

What caused the golden age?

The Dutch golden age provoked many new ideas and views, such as religious tolerance and new artistic views. But what *caused* the golden age? In this essay I will handle the various factors of the golden age, and analyze them as to see how they affected / contributed to the influential political and cultural significance of The Netherlands in that period of time.

First of all, the Netherlands was the center of trade at the time, geographically as well as commercially. This was because of the way the Netherlands did not only specialize in a few products of trade, but extended the list in order to cater for their own and other peoples needs. The geographical position of The Netherlands was also to be benefited from, as it is a coastal country, which provides easy access to sea routes for trades. All of these elements combined assured that The Netherlands would become the most powerful country in trade.

The two trade companies, the VOC and WIC were the dominant companies at the time. The VOC being the most successful. The VOC was given the monopoly of all Dutch trade in the east, and were given power even to start wars with their rivals. The WIC was given the monopoly of the American trades, but was not as successful due to conflicts which led to costly wars and loss of territory.

Immigrants also contributed to the success of the golden age, with people coming from the Spanish Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Poland and Lithuania. These people all played a part in doing the labor required the products if trade and/or other required jobs. These people were of all different skills, religions and origins, which provided a wide range of jobs that could be done by them, ensuring maximum efficiency.

Technological developments were crucial, “high tech” ways of producing energy sped up the process of producing finished products, and was less costly than man labor. Maps and instruments of navigation were important tools for shipping products, as well as a new ship design, “de Fluyt” with a maximum load capacity and a minimum requirement of crew members. This lowered the cost of shipping.

Due to the fact that the land was unsuitable for growing wheat, farmers had to turn to other methods of farming. While many turned to dairy produce, which would be exported to England, Germany, France and Spain, others would harvest crops used in the fabrication of cloth and beer. A majority of the crops and dairy products were not kept for use in the Netherlands, but would be exported in return for wheat and other produce.

Having looked at all of those factors of the Dutch Golden Age, it becomes clear that each must have played its own part in contributing to the success of the Netherlands in that period of time. The need for new developments in i.e. farming led to the Netherlands being superior to other nations that still used old methods. The religious tolerance of the Netherlands allowed ideas, wealth and skills to come in from different countries when they would have been rejected otherwise due to racial and religious differences. Ultimately... originality, tolerance, good organization and the welcoming of new ideas were the causes of 'The Dutch Golden Age'. These made the Netherlands stand out above other countries.