Prompt:
   1. Analyze the various responses to the outbreaks of plague from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Discuss the beliefs and concerns that these responses express.

**Historical background:** The plague struck Europe in a series of waves beginning in the mid-fourteenth century. It is estimated that the first wave killed about 25 million people, or one-third of the population of Western Europe. Sporadic but deadly outbreaks continued throughout Europe into the eighteenth century.

   Europeans at the time did not understand the cause of this bacterial infection, which was spread by fleas that had been infected by their hosts, usually rats. When the rats died, the fleas moved on to infect other hosts, including human beings. Once infected, a person suffered extreme pain and, within a few days, about 80 percent of those infected died.

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**Document 1**

You asked how my school is doing. It is full against but the plague, which killed twenty of the boys, drove many others away and doubtless kept some others from coming to use at all.

*Schoolmaster at Deventer, Netherlands, letter, 1484*

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**Document 2**

The plague and sickness in England is due to the filth in the streets and the sputum and dogs’ urine clogging the rushes on the floors of the houses.

*Erasmus of Rotterdam, letter, 1512*

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**Document 3**

Since the rich fled, death was principally directed towards the poor so that only a few of the Paris porters and wage-earners, who had lived there in large numbers before the misfortune, were left.

*Nicolas Versoris, French author, *Book of Reason*, 1523*
Document 4

About 40 people at Casale in Western Lombardy smeared the bolts of the town gates with an ointment to spread the plague. Those who touched the gates were infected and many died. The heirs of the dead and diseased had actually paid people at Casale to smear the gates in order to obtain their inheritances more quickly.

Johann Weyer, German physician, *The Deceptions of Demons*, 1583

Document 5

Whatever house the pestilence visited was immediately nailed up, and if a person died within, he had to be buried there. Many died of hunger in their own houses. Throughout the country, all the roads and highways were guarded so that a person could not pass from one place to another.

Heinrich von Staden, Count of the Palatinate and traveler to Russia, *The Land of the Government of Muscovy*, 1571

Document 6

Gold, fire, and gallows: gold for the expense of pest houses to quarantine the diseased, the gallows to punish those who violate the health regulations and to frighten the others, and bonfires to eliminate the infected things.

Motto of Giovan Filippo, Sicilian physician of Palermo, 1576

Document 7

My husband Ottavio had a malignant fever. We were sure he would die. Sister Angelica del Macchia, prioress at Crocetta, sent me a little piece of bread that had touched the body of St. Domenica. I fed it to my husband and suddenly the fever broke.

Lisabetta Centenni, Italian housewife, legal deposition, 1624
Document 8

And thus would I mediate with myself alone: what if the sickness should come into this house? Who would I be willing to give up to disease? Then would I say, the maid. Who next? My son John. Who next? My daughter Elizabeth. Who next? Myself.

Nehemiah Wallington, English Puritan, diary, 1625

Document 9

I have accompanied severity with compassion and charity. I have managed and fed the convalescents and servants of two pest houses; I have paid guards and gravediggers with the alms your lordships have sent me.

Father Dragoni, priest, letter to the Health Magistracy of Florence, 1630

Document 10

Plague-stricken patients hang around their necks toads, either dead or alive, whose venom should within a few days draw out the poison of the disease.

H. de Rochas, French physician, The Reform of Medicine, 1647

Document 11

The demand for nurses in Barcelona was so great that they were hard to find. Many times all they did was to make the patients die more quickly, because the sooner they died, the sooner the nurses collected fees they had agreed on.

Miguel Parets, Barcelona tanner, diary, 1651

Document 12

The news came as we were ready to set forth for Italy that the plague was now violent in Rome, which discouraged all the gentlemen but three and myself, for I resolved to trust Providence rather than not see so fine a place.

Sir John Reresby, English traveler, memoirs, 1656
For nobody will dare to buy any wig, for fear of infection, that the hair had been cut off the heads of people dead of the plague.

Samuel Pepys, English naval bureaucrat, *Diary*, 1665

The trading nations of Europe were all afraid of us; no port of France, or Holland, or Spain, or Italy would admit our ships. Foreign exportation being stopped, the general trade in manufactured goods stopped next.

Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722
(written about the plague of 1665)

The plague must be considered a particular chastisement exercised by an angry God over a sinful and offending people rather than as a calamity proceeding from common and natural causes. Consequently, it is little subject to the remedies pursued in the cases of ordinary maladies.

M. Bertrand, physician at Marseilles, *A Historical Relation of the Plague at Marseilles in the Year 1720*
Print depicting Emperor Leopold and the “Plague Column,” which he commissioned in gratitude for the end of the plague that gripped Vienna in the 1680’s, Vienna, 1696
Document-Based Question
The Plague

STEP 1: Analyzing the Question
What is the question asking you to do? What will you be looking for as you read through the documents?

STEP 2: Read and tag the documents.

STEP 3: Group the documents based on the prompt

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<table>
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REMEMBER, you must follow these rules for grouping the documents:
1. You must use A MINIMUM OF 10 DOCUMENTS (normally use ALL documents)
2. You may use documents more than once
3. You must have 3-4 groups
4. Groups must contain a MINIMUM of 2 documents

STEP 4: Thesis – Your thesis should consist of the group labels you came up with in the previous step.

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Step 5: Document Analysis. Pick one document from each group and do a FULL treatment of it.

**Document from group 1:**

1. Summarize the overall meaning of this Source. (In one sentence. Think of it as a 1-sentence book report.) You may paraphrase the source, but DO NOT quote it.
   
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
2. List 3 specific concepts, vocabulary terms, or phrases UNIQUE to this source (Not found in ANY OTHER source).
   These examples can be short phrases or even a single word.
   1. ________________________________________________________________
   2. ________________________________________________________________
   3. ________________________________________________________________

3. Look at the source section of the document. What possible reasons can you think of that would explain WHY this author created this document at this time? Why did some other author create some other document at a different time?

   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. Now combine #1-3 above all into ONE sentence that summarizes the document’s overall meaning (#1) using a specific piece of evidence (#2) to explain a reason why this author created this document at this time (#3)

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Document from group 2:

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________
   a. ________________________________________________________________
   b. ________________________________________________________________
   c. ________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________

4. __________________________________________________________________

Document from group 3:

1. __________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________
   a. ________________________________________________________________
   b. ________________________________________________________________
   c. ________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________

4. __________________________________________________________________

The Additional Document
Include additional document AND state WHY it’s necessary.