

Mastering the Essay

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AP European History Modified DBQ #1

1. FRENCH WARS OF RELIGION

Exercise Question: Analyze the extent to which politics were at the heart of the French Wars of Religion, 1562–1598.

Document A

SOURCE: Salviati, Papal Nuncio, dispatch to the Cardinal Secretary of State, September 22, 1572

As to all the statements that will be made respecting the firing upon the admiral and his death, different from that which I have written to you, you will in time find out how true they are. Madame the regent, having come to be at variance with him (the admiral) and having decided upon this step a few days before, caused him to be fired upon. This was without the knowledge of the king, but with the participation of the Duke of Anjou, the Duchess of Nemours, and her son, the Duke of Guise. If the admiral had died at once, no others would have been slain. But, inasmuch as he survived, and they apprehended that some great calamity might happen should he draw closer to the king, they resolved to throw aside shame, and to have him killed together with the rest. And this was put into execution that very night.

Document B

SOURCE: Henry of Valois, Duke of Anjou, in conversation with his physician, 1574

Both of us were easily persuaded, and became, as it were, certain that it was the admiral who had impressed some evil and sinister opinion of us upon the king. We resolved from that moment to rid ourselves of him.... As soon as we had entered the room in which the king my brother was, my mother began to represent to him that the party of the Huguenots was arming against him on account of the wounding of the admiral....

All France would be seen armed by two great parties, over which he would have no command, and from which he could exact just as little obedience. But, to ward off so great a danger, the admiral, the head and author of all the civil wars, alone need be put to death. The designs and enterprises of the Huguenots would perish with him; and the Catholics, satisfied with the sacrifice of two or three men, would remain obedient to him (the king).

Document C

SOURCE: Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Holy Roman Emperor's ambassador to France, letter, 1575

Ever since the commencement of the civil wars which are distracting the country, there has been a terrible change for the worse. So complete is the alteration, that those who knew France before would not recognise her again. Everywhere are to be seen shattered buildings, fallen churches, and towns in ruins; while the traveller gazes horror-stricken on spots which have but lately been the scenes of murderous deeds and inhuman cruelties. ... Besides the two parties into which Frenchmen are divided by their religious differences, there are also feuds and quarrels which affect every grade of society. ... The feuds which separate the leading families of France are more bitter than those described in ancient tragedy; this is the state of feeling which exists between the Houses of Guise, Vendôme and Bourbon, not to mention that of Montmorency, which, through its alliances and connections, has a considerable party of its own.

Document D

SOURCE: The Edict of Nantes, 1598

The realm was so torn by innumerable factions and sects that the most legitimate of all the parties was fewest in numbers. God has given us strength to stand out against this storm; ...

We have, by this perpetual and irrevocable edict, established and proclaimed and do establish and proclaim:

First, that the recollection of everything done by one party or the other between March, 1585, and our accession to the crown, and during all the preceding period of troubles, remain obliterated and forgotten, as if no such things had ever happened.

We ordain that the Catholic Apostolic and Roman religion shall be restored and reestablished in all places and localities of this our kingdom . . . in order that it may be peaceably and freely exercised, ...

And in order to leave no occasion for troubles or differences between our subjects, we have permitted, and herewith permit, those of the said religion called Reformed [Huguenots] to live and abide in all cities and places of this our kingdom . . . without being annoyed, molested, or compelled to do anything in the matter of religion contrary to their consciences....

Document E

SOURCE: St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre by François Dubois, born 1529 in Picardy, date of painting unknown

