

# Peasants' revolts in the german states



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying Documents 1-12. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

Write your answer on the lined pages of the Section II free-response booklet.

This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents. Write an essay that:

- Provides an appropriate, explicitly stated thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question and does NOT simply restate the question.

- Discusses a majority of the documents individually and specifically.
- Demonstrates understanding of the basic meaning of a majority of the documents.
- Supports the thesis with appropriate interpretations of a majority of the documents.
- Analyzes the documents by explicitly grouping them in at least three appropriate ways.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the authors' points of view.

You may refer to relevant historical information not mentioned in the documents.

1. Analyze the causes of and the responses to the peasants' revolts in the German states, 1524–1526. Historical Background: In late 1524, peasants, craftsmen, and poor soldiers formed bands and pillaged throughout a large area of the Holy Roman Empire. During the revolt, some of the rebel bands

authored statements of grievances called Articles. Although most bands did not coordinate their activities, several groups met in Memmingen, Swabia, during March 1525 at a gathering known as the Peasant Parliament. After a series of battles, the authorities managed to suppress the revolts. More than 100,000 rebels and others were killed.

The German Peasant Revolt occurred because of poor conditions, a giant separation between the upper and lower class, and because of the unfair conditions of serfdom (mentioned in documents 1, 3, 4, 8 and 11). This resulted in harsh reactions by lords, princes, and authorities and a sense of unity and a sense of entitlement to fair conditions among the lower class and poor and widespread violence among both the upper and middle class. This leads to a trend throughout history where the rift between the upper and middle class creates fighting.

New religions (document one) arise which spread ideas and new ways of thinking among the lower class, with religions like Lutheranism and Calvinism spreading it gave more individualism to the lower class and now the king couldn't control everything in your life (document 1), this results in nobles blaming the religion itself.

Serfs begin to try to leave serfdom and begin to say that they will obey a fair authority (document 3) and have no problem working for compensations but nobles, lord, and town councils reply by saying that serfdom doesn't affect their soul and that the council will release any serfs under their control if they pay them, but serfs aren't paid and if they are they don't have a whole lot of money so when they say the lords paid a lot of money for them

they want that money back and the serfs don't have that kind of money/coin (document 4) this further distresses the serfs. Document 4 is written to draw a good- face on the town council and lords saying that the lords have the right to own them they but they can escape serfdom any thime they won't if they have the coin. This document is bias because it is from the lords point of view and doesn't correctly portray the practice of serfdom . The serfs also say that since they and the lords are “ brothers” with each other the rich should share with the poor (document 8), this of course doesn't go well and is ignored these ideals that had developed before the revolts unified and brought the peasant class together.