

*AP US Government and Politics – Summer Reading Guide*

*What Unites Us: Reflections on Patriotism* was written by Dan Rather and Elliot Kirschner. Rather was lead anchor of CBS News from 1981 – 2005 and employed by CBS News from 1962 -2006. One of his earliest assignments was covering the integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962 (a topic we will cover during the academic year). Kirschner was a longtime producer for CBS News and worked closely with Dan Rather throughout his career. The book is a collection of sixteen essays organized into five broad categories: Freedom, Community, Exploration, Responsibility, and Character. The authors focused on core beliefs that they feel define Americans. They reflect on what they see uniting us as Americans and remind readers of the values they think have historically made our country great as the country contends with a growing political divide in more recent times.

Some questions to consider as you read:

- 1) What do you think of the authors' definition of patriotism?
- 2) How do you think Rather's youth in East Texas impacted his feelings about patriotism?
- 3) Within each of the five broad categories, which essay would you argue for as the most important for bringing the country together?
- 4) Obviously, the authors feel strongly about the value of each of these essay topics. Are there any that you think are worthy of debate, as far as the inclusion of them within the five broad categories?
- 5) Choose one quote that you think best captures the message of this book and be able to support your choice.
- 6) An *Afterword* was added, covering *Citizenship*. What do you think of the concerns that the authors raise in that *Afterword* as you look ahead to the 2024 election?