

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTION ANSWER

QUESTION: The fifteenth and sixteenth century voyages of exploration produced lasting changes in the political and social structure of Western Europe. Would you say that these voyages tended to hasten or to delay the growth of national states? Explain.

The student jotted down thoughts that occurred while reading the prompt. Then, the thoughts were numbered to show order of use as well as related ideas. (A memorized prepared outline can also be jotted down in the margin or on the blue book cover.)

- 2--competition between countries led to nationalism
- 3--no need for other countries for trade (Italy)
- 2b--minerals (coffee, spice, etc.)
- 2a--wanted money and land
- 1--war
- 2c--Cortez and Aztecs

A GOOD ANSWER

Often starts with a direct answer to the question → The exploration of the 15th and 16th centuries hastened the growth of national states. The reasons have to do with war, wealth, trade, and nationalism.

Pre-outlines the topics in order →

Starts with one of the reasons → One of the prime ingredients for the beginning of national states was a common danger from outside. Because countries went to war over the right to control certain colonies and trade routes, each country had to unite within in order to fight off any aggressor.

Transition → Other forms of competition between countries contributed to the growth of national states. Competition for land and wealth was fierce. The resources of the new lands, such as coffee, spices, minerals, were considered valuable. Each country was eager to gain land because the products of the land could be turned into more wealth, [as when Cortez conquered the Aztecs and exploited their gold and silver.] A united country could best succeed in this form of competition.

Specifics given →

Phrase added here to show relevance of the point to the question →

Identifying a major institution of the time which was a key factor in development of national states → These resources, brought about by new discoveries, increased the power of mercantilism. Mercantilism is a system in which the mother country takes from its colonies raw materials and sells them back in the form of finished products. This allows the mother country to keep economic control over the colonies. With the opening of new trade routes, the Northern and Western European states were able to break the Venetian-Arab trade monopoly with the Indies. The colonization led to a system involving a state-controlled market between the colony and the mother country. This permitted the nations of Europe to become economically separate units with no common market existing between them—a condition which fostered nationalism. It is interesting to note that Italy, which did little exploration, took longer to become a united nation than did the other countries of Europe.

Adds an afterthought to make sure the relation of the point to the question is clear →

Amplifies with an example Italy →

Transition → Another feature in producing national states was the national pride these voyages tended to produce. [The voyages were financed by a national government. Any new discovery was seen as reflecting the prestige of the sponsoring government and its people, and this added pride contributed to the spirit of nationalism.]

A new point which came to mind during the writing of this answer →

A POOR ANSWER

(Teacher's comments)

Interesting, but what relevance does this have to the question?

But how does all this strengthen nationalism?

Very irrelevant

No reasons given. Only a conclusion is being stated.

Competition, wealth, trade, and pride are all suggested, but their relation to the development of nationalism is hard to see.

Please work on writing clarity. Grammatical errors obscure meaning. See SLAC or Writing Center.

The voyages of exploration is a rather ambiguous term because actually there was no sudden burst of interest in exploring the world around them—they just were looking for easier trade routes to the Orient. This so-called age of exploration if it was indeed exploring was quite by accident.

When the first countries colonized the "New World" every other country now wanted to get in on it. However, to make voyages in the first place, knowledge was needed in shipbuilding and navigation. Henry the Navigator bettered the conditions of European states by contributing to navigation, maps, etc. He also began a school for navigation. Great effort was now put forth to build more and more ships and for each country to go and colonize for itself. An example of this would be when Spain started some colonies in the "New World," France, England, Holland, etc., started sending explorers and colonizers out.

So, the voyages of exploration didn't delay the growth of the national states. The voyages were all a part of the national states. The explorers who reached other lands claimed their find for their countries. These many voyages induced the growth of national states.

I think these voyages of exploration bound a nation together. The reason for this is that anything a group of people do together, and this was done by a whole country not just its leaders, tend to unite them. Many times newly discovered lands brought great wealth to the mother country and new places for people to settle and raise families. Then when trading was carried out with the newly found places, this again helped to unite the nation. People were also united in a common cause, this being to beat other countries to these places, for trade and colonization. The lands that were claimed, and the prestige and trade that followed these voyages, affected all the people of the country and make it stronger and richer.