

1.1 Contextualizing Renaissance and Discovery

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write the **context** 语境 for the Renaissance and the age of discovery.

You must be able to:

- state what a context paragraph must do that a narrative does not
- name the conditions that made exploration possible
- explain how commercial wealth supported new learning
- avoid listing events instead of naming conditions

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ What a context does

A context names the **conditions in place before** the developments, and says what each made possible. It is not a summary of what happened next.

■ Conditions for exploration

Navigational and shipbuilding improvements, competition between rival states, and commercial demand for direct routes to Asian goods. Each is a condition; none is an event.

■ Wealth and learning

Italian commercial cities accumulated wealth that patrons spent on artists and scholars. The recovery of classical texts required money and stable urban institutions as much as curiosity.

2 Practice

2.1 State what a context paragraph must do.

[2]

2.2 Name two conditions that made long-distance exploration possible. [2]

2.3 A student writes: "In 1492 Columbus sailed west, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama reached India."

(a) State why this is not context. [1]

(b) Rewrite one sentence as context. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Which is a condition rather than an event? [1]

- **A** Columbus reached the Caribbean.
- **B** Improvements in ship design allowed longer voyages.
- **C** Vasco da Gama rounded Africa.
- **D** A treaty divided new territories.

3.2 Commercial wealth mattered to the Renaissance mainly because it [1]

- **A** replaced classical learning
- **B** funded patrons who supported artists and scholars
- **C** prevented exploration
- **D** ended urban government

3.3 A context paragraph names three conditions and stops.

(a) State what is still missing. [1]

(b) Explain why. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **1.1 Contextualizing Renaissance and Discovery** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Renaissance and Exploration** section of the AP European History hand-out on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 it names the conditions in place beforehand and says what each made possible.

2.2 any two of: navigational and shipbuilding improvements; competition between rival states; commercial demand for direct routes to Asian goods.

2.3 (a) it lists events rather than naming the conditions that made them possible. (b) a rewritten sentence naming a condition and what it enabled.

3.1 B. it names a capacity, not an occurrence.

3.2 B. patronage converted commercial wealth into art and scholarship.

3.3 (a) what each condition made possible. (b) a condition explains nothing until its consequence is stated, which is the whole purpose of contextualising.