

# World History One DBQ: Causes of the Reformation



Hoblien the Younger's Sale of Indulgences 1529

The Following task is based on the accompanying documents 1-5. Some documents have been edited for this exercise. The task is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the sources of the documents and the purpose of the document and the author's point of view.

## **Directions:**

1. Read the Historical Context & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
2. Read the Documents & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
3. Create a Thesis to answer the question presented in the "Task"
4. Write an Essay to answer the question (**The essay requires an outline, Introduction paragraph, 3 supporting body paragraphs and a Conclusion**)

-or-

Create a project which will present an answer to the question – (**The Project must still integrate a thesis & three items supporting the thesis & a Conclusion**)

## **Task: Analyze the multiple causes of the Reformation.**

### **Historical Context: The Reformation**

The reformation of the church in the sixteenth century was rooted in demands for spiritual renewal and institutional change. These pressures began as early as the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and came from many sources.

The pope and traditional Catholic theology were challenged by English theologian John Wycliffe and Czech theologian John Huss. Both attacked the Church's involvement in politics and urged a return to the simple practices of the early apostolic church. Both claimed that the Bible-not the church- was the highest authority for Christians. Both emphasized the study of the Holy Scriptures by the people on their own and sermons in the common language of the people.

Several secular factors contributed to this heightening of spiritual feeling. The many wars, famines, and plagues of the late 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries had traumatized Europe. The increasing educational level of the urban middle class and skilled laborers and the invention of the printing press allowed the rapid and relatively inexpensive spread of new ideas.

Finally, there was the influence of the humanist movement. Many humanists promoted religious education. They stimulated public interest in biblical study by publishing new editions of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the church fathers, along with new devotional literature.

In Germany, economic and political concerns joined with the demand for reform of church and religious life. The middle class resented the flow of tax money from Germany to Rome. By supporting Martin Luther's break with the church, nobles saw a way of seizing church property in their territories and of resisting the centralizing efforts of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who sided with the papacy.

The Reformation accentuated the importance of the individual person, a main idea of the time. It stressed individual thinking rather than the Church's authority. It called attention to the individual's own religious capacities- without help from the church.

Many more people were angered with the Catholic Church's method of financing the rebuilding of St Peter's church in Rome. In 1515 the Church (and the pope) offered indulgences to those who gave alms for this pious work. An indulgence was forgiveness for a person who confessed a sin, and showed remorse.

Indulgences were granted by papal decrees for those who agreed to perform some act of charity, almsgiving, prayer, pilgrimage, or other pious work. Some of the preachers selling these indulgences tricked people into believing that a "purchase" of this indulgence would give them, or even the dead, a secure place in heaven.

## Document 1: A Sermon made by Johann Tetzel 1515

Listen now, God and Peter call you. You priest, you noble, you merchant, you virgin, you matron, you youth, you old man, consider the salvation of your souls and those of your loved ones departed. Have you considered that you do not know whether you can reach heaven? Consider that those who are apologetic and have confessed and made contribution will receive complete forgiveness of all their sins. Listen to the voices of your dear dead relatives and friends beseeching you and saying, "We are in horrible torture from which you can save us for a small cost." Are you so cruel and hard that now you are not willing for so little to set us free? Will you let us lie here in the flames?"

Remember that you are able to release them, for *as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs*. Will you not then for a quarter of a florin receive these letters of indulgence through which you are able to lead a divine and mortal soul into the fatherland of paradise?

## Document #2 A Hoblien the Younger's Sale of Indulgences 1529



Document #3 A scene from the play *In Praise of Folly*, Erasmus. 1509

Characters: Pope Julius II and the Spirit of Saint Peter. Location: Gates of Heaven

JULIUS: What the devil is this? The gates not opened! Something is wrong with the lock.

Saint Peter: You have brought the wrong key perhaps. The key of your money-box will not open the door here.

JULIUS: I never had any but this, and I don't see the use of another.

Saint Peter: It's good these gates are strong or this fellow would have broken in. He must be some giant or conqueror. Who are you, what do you want?

JULIUS: Open the gates, I say. Why is there no one to receive me?

JULIUS: Will you make an end of your talking and open the gates? We will break them down or I will fling a thunderbolt at you. I will excommunicate you. I have done as much to kings before this. Here are the Bulls ready.

PETER: Thunderbolts! Bulls! I beseech you, we had no thunderbolts or Bulls from Christ.

Document #4 Carving of the church selling Indulgences: The caption said “So much money is going into the coffer of the vendor that new coins must be minted on the spot”



<http://mlynde.wikispaces.com/file/view/Reformation+DBQ.pdf>

Document #5 Ulrich von Hutten, German nobleman

We see that there is no gold and almost no silver in our German land. What little may perhaps be left is drawn away daily by the new schemes of the Church. What is squeezed out of us is put to the most shameful uses. Dear Germans, I have seen for myself how Rome wastes our money, and it is shameful.

Now, if all these who devastate Germany, and continue to devour everything, might once be driven out, and an end made of their unbridled plundering, swindling and deception with which the Romans have overwhelmed us, we should again have gold and silver in sufficient quantities, and should be able to keep it.