AP World History
You will need your composition book out for the start of class. Extra credit is due at the beginning of class in the basket.
The Influence of Religion

On page 10 of your Comp book, write the title above and then answer the following two critical thinking questions in complete sentences. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Suppose that an omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful) God exists, and that you have been granted a chance to ask this God 5 questions. What 5 questions would you ask?

2. What do you think is the greatest APPEAL of religion/religions?
The Influence of Religion

Think about the things you believe in and the things you don’t. It’s very possible that the person sitting right next to you has entirely different beliefs than you do. There are many religions and many schools of thought that divide them.

21st-century religious scholars ask questions such as: How is religion a factor in war? How is religion a factor in politics? In what ways do our different religious views affect our views of science and technology (for example, cloning)? How do our religious views influence our ideas of appropriate sexuality or our understandings of proper gender roles in the home and in society? In what ways has religion affected our cultural development, and in what ways should religious standards put restraints on cultural expression?
The Influence of Religion

Continue your reflections in your COMP book (page 10) by answering the following two critical thinking questions. Again, there are no right or wrong answers.

3. How do your religious beliefs influence your views on issues in politics, society, and culture?

4. Why is it important to study religions of the world when studying history?
Reasons for the Development of Belief Systems

1. Protection and support, or security in an uncertain world.
2. Desire for a deeper sense of the significance of life.
3. Hope for existence after death.
4. Answers to eternal questions about existence
   - Where do we come from?
   - Why are we here?
   - What happens to us when we die?
   - What is our relationship to the physical world?
Five Common Traits of Belief Systems

- Sacred calendar/rituals
- Sacred spaces
- Sacred teachings/texts
- Sacred symbols
- Religious organization/hierarchy
Setting the Stage: Religious and Cultural Developments

600 BCE - 600 CE

- Known as the Classical Era
- Greatly influenced later generations as well as today
- Many religions that developed during this era had long-term effects worldwide
- Various cultural foundations also grew from this era
  - Greek theatre and democracy
  - Confucianism
  - Religious art and literature
  - Mediterranean architecture
Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity

Work with your partner to compare reading notes and add to your charts. Also, read the handouts provided and add any additional information that helps complete your chart.

Classical Religions and Philosophies Comparison Charts

Explain how religions, belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies originated, developed, and spread as a result of expanding communication and exchange networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judaism</th>
<th>Zoroastrianism</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founders (46-48, 176-177, 279-281)</td>
<td>(173-177)</td>
<td>(280-282, 296-298)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Picture

- Most of these belief systems have impacted world history from their inception through the present era. At this point, we are looking at their impact during the ancient and classical eras. We will learn more about their impact on later world events as we move through the year.

- Most of the major religions have had schisms (divisions), resulting in a variety of subgroups or sects. For the most part, AP test writers focus on the overall religion rather than particular sects (exceptions include the Protestant Reformation, the Sunni/Shia split in Islam, and the rise of fundamentalism in Islam).

- In addition to understanding core beliefs of each religion, it’s important to focus on the impact they had on social, political, cultural, and even military developments.

- Pay attention to where each belief system started as well as where and how it spread. This will help you understand conflicts and interactions with religions and cultures.
Polytheism

- Believe in multiple gods who impact life on earth to varying degrees, sometimes for good, and sometimes not.
- The vast majority of ancient civilizations were polytheistic.
  - Through 600 CE, the religions of all the Mesopotamian and Mediterranean empires (including the Greeks and Romans - prior to the rise of Christianity), except for the Hebrews and the Christians.
  - In the east, Aryan religions, Hinduism, and traditional Chinese systems were polytheistic as were some Buddhist and Daoist sects.
  - In ancient Egypt, the gods were often considered benevolent and kind, while in ancient Sumer, the gods were feared and therefore had to be appeased on a regular basis.
Polytheism

- **Broader Impact:**
  - It was at the center of art and architecture in most civilizations. Most of the grand works of these civilizations were dedicated to the gods, or made to appease them.
  - Because the practice of polytheism was very complicated and filled with rituals, it led to the rise of a priestly class, whose members controlled most of the communication between the people and their gods. Rigid social structures with priests at the top quickly developed.
  - Many civilizations had separate gods for each city-state, as well as collective gods for the civilization as a whole. As a result, the rise and fall of various city-states was thought to play out on earth, as well as in the heavens.
Judaism

- Practiced by the Hebrews; founded about 2000 BCE
- Holds that God (Yahweh) selected a group of people, the Hebrews, and made himself known to them. If they followed his laws, worshipped him, and were faithful, he would preserve them for all time. This group became the Jews, and Judaism became the first of the monotheistic religions.
- At the center of Judaism is the awareness of a unique relationship with God. Jews believe they were created by God and live in a world created by a personal, sovereign God who created the world for humans to live in and enjoy and exercise free will. The destiny of the world is paradise, reached by human beings with divine help.
- The task of human beings is to honor and serve God by following the Laws of Moses, as contained in the Torah (the Jewish Bible, made up of the first five books of the Old Testament), to promote the ethics of the prophets, and maintain the identity of the people. Judaism, therefore, is both a religious practice and a societal custom.
Judaism

- It is not centered on many of the concepts typically associated with a religion, although a belief in an afterlife, a set of traditions and doctrines, philosophy, and personal salvation are part of its makeup.

- Judaism did not become a Proselytizing religion (seeking converts)

- Broader Impact
  - Judaism was the first of the major monotheistic faiths; as such, it spawned the other two major monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam.
Christianity

- Originally a splinter group of Jews practiced the religion, but it quickly expanded into the non-Jewish community and throughout the Roman Empire.

- It came into existence with Jesus of Nazareth, a charismatic Jewish teacher who claimed to be the Son of God, the Messiah, for whom Jews had long awaited. Many people were attracted to his teaching of devotion to God and love for human beings. The Roman and Jewish leaders were not among them, and so in 30 CE, Jesus was crucified. His followers believe that he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and Christianity was born.

- Christianity is based on both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that forgiveness of sins, and ultimately everlasting life, is achievable only through belief in the divinity, death, and resurrection of Christ.
Christianity

- The Christian view is that the world was made by a personal and sovereign God (like Judaism), but that the world has fallen from harmony with God’s will. As the Son of God, Christ was the link between God and human beings.
- Human beings are expected to seek to know God, to worship him, and to practice love and service to him and to other human beings.
- Many early Christians (and many Christian sects today) believed that it was their duty to share this message with the unconverted.
Christianity

- **Broader Impact**
  - Christianity was spread by the disciples of Jesus and by Paul of Tarsus. Paul originally was an extreme anti-Christian who was converted by a vision of Christ and became a principle figure in propagating the new religion.
  - With its emphasis on compassion, grace through faith, and the promise of eternal life regardless of personal circumstance, Christianity appealed widely to the lower classes and women.
  - By the 3rd century CE, Christianity had become the most influential religion in the Mediterranean basin. Following a period of persecution, it became legal within, and then the official religion of, the Roman Empire; it continued to branch northward and westward into regions beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire.
  - In coming centuries, this marriage of Christianity and empire would profoundly affect developments in a large segment of the world.