

*History is a race between education and catastrophe. (HG Wells)*

May 2020

Dear AP European History Student:

We welcome you into the world of Advanced Placement History, a fascinating, exciting and challenging study of the events and individuals who have shaped our world since 1450. For better and for worse, Europe has been a driving force in the world for the last 500 years. Many of the most dominant ideas in the world today [democracy, industrialism, capitalism, communism, the scientific method] have their origin in modern Europe. The world is changing and will not stop. For many people, change happens to them. By being informed, AP European History empowers you to impact that change.

The study of the past to better understand the present and prepare oneself for the future is one definition of history that we find acceptable. We challenge you to reach back into your past (brief, we know) and examine why you presently find yourself enrolled in AP European History. Obviously, you have an interest in history, and our job will be to sharpen your skills as an historian and raise that interest level. We guarantee you that if you are willing to work hard and put forth a sincere effort, you will have fun while learning in our class.

Although AP European History courses are generally designed to prepare students for the AP European History examination given every May, teachers approach and present the subject to their students with great variety. Indeed, the Advanced Placement European History Development Committee encourages teachers to give full and free range to their own talents, interests, strengths, and creativity.

Students need to be aware that actual credit and placement awarded for their AP work is determined by individual colleges, not by the College Board. On average, Stevenson students who have taken AP European History have repeatedly earned among the highest AP scores in the nation. Furthermore, these students have traditionally made the transition to AP US History with great success. Finally, with writing now an integral part of the SAT, AP European students are in an ideal program to help prepare them for the SAT exam. Congratulations on your choice to join a program we are very proud of as you continue your education and growth at Stevenson.

**SUMMER READING**

You are to read Chapter 14 “European Exploration and Conquest, 1450-1650” in the McKay textbook before the first day of class in August. You should be prepared for an assessment on Ch. 14 on the first day.

Here are some guidelines to follow as you read Ch. 14:

- The five sections of the chapter are divided up into smaller parts by red headings to help you break down the material into smaller units. Each heading comes with a Focus Question that you should specifically answer in the margin after reading the section. When you are done reading chapter 14, you should be able to answer the Focus Questions and be familiar with the bold terms.
- You are expected to highlight and annotate as you read. As a general rule, highlight the most significant idea from each paragraph. Be selective; if you highlight too much you’re not thinking actively and therefore just wasting ink. At least once for each column of text, write an annotation that connects specific ideas to the broader themes of the section. Finally, write an annotation for every image, map, or chart that links the image to ideas in the text.
- Most importantly, you should be able to explain (in your own words, citing specifics) the answer

to the following question: “**Between 1450 and 1650, how did global power shift from the trading world of the Indian Ocean to Europe and the Atlantic?**” This chapter is all about “change,” so look for which countries and groups of people gained and lost power. How did those changes affect attitude beliefs about race? These questions are crucial to understanding the origins of European history in our period of focus.

### TEXTBOOK

Please purchase the McKay textbook from an online source such as Amazon. (Regrettably, the Stevenson Student Store is currently unavailable due to the pandemic.) This is the only book you need to buy. The reason for purchasing the book is it will allow you to underline and take notes in them as most college level students do on a daily basis. Additionally, as a personal possession, you may begin to prepare for the school year in advance and complete the summer reading; and this textbook will prove to be a useful resource for other high school and college courses. We understand and regret that the textbook is expensive but it is our experience that owning and annotating the book is the best preparation for a college-level course. If paying for the book presents a challenge for your family, please contact your counselor for assistance.

To purchase the AP textbook, please read the following information on book order and prices. In addition, we want everyone to buy a three-subject sized notebook and a folder with dividers for papers. **Bring these with you to class.**

### BOOK ORDER LIST FOR AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

*A History of Western Society Since 1300 for AP*, by John McKay, et al (**13th Edition**) (Hardcover) [ISBN 1319221637]. The book has a painting of a woman with a guitar and parrot on the cover.

- 1. Buy the hardcover 13th edition (refer to the ISBN number above) that includes the AP material. Paperback versions do not include all the necessary content. Earlier versions of the book are not the same and are not substitutes.**
- 2. Buy new or nearly new books with no previous marks in them.**
- 3. Buy them with enough time to have read chapter 14 by the first day of class.**

We would be happy to answer any questions about the course or assignment. Feel free to contact any of the instructors at (847) 415-4000 or by email.

Sincerely,

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