Historical Context

When Justinian became emperor in 527, he was determined to revive the ancient Roman Empire, to build a new Rome. He established Constantinople as the capital of the Byzantine, or Eastern Roman, Empire. Justinian's actions preserved Roman heritage for more than a thousand years.

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying documents in Part A. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and the author's point of view. Be sure to do each of the following steps:

1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about this topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?

2. Read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. Answer the questions that follow each document before moving on to the next document.

3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the document-based question.

4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.

5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. You should present your essay logically. Include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge beyond the documents.

Question: Evaluate the reign of Emperor Justinian. Did Justinian revive the Roman Empire as the Byzantine Empire? What is his legacy?
**DBQ 5: BYZANTINE EMPIRE UNDER JUSTINIAN**

**Document 1**

In this adapted excerpt, Procopius describes Justinian.

> Justinian created countless cities which did not exist before. And finding that the belief in God was... straying into errors... he... brought it about that it stood on the firm foundation of a single faith. Moreover, finding the laws obscure because they had become far more numerous than they should be, and in obvious confusion because they disagreed with each other, he preserved them [in the Code of Justinian, 529-534]... by controlling their discrepancies with the greatest firmness.

Source: Procopius, *Buildings*, Loeb Classical Library, 1940 (adapted)

According to Procopius, what were three contributions of Justinian?

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**Document 2**

Procopius also described Justinian in a different book, *The Secret History*.

> Wisely, this book was published after Justinian’s death. Justinian was... crafty, hypocritical, secretive by temperament, two-faced: a clever fellow with marvelous ability to conceal his real opinion... lying all the time.

Source: Procopius, *The Secret History*, translated by Richard Atwater, 1927 (adapted)

Which characteristics of Justinian did Procopius stress in *The Secret History?*

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Why was this description so different from what Document 1 says about Justinian?

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(continued)
DBQ 5: BYZANTINE EMPIRE UNDER JUSTINIAN

Document 3

Justinian ruled like earlier Roman emperors. This is a description of him by a Byzantine official.

The emperor is equal to all men in the nature of his body, but in the authority of his rank he is similar to God, who rules all.

How did this official explain Justinian's power?

Document 4

In this adapted excerpt, Procopius describes the Hagia Sophia, a magnificent church, upon its completion in 537.

In height it rises to the very heavens. . . . A spherical-shaped dome . . . makes it exceedingly beautiful: from the lightness of the building it does not appear to rest upon a solid foundation, but to . . . be suspended from heaven by the fabled golden chain. . . . The entire ceiling is covered with pure gold, which adds glory to the beauty, though the rays of light reflected upon the gold from the marble surpass it in beauty. . . . And whenever anyone enters this church to pray, he understands at once that it is not by any human strength or skill, but by the influence of God, that this work has been perfected. And so his mind is lifted up toward God. . . . Moreover, it is impossible to describe the treasure of gold and silver plate and gems, which the Emperor Justinian has presented to it. . . .

What were the distinctive characteristics of the Hagia Sophia?

What impact did the church have on a visitor?

(continued)
DBQ 5: BYZANTINE EMPIRE UNDER JUSTINIAN

Document 5

Justinian was a great builder. This is evident from the fortifications and buildings he constructed in Constantinople, shown on the map below.

Study this map and describe the building projects that made Constantinople the center of power. In addition, discuss Constantinople’s strategic location for trade and defense.

(continued)
DBQ 5: BYZANTINE EMPIRE UNDER JUSTINIAN

Document 6

The Byzantine Empire reached its greatest size under Justinian. From 565 until the empire’s collapse in 1453, several invaders took sections of it.

The Byzantine Empire in 527

What areas were included in the Byzantine Empire?

What problems did Justinian’s reconquests cause for the empire?

PART B

Evaluate the reign of Emperor Justinian. Did Justinian revive the Roman Empire as the Byzantine Empire? What is his legacy?