help you to evaluate it. The text is: Mortimer Chambers, et al, *The Western Experience*, Volume I, 8th Edition. Please answer the following questions:

(1) Look up a subject about which you have considerable knowledge. Evaluate how the textbook treats the subject. (Does it treat the subject in the way you expected? Does it leave anything out that you think is important? Do you like the authors' style of writing, organizational scheme, use of language? What does the book add, if anything, to your knowledge of the subject?)

(2) Look up a subject that especially interests you but about which you have little or no knowledge. Evaluate how the textbook treats the subject. (Does it give sufficient background information for a beginner to put the subject in a larger context? Is the book's treatment of the subject interesting or dull? Understandable or not? Enlightening or uninformative? What main points did you learn about the subject: Was it easy or hard to get this information from the book?)