

American Studies Summer Work 2024



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. These assignments will commence your rigorous study of the American experience. The writing you submit 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

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

A. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*, Wilkerson: Essay

1. Critically read and annotate the text
2. Compose an essay that responds to the following question: *Where do you think you fit in America's "caste?" (In your community, in the State of Connecticut, in America, in your school, in your family, etc.) What are your thoughts about Wilkerson's argument in the book? Can you draw from observations and/or experiences that support, refute, or qualify her argument? Is this a history book? Why or why not?*
3. Select pivotal quotes/passages from the novel that help develop your arguments with proper MLA in-text citations). Analyze how those passages contribute to your arguments.

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

Summative: 70 pts

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 carry an ongoing dialogue with the writer; you question, agree, disagree, appreciate, or object to their 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 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 this audience in particular given the context in which the speech is delivered.
 - b. 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)

Summative: 30 pts

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 and must **include quotes and page numbers** from both sources. (Focus on these three topics only)

Summative: 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.
- a. 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. Try to choose lesser known historical figures. Use quotes from *Give Me Liberty!* with page numbers.
 - Massachusetts Bay Colony
 - Chesapeake Colony
 - Middle colonies: New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania colonies
 - b. Briefly explain why an individual from ONE of the other options above reflects a value in opposition to the value identified above.

Summative 20 points

3.

- A. What major news event 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? **Include quotes from both articles.**

Formative: 20 points

4. History around us:

- A. Visit a historical site or learn the history of any place or structure even if it isn't labeled a historical site. Visit it with one of your classmates, a family member, a 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](#). Be certain to include your name, where you visited and describe the history. Show that you learned something new. There are plenty of historical sites and places that have historical significance to visit here in Fairfield or any of the surrounding towns and cities. Maybe you're traveling somewhere this summer in the United States, if so use someplace on your trip. Do not do the Burr Mansion or the Ogden House as it has been done too many times and its boring for me. Think outside the box. Extra bonus points if you **also** visit Switzer's Pharmacy in Southport, meet Jerry Ringel the pharmacist and learn the history.

Formative: 20 points