

Age of progress assignment



**ASSIGN
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During the time period of 1200 to 1500, a vast society in Europe was emerging from the Middle Ages and was beginning to grow towards the period of the Renaissance. This period encountered numerous problems, such as in lifestyle, growth, disease, and environment. Despite these problems, however, Europe was able to flourish and experienced achievements, such as new inventions, rights for lower classes, and great learning. Although Europe underwent many significant problems, it was able to thrive with accomplishments.

Europeans endured problems and achievements in lifestyles and population. In the beginning of the Renaissance, around 1200, most peasants were serfs on manors to wealthy lords. Because serfs only got a portion of the harvest they reaped, so there was little desire for new technology that would bring in more harvest. However, this led to a lack of food as population grew. The Great Famine of 1315-1317 led many to lead lives with starvation. Along with starvation, the Black Death started to take its toll in the struggling European area. Originally developed in the area of the Mongols and carried with their invasions into China, the Bubonic Plague was then spread into Europe by traders, and then from city to city by fleas and rats. This wiped out large portions of the population. Because of the epidemic, there were fewer laborers, and they were able to demand higher pay. There were numerous peasant revolts, and slowly serfdom was mostly eliminated. Wages were raised and guilds were formed. People also had to find technology to replace laborers. Common developments include the water wheel and the windmill. Problems in lifestyles and populations were strong but helped bring about great accomplishments.

The population change that Europe endured affected the environment. More people needed more land to live and farm on. To create this farmland, swamps were drained and many forests were cleared. Because more people needed more food, fields were overplanted and worn out of nutrients. However, some farmers began the three-field system, where farmers planted two fields with crops and the last with oats, which helped replace the nutrients in the soil. Pollution also developed into a problem. Water was polluted by the wastes from urban tanneries, which commonly disposed acidic wastes in rivers. In addition, water was polluted with human wastes and slaughterhouse runoff. These problems, however, helped create the first antipollution law (in England in 1388), a great advancement. Deforestation was also a common problem, in which trees were cut for land, timber and fuel. The population growth in Europe affected the environment and created substantial problems.

Europe was also greatly affected during 1200s-1500s by a great transformation of learning and philosophy. Firstly, because guilds had formed for laborers, the education began to form a type of guild of their own. Students and professors began to organize "teaching guilds" where standards were set, and people were trained. This aided the formation the universities of the time period. These helped establish a great wave of learning. This had many important effects that helped define the Renaissance period. Humanism and individualism began to flourish, and people began to believe that the human potential should be fully developed. This individualism also had effects on religion. The people slowly gained a rising gratitude for life in this world, instead of focusing on life in the next

world, such as heaven in Christianity. The printing process was further developed, notably by Johann Gutenberg, with the printing press, a new type of ink, and movable type. Lastly, art flourished. Altogether, a great development was the age of learning experienced in Europe that brought on important changes.

Europe went through an important transition in the 1200s to 1500s that helped institute many advancements in society. These include learning improvements, printing, anti-pollution laws, support for labor classes, the water wheel, and the windmill. However, problems, such as hunger, disease, pollution, and labor shortages helped bring these about. The period was able to bring about remarkable growth in spite of its various problems.