Discovering The Humanities (2nd Edition)
Synopsis

See Context and Make Connections across the Humanities  Discovering the Humanities helps students see context and make connections across the humanities by tying together the entire cultural experience through a narrative storytelling approach. Written around Henry Sayre’s belief that students learn best by remembering stories rather than memorizing facts, it captures the voices that have shaped and influenced human thinking and creativity throughout our history. With a stronger focus on critical thinking, and coupled with the new MyArtsLab to personalize learning for each student, the second edition enables students to deepen their understanding of how cultures influence one another. It also shows how ideas are exchanged and evolve over time, and how this collective process has led us to where we stand today. A better teaching and learning experience This program will provide a better teaching and learning experience “for you and your students. Here’s how: Personalize Learning “The new MyArtsLab delivers proven results in helping students succeed, provides engaging experiences that personalize learning, and comes from a trusted partner with educational expertise and a deep commitment to helping students and instructors achieve their goals. Improve Critical Thinking “The second edition includes features that focus on applying concepts and building critical thinking skills in the beginning and at the end of each chapter. Engage Students “Henry Sayre engages students like no other with his storytelling approach and the MyArtsLab Challenge which guides students through the ages as they master the study of Humanities. Support Instructors “New MyArtsLab with streaming audio, ClassPrep, Instructor’s Manual and Test Item File, and MyTest are available. Note: MyArtsLab does not come automatically packaged with this text. To purchase MyArtsLab, please visit www.myartslab.com or you can purchase a ValuePack of the text + MyArtsLab (at no additional cost): ValuePack ISBN-10: 0205883680 / ValuePack ISBN-13: 9780205883684.

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I am using this book in the fall for all of my Intro to Humanities classes (I teach at a community college). I've taught before with this text and with Gloria Fiero's Landmarks in Humanities, and I've looked through a number of similar texts, like Sayre's Continuity and Change. There are a few reasons I prefer the Sayre text. First, it's well organized. Intro to Humanities courses can be hard to keep a lid on, in terms of content. Humanities is a massive category encompassing art, music, philosophy, architecture, religion... basically everything human beings have done since the beginning of time. So the fact that Sayre gets this into relatively concise chapters is a feat in itself. And I know the chapters can feel long to students. They are dense with material, and ideally you'll have enough time to really dig in. If you try to take in too much material at a time -- and this also goes for profs who assign too much, too fast -- it's a little overwhelming.

Second: Sayre provides a good cross-section of primary sources from cultures including the far East and Africa. There's no denying most Humanities survey courses are Western- and Euro-centric. But this text does a good job including sculptures, structures, paintings, and artifacts from cultures outside the West that give students something to use as a point of comparison. Also, I think the selection of primary sources gives a good sampling of the most important human creations. It's a monumental task to decide what handful of artifacts students will look at to learn about an entire civilization over a millennium. No one text can probably do this job perfectly, but I am satisfied with this one.

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