

# A Visit to Hagia Sophia—Writing prompts

## Possible prompts for a summative writing assessment

- A) Sixteen centuries is a long time. What does your tour of Hagia Sophia tell you about the knowledge and skills of the Byzantines that long ago when this building was built? What skills, trades or knowledge would the Byzantines have needed in order to construct Hagia Sophia? What does their ability to do so tell you about Byzantine civilization—was it a simple thing or was it advanced for its time? Support your answer with evidence from your tour.
- B) Write a letter to Constantine telling what changes will occur in his city in the years after its founding in 330. Support your letter with evidence from your tour.
- C) Write a letter to Justinian telling what changes will occur in Hagia Sophia in the years after its initial construction. Support your letter with evidence from your tour.
- D) Imagine that you have been placed in charge of a commission to decide what should be done with Hagia Sophia. Your options are 1) to keep it a museum as it is presently, 2) to convert the building back into a church, or 3) to convert the building back into a mosque. Write a report for your commission recommending which of these options you think should be carried out and explaining why. Your report should answer the following questions: What would have to be done in each case? Who will be pleased by your recommendation and why? Who will not be pleased by the recommendation and why? Support your report with evidence from your tour.
- E) Which had a greater impact on Hagia Sophia and on Constantinople/Istanbul, the conquest of the city by the Roman Catholic crusaders or that by the Muslim Ottomans? Support your answer with evidence from your tour.