Document-Based Question
Suggested reading and writing time: 1 hour

It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the documents and 45 minutes writing your response.

Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

Directions: Question 1 is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following:

• Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
• Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
• Support an argument in response to the prompt using either three or six documents.
• Use at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt.
• For at least three documents, explain how or why the document’s point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
• Use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the prompt.
Question:
Evaluate the factors that made Cyrus the Great and King Ashoka successful rulers.

Document 1

Source: The Cyrus Cylinder, written in Babylonian script, describing Cyrus’s conquest of Babylon in 539 B.C.E.

My vast troops marched peacefully in Babylon, and the whole of [Sumer] and Akkad had nothing to fear. I sought the welfare of the city of Babylon and all its sanctuaries. As for the population of Babylon…I soothed their weariness, I freed them from their bonds…

All kings who sit on thrones, from every quarter, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, those who inhabit remote districts and the kings of the land of Amurru who live in tents, all of them, brought their weighty tribute into Shuanna, and kissed my feet. From Shuanna I sent back to their places to the city of Ashur and Susa, Akkad, the land of Eshnunna, the city of Zamban, the city of Meturnu, Der, as far as the border of the land of Qutu – the sanctuaries across the river Tigris – whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated, the gods who lived therein, and made permanent sanctuaries for them…

Document 2

Source: A Jewish historian, Josephus, writing in the first century C.E., describing the departure of the Jews from Babylon.

“KING CYRUS TO SISINNES AND SATHRABUZANES SENDETH GREETING.”

I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before. I have also sent my treasurer Mithridates, and Zorobabel, the governor of the Jews, that they may lay the foundations of the temple, and may build it sixty cubits high, and of the same latitude, making three edifices of polished stones, and one of the wood of the country, and the same order extends to the altar whereon they offer sacrifices to God. I require also that the expenses for these things may be given out of my revenues.
Document 3

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the fourth century B.C.E. about Cyrus the Great.

[Cyrus speaking to his father Cambyses] As for enforcing obedience, I hope I have had some training in that already; you began my education yourself when I was a child by teaching me to obey you, and then you handed me over to masters who did as you had done, and afterwards, when we were lads, my fellows and myself, there was nothing on which the governors laid more stress. Our laws themselves, I think, enforce this double lesson: - ‘Rule thou and be thou ruled.’ And when I come to study the secret of it all, I seem to see that the real incentive to obedience lies in the praise and honor that it wins against the discredit and the chastisement which fall on the disobedient.

Document 4

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the 4th century B.C.E. about Cyrus the Great.

And he would bring more modesty, he hoped, into the hearts of all men if it were plain that he himself reverenced all the world and would never say a shameful word to any man or woman or do a shameful deed… And his people, he thought, would learn to obey if it were plain that he honored frank and prompt obedience even above virtues that made a grander show and were harder to attain. Such was his belief, and his practice went with it to the end.
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Document 5

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the fourth century B.C.E., about Cyrus the Great.

So it was that Cyrus called a council and spoke as follows: “Gentlemen and friends of mine, you are aware that we have garrisons and commandments in the cities we conquered, stationed there at the time. I left them with orders simply to guard the fortifications and not meddle with anything else. Now I do not wish to remove them from their commands, for they have done their duty nobly, but I propose to send others, satraps, who will govern the inhabitants, receive the tribute, give the garrisons their pay, and discharge all necessary dues.” …

With these words he assigned houses and districts to many of his friends among the lands he had subdued: and to this day their descendants possess the estates, although they reside at court themselves. “Now,” he added, “we must choose for the satraps who are to go abroad persons who will not forget to send us anything of value in their districts, so that we who are at home may share in all the wealth of the world. For if any danger comes, it is we who must ward it off.”

Document 6

Source: Edicts of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

Edict 3: Twelve years after my coronation this has been ordered – Everywhere in my domain the Yuktas, the Rajjukas and the Pradesikas shall go on inspection tours every five years for the purpose of Dhamma instruction and also to conduct other business. Respect for mother and father is good, generosity to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans and ascetics is good, not killing living beings is good, moderation in spending and moderation in saving is good.

Edict 5: In the past there were no Dhamma Mahamatras but such officers were appointed by me thirteen years after my coronation. Now they work among all religions for the establishment of Dhamma, for the promotion of Dhamma, and for the welfare and happiness of all who are devoted to Dhamma…They (Dhamma Mahamatras) work for the proper treatment of prisoners, towards their unfettering, and if the Mahamatras think, “This one has a family to support,” “That one has been bewitched,” “This one is old,” they they work for the release of such prisoners.
Source: Edicts of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

Edict 6: In the past, state business was not transacted nor were reports delivered to the king at all hours. But now I have given this order, that at any time, whether I am eating, in the women’s quarters, the bed chamber, the chariot, the palanquin, in the park or wherever, reporters are to be posted with instructions to report to me the affairs of the people so that I might attend to these affairs wherever I am.

Edict 12: Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, honors both ascetics and the householders of all religions, and he honors them with gifts and honors of various kinds. But Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this – that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one’s own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way.

Edict 13: Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, conquered the Kalingas eight years after his coronation. [25] One hundred and fifty thousand were deported, one hundred thousand were killed and many more died (from other causes). After the Kalingas had been conquered, Beloved-of-the-Gods came to feel a strong inclination towards the Dhamma, a love for the Dhamma and for instruction in Dhamma. Now Beloved-of-the-Gods feels deep remorse for having conquered the Kalingas. Indeed, Beloved-of-the-Gods is deeply pained by the killing, dying and deportation that take place when an unconquered country is conquered.