Instructions for Answering Identifications

Keep these journalistic principles in mind as you identify and analyze the significance of, say, the Spanish Armada:

- **What is the term (or name, or concept)?** Define it, saying who or what it is/was: The Spanish Armada was a naval flotilla sent against England by Philip II of Spain with the aim of returning England to the Catholic faith.

- **Who or what was involved & under what circumstances (including any relevant background information)?** Be specific, but be concise: Philip II, Habsburg ruler of Spain, Elizabeth I, Tudor queen of England, Sir Francis Drake, and the Duke of Medina Sidonia as part of the war between Spain and England that was itself the result of years of conflict—religious, military, economic—between the two countries. A couple of examples of this conflict would demonstrate your understanding of the key issues involved.

- **Where and how did it happen?** Provide just enough information to demonstrate your familiarity with events: The fleet sailed from Spain to the English Channel and then east for a planned rendezvous with the Duke of Parma, whose troops the Armada was to ferry across the Channel to England. The Spanish were attacked successfully in the Channel and then again at Calais where the English used "hell-burners" or fireships to damage the fleet further. After this Spanish defeat, the remains of Sidonia's fleet sailed north all the way around the British Isles, suffering further losses (especially due to weather and rough seas) before finally hobbling back to Spain.

- **When did it happen or when did the person live?** Some terms or names elicit an exact date, others an era; in this case it's 1588. If you don't remember the exact date try to get within a few years or use the part of the relevant century (i.e., late 16th century). I will typically provide the necessary dates on the exam page.

- **What is its significance?** *Why* is the event, person, or concept important, both in itself and in a broader sense? What led up to or caused the event, helped set the stage for the concept, or made it possible for the person to achieve what makes him or her significant? What were the short- and long-term consequences and influences? Who or what was affected, and in what ways? Think in terms of “cause and effect,” “impact upon,” and “connections” or “relationships” as you determine the significance: What led to the Armada being launched was a long conflict between Queen Elizabeth and Philip II, especially over the fate of Mary, Queen of Scots and the religion of England. The Spanish loss was a blow to their prestige and finances. It helped crystallize feelings of English pride and nationalism. It signaled the beginning of the decline of the fortunes of Spain at the end of her Golden Age and the rise of England. It had negative effects on English Catholics. [These should be elaborated upon with examples.] *This is the critical part of the response, and it should be the longest, the most detailed, and the best supported.*
In responding to Identities, combine all of this information together in one or more smooth-flowing essay-like paragraphs (i.e., do not answer each of these five questions separately or one at a time in a Q & A format). Include as much material from your reading and from class lectures/discussions as possible.

Identities test both your factual knowledge and your understanding of the significance of people, events, and concepts in the context of their times—unlike essay writing which relies on your ability to interpret historical events, to use judgment, and to bring in your factual knowledge in appropriate ways to support a thesis and conclusions that are based on evidence and a thesis.