

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi Summer Reading APUSH & US History (2019)

For all United States History courses, you are asked to read *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi this summer. The book begins in 18th century Ghana and tells the story of half sisters Effia and Esi who are born in separate towns and never know each other. This work of historical fiction then follows the lives of eight generations of Effia and Esi's families as they migrate around the world.

The New York Times said the following of *Homegoing* in its 2016 review:

“It’s impossible not to admire the ambition and scope of ‘Homegoing,’ and thanks to Ms. Gyasi’s instinctive storytelling gifts, the book leaves the reader with a visceral understanding of both the savage realities of slavery and the emotional damage that is handed down, over the centuries, from mothers to daughters, fathers to sons.”

For each of the following questions, write a thoughtful, evidence-based paragraph citing specific pages from the text.

1. Using a character from the book of your choosing, explain the ways Gyasi’s storytelling tells a story which your history textbook cannot. What parts of the character’s life-story are important? How can you tell?
2. Consider the setting of the book. What time periods are represented and what places are adopted as settings? Why do you think the author chose these particular settings? What subjects and themes are illuminated via these particular choices? How does the extensive scope of the book help to unify these themes and create a cohesive treatment of the subjects therein?
3. What is history according to Yaw? What does he tell his students is “the problem of history” (226)? Who does Yaw say we believe when reading historical texts and what does he say is the question we must ask when studying history? How might these ideas influence your own reading of Gyasi’s book and reshape your ideas about the historical subjects and themes treated therein?