

## AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

### MAIN IDEAS IN CANDIDE

#### I. Criticism of Philosophical Systems

- A. Leibnitzian Optimism— Leibnitz (1646-1716) was a respected German philosopher whose theory based on optimism was popularized by some 18th century thinkers in simplistic formulas such as “all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds.”
1. Voltaire attacks simplistic versions, but not all of Leibnitz’s ideas, as seen through Pangloss.
  2. He rejects fatalism or that all events are predetermined.
  3. He does not think that every “cause” leads to an appropriate “effect” or that this cause has to be the best possible cause since undoubtedly it reflects God's will.
  4. He does not accept things as they are like Pangloss teaches.
  5. Voltaire teaches that a spirit of struggle and reform are needed to correct abuse.
  6. Voltaire is a “deist;” He believed that God created the world, but God does not get involved in daily affairs of the world.
  7. By the end of the book Candide shares Voltaire’s ideas on God and thinks that “we must cultivate our own garden.”
- B. Manicheanism Pessimism— a system that originated with Mani (Persian prophet, about A.D. 250), whose belief was that good and evil rule the universe and are in conflict.
1. The character of Martin, the pessimist, takes this doctrine to the extreme.
  2. Martin maintains that God has abandoned earth, but not the universe, to the forces of evil (Satan and darkness)—evil is real, not an illusion.
  3. Voltaire has a profound distrust for any doctrine. He rejects both Leibnitzian Optimism and Manicheanism Pessimism.
- C. Empiricism— Voltaire believes that all knowledge comes from sense experience (an approach to knowledge that derived from John Locke’s [1632-1704] “blank slate.”)
1. Voltaire thinks a statement, idea, or hypothesis is valid only if it is related to something physical and can be known and verified through human senses.
  2. Cacambo helps Candide to gradually pay attention to practical matters and test all concepts and statements, whether those of optimism or pessimism, by experience.

## II. Social Criticism

- A. Voltaire attacks all aspects of society.
- B. He believes that human nature has been negatively effected by civil institutions. For example, Candide finds liars, cheats, pimps, etc. in Paris.
- C. The clergy, from Pope to priest, is corrupt, fanatical, oppressive, greedy, and hungry for power.
- D. The medical profession practices fraud and quackery.
- E. The law courts and police are of dubious integrity.
- F. Class distinctions are based more on snobbery than on merit.
- G. European prosperity rests on the misery of the people and the slave trade.
- H. The superficial glory of war is contrasted with its horrible reality.

## III. Utopia

- A. Voltaire creates a number of “perfect places” in the book but all have flaws.
- B. Finally, at the end of the book, Candide creates his own utopia, a farming/gardening community where all of Voltaire’s values are represented including hard work, open-mindedness, honesty, progressivism, and a community effort where each individual participates according to his or her own talents and strengths.

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### CANDIDE READING GUIDE

**Directions:** The following exercise is designed to guide you through *Candide*. After completing it, you should have a thorough understanding of the main points of the novel and Voltaire's overall philosophy.

#### Chapters I-III

1. In whose castle does Candide live?
2. Under what circumstances was Candide born?
3. Who is Cunegonde and how old is she?
4. "It is proved," [Pangloss] used to say, "that things cannot be other than they are, for since \_\_\_\_\_ was made for a \_\_\_\_\_, it follows that \_\_\_\_\_ is made for the \_\_\_\_\_."

**Use Pangloss' optimistic philosophy to answer questions 5-7.**

5. Why do we have spectacles?



12. Would the orator on pages 26-27 be inclined to agree with Pangloss' philosophy?

### **Chapters IV-VI**

13. How does Pangloss' philosophy backfire on him and on Cunegonde?
14. Voltaire believed that men make their own fates. They are not controlled by some all-powerful God. How does Voltaire make this clear when James states his opposition to Pangloss' philosophy?
15. According to Pangloss, for what purpose was the Lisbon harbor formed?
16. What was the purpose of burning people at the stake in Lisbon?
17. On what charges were Pangloss and Candide arrested?

### **Chapters VII-IX**

18. To whom did the old woman take Candide?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
19. What relationship do Cunegonde, Don Issachar, and the Grand Inquisitor have?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
20. What does Candide do with the Inquisitor when the Inquisitor walks in on Candide and Cunegonde while they are “on the couch.”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
21. Now that Pangloss is dead, who becomes the new advisor to Candide and Cunegonde?

### **Chapters X-XII**

22. How does Voltaire show the hypocrisy of the clergy on page 47?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
23. Where does Candide go to find the “best of all possible worlds?”

24. Why did Voltaire choose Urban X to be the old woman's father when he could have chosen any pope?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
25. Name two misfortunes that befell the old woman when she was with the Moroccans.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
26. According to the Catholic Church, despair is a mortal sin because it is the opposite of hope which is in turn based on faith. Therefore, if a person lives his or her life in despair, he/she has no faith in God. Suicide is also a mortal sin because it violates the fifth commandment, "Thou shall not kill." All through *Candide*, Voltaire criticizes religion. Does the first paragraph on page 49 indicate a continuation of this theme, a change in theme, or a partial change?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
27. For what purpose does Voltaire think religion can be used?

### **Chapters XIII-XVI**

28. Pangloss was always very optimistic, but the old woman is more practical. How does she advise Candide to deal with the murder he has committed?







## Chapters XX-XXIII

43. How does Martin's philosophy differ from Pangloss' philosophy?
44. What criticism does Martin make of Pangloss' philosophy on pages 91-92?
45. According to Martin, for what purpose was the earth formed?
46. Explain the humor involving the doctors on page 97.
47. How do the incidents described on pages 105-107 illustrate that Candide is very naïve and still has faith in Pangloss' philosophy?
48. Based on the events in Chapter XXIII, does Voltaire agree with Hobbes or Locke? Give evidence
49. Does Voltaire support the British system of government? Give evidence.



55. Who does Candide discover on the Levantine ship?
56. "I still hold my original views," replied Pangloss, "because, after all, for I am still a philosopher. It would not be proper for me to \_\_\_\_\_, since \_\_\_\_\_ cannot be \_\_\_\_\_; and besides, the \_\_\_\_\_, together with the plenum and subtle matter, is the most beautiful thing in the world."
57. What does the old woman suggest Candide buy while they wait for their fortunes to take a turn for the better?
58. After the baron again refuses to allow Candide to marry his sister, what does Candide do with him?
59. Searching for the meaning of life, Candide and his friends consult a famous dervish. What religious concept does the dervish reflect?
60. Do Pangloss and Martin change their opinions by then end of the book?

## AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

### CANDIDE CULMINATING ACTIVITY

**Directions:** Write a four paragraph essay on either of the following topics. Your grade will be based on the ruberics you recieved on the first day of class.

#### Topic 1

The story of Candide and his friends unfolds in another time and place. Therefore, in many ways the cultural context of the book is very different than yours. However, there are also many connections that can be made with experiences today.

Candide's journey presents various characters that demonstrate behaviors based on different philosophical ideas. These ideas have historical roots in the 18th century but may still be relevant today. Your discussion should include (1) at least three detailed examples from the book that clearly demonstrate a connection between ideas and behavior and (2) at least three detailed examples from your life experiences [about yourself or others] that demonstrates how lessons can be learned from this story by young people today.

#### Topic 2

...Pangloss said to the dervish, "Sir, we've come to ask you why such a strange animal as man was ever created."

"Why are you concerned about this?" said the dervish. "Is it any of your business?"

"But Reverend Father," said Candide, "there's a terrible amount of evil in the world."

"What does it matter if there is evil or good?" said the dervish. "When His Highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he worry about whether the mice in it are comfortable?" (p. 118)

"I also know," said Candide "that we must cultivate our garden."

"You're right," said Pangloss, "because when man was put in the Garden of Eden, he was put there 'to dress it and to keep it,' that is, to work; which proves that man was not born to be idle."

"Let's work without theorizing," said Martin; "it's the only way to make life bearable."

...

"Well said," replied Candide, "but we must cultivate our garden." (p. 120)

The conversations above reflect a message by Voltaire to the reader of *Candide*. Explain the message and then relate in detail at least three examples from the book that illustrate the message. Also, explain why you agree or disagree with the message.