

American Studies Summer Work 2021



Thomas Hart Benton's *The Sources of Country Music*
1975

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Advanced Placement American Studies Summer Reading

Welcome to AP American Studies. This assignment will commence your rigorous study of the American experience. You will craft a few relatively short writing pieces in response to texts. This writing should move beyond summary to demonstrate the critical thinking capabilities of ***questioning, evaluating, and synthesizing***. All ideas ***must*** be original, and if additional sources are referenced in your written analysis, cite them in proper **MLA format**. See [Purdue University's Online Writing Lab](#) for proper MLA formatting. The completion of all summer work **by the first day of class** is a requirement of the course.

PART 1: AP Language and Composition

A. The “Other” America (**Formative: 50 pts**)

1. Critically read and annotate **ONE** of the following texts:
 - a. *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls (memoir)
 - b. *Educated* by Tara Westover (memoir)
 - c. *There There* by Tommy Orange (novel)
 - d. *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin (novel)
 - e. *The 57 Bus* by Dashka Slater (nonfiction)
 - f. *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (nonfiction)
 - g. *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer (nonfiction)

Please do some initial research on the titles to help you select a book that is interesting to you, and offers a good challenge for new learning. Please also note that these books are contemporary works, written mostly for adults, and that many of them contain mature situations and conflicts such as rape, hate crimes, and other forms of violence, as well as some use of profane language. Level of difficulty also varies in these books, so, again, do some research before picking to make sure you have a good fit. [The directions to access texts on Sora will be posted to the Google Classroom page. Additionally, you can request copies of the texts from the library, or feel free to purchase the book. Please email me with any questions.]

2. Complete a double-entry journal as you read. This can be digital or hand-written and should track your thinking about key passages throughout the text.

DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNAL GUIDELINES:

- a. Make two columns on your paper or Google Doc. Label the left side “Passage/Quote” and label the right side “Analysis/Thinking”.
- b. Copy any passages/moments from the text that trigger an idea, question, connection, argument, etc. Then, directly across from the passage, articulate your thinking. What thoughts, concerns, ideas, arise? Fully flush out your thinking to help foster a dialogue with the text.
- c. Demonstrate a consistent conversation with the text for the entirety of the book. Show me how you, as a strong and developed reader, think about the story being told, its implications about America, and what it means to be a part of, or a part from, American society.

CRITICAL READERS will show that you can “read between the lines” of the text. You think about the meaning of the text in terms of a larger or universal significance and as an aspect of self or life in general. You create your own meaning through personal connections and references to other texts. You carry an

ongoing dialogue with the writer; you question, agree, disagree, appreciate, or object to his/her claims. You are aware of connotations and recognize the impact of language on the audience.

B. Introduction to Rhetoric & American Values

Rhetoric is the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially in the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.

1. Read [David McCullough's Commencement Speech to Wellesley High School \(2012\)](#).
2. Craft an analysis of the speech by fulfilling the following expectations:
 - a. Identify three devices McCullough uses in his speech (e.g., metaphor, repetition, symbolism, juxtaposition, diction, imagery, allusion, anecdote, etc. - ANY LITERARY DEVICE IS UP FOR GRABS) and analyze WHY he uses each particular device. Consider the effect he is trying to have on his audience in the moment that the device is used.
 - b. Research and reference the historical context in which the speech was given. Consider what was happening in America at the time the speech was delivered, and why is the speaker delivering this message to this particular audience. Consider how the historical context affects the content of the speech.
 - c. End your response by answering the following question: What does this speech reveal about American values?

Format: (two-page maximum, Times New Roman, 12pt, double-spaced)

Formative: 50pts

Part 2 A.P. United States History

All assignments should be posted to the designated title in Classwork on our Google Classroom page.

1. **Comparing historical sources: Read *Give Me Liberty!* chapters 1-3 and *A Voyage Long and Strange* chapters 9 and 13.**
 - A. As you read [Give Me Liberty!](#), take notes on each of the three chapters. These will not be collected and are for your own review. Taking notes on assigned readings will be invaluable for your preparation for all assessments.
 - B. Read the two chapters linked below from Tony Horowitz's *A Voyage Long and Strange*.

[Chapter 9 The Mississippi Conquistador's Last Stand](#)

[Chapter 13 Plymouth - A Tale of Two Rocks](#)
 - C. For each of the topics below, different information is presented in *Give Me Liberty!* versus *A Voyage Long and Strange*. Consider a piece of information that was left out of the text *Give Me Liberty!* and explain what information, if any, from *A Voyage Long and Strange* should have been included in the text and why. Also consider the differences in specific words chosen to describe the topic in one text versus the other and provide examples. **Complete one paragraph for each of the topics.** Paragraphs should be 6-8 sentences. (Focus on these three topics only)
Formative: 30 points
 - a. Spanish conquest
 - b. Founding of Plymouth Colony
 - c. Mound builders

2. Sample Question for the AP US exam.

Use information from *Give me Liberty!*

- A. Using your knowledge of United States history, answer parts a and b.
- Briefly explain why **ONE (1)** individual residing within one of the following colonies best represents a value that still shapes the thinking, behavior and actions of Americans today. Consider a value as a non-tangible principle that guides decisions and actions. Provide at least **ONE** piece of textual evidence from the specific analysis of the individual within the colony to support your explanation. Be certain it is clear which colony and which specific individual you are writing about.
 - Massachusetts Bay Colony
 - Chesapeake Colony
 - Middle colonies: New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania colonies
 - Briefly explain why an individual from ONE of the other options above reflects a value in opposition to the value identified above.
Formative 20 points

3. Differing Perspectives “A People’s History” vs. “A Patriot’s History: ” Zinn vs. Schweikert et. al.: Investigating Bias.

- A. Read the two chapters linked below and in a brief response of one page, explain the greatest differences between these two versions of history and how the same facts can be interpreted so differently. Use specific quotes to support your claim on the difference. What are the different motives of the writers, and are both legitimate in your opinion? Explain. **Formative: 20 points**

Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States Chapter 1 Columbus, the Indians and Human Progress* found in the following link:

<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncoll.html>

Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen’s *A Patriot’s History of the United States Introduction and Columbus* material in Chapter 1 found in the following link

<http://ready4itall.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/A-Patriots-History-of-the-US-Ytsewolf.pdf>

- B. What major news story over the summer interests you? Choose one story and find a contrast of opinions from credible news organizations (i.e. Peggy Noonan *WSJ* vs. Maureen Dowd *NYT*). This should be two arguments presenting differing views on the same story. Cut and paste both stories (with links) into a google doc. In a single page response at the end, investigate: how do the same facts lead to different conclusions? Where does the truth lie? **Formative: 20 points**

4. History around us:

- A. Visit a historical site, with one of your classmates, a family member or friend or by yourself and share your experience. Take a picture of you at the location and upload to our [Amstud summer Field Trip padlet](#). There are plenty of historical sites to visit here in Fairfield

or any of the surrounding towns and cities. Contact any of the town historical societies or museums or just do a Google search of historical sites to visit in Fairfield County. **Formative: 5 points**

- B. Write a Horwitz inspired fragment from your experience. If you visited with a classmate then write it together. You can even type out or record yourself having a conversation. Emulate how Horwitz moved from narrative to commentary and his mode of lifting a facade to reveal an inner truth. Your site could be a NJ boardwalk, an Appalachian cabin, or one of the many historic buildings, memorials, cemeteries or monuments here in Fairfield. This should not be longer than 1 page (2 if you are working with a partner) but certainly it can be done effectively in ½ a page (1 page if with a partner) **Formative: 10 points**