

Harley School

AP US History Summer Assignments and Suggestions

To all of those who signed up for APUS history I want you to have the best academic experience possible next year, and one way to ensure that is to begin preparing in the summer. I know there are some of you who might want to take time to relax after a grueling year of pursuing academic goals. However, I believe that learning should never completely stop and that the skill of reading needs to be developed and nurtured over the summer. I also believe that relaxation does not require the complete cessation of learning; it just means a shifting of gears. With that in mind I have come up with some work for you to do over the summer.

To prepare for APUS, I will expect you to read **Chapter One in the text book** which I have photocopied for you. Also, keep a notebook in which you write out the **terms for identification** and their definitions and answers to the essay questions in bullet form. This part of the assignment would best be done in the last weeks before school, as we will have a quiz on that chapter soon after returning.

In addition, you all must read: *A Little History of the United States* by James West Davidson, a Harley graduate, **OR** *Triangle, the Fire that Changed America*, by David VonDrehle. Plus, I will want you to write a two to three page paper on the book. The topic for the first one is: Identify the author's point of view of American History, and use quotations, or descriptions of events in at least three different chapters to support your thesis. The topic for the second book is: Although the book describes the events of the actual fire in harrowing detail, the author also explains how this fire, and the reaction to it, changed the Democratic Party in New York state. Explain that change and what the author says it meant for the future of the Democrats in America.

Supplies and ideas:

Your notebook should probably be a sturdy one or two-inch three-ring binder with dividers for notes, review sheets, handouts, and papers. However, if you prefer to use spiral notebooks and pocket folders, I will accept that method of keeping data as well. **Using your text book as a receptacle for folded up tests and review sheets, however, is unacceptable.**

You should probably also have a few packets of 3" x 5" index cards to make review cards for Identification terms and dates. I will probably have some quizzes during the year just based on factual information, because otherwise people do not learn it. In history dates and facts are important; they are not the be all and end all, but without them you have no peg on which to hang your hat, so to speak.

I have also included in this packet a list of movies that you could rent and watch to help prepare you for the AP course. The purpose of watching these would not be to educate you in a definitive way but to get you thinking about some of the important events that have been chronicled in some of these movies or about the time periods in which these movies were set. It may also be a good idea to tune your radio to NPR news and to watch the History Channel every once in a while. You can become a victim of the networks and fall into the trap of watching what the advertisers want you to watch, or you can become an intelligent and critical viewer and listener. The first step toward the latter is to step back from the mainstream of American Pop Culture for a moment and ask yourself what you get out of it. Once you have answered that question, you will be able to step away from it more easily in the future.

Finally, please e-mail me at sfoster@harleyschool.org with your own e-mail so I can contact you during the summer. I would like to have an August pizza and movie night or two to get us ready for the year, but I will need to have your contact information.

Further, my cell phone is 585 415 7314 if you need to call or text me over the summer.