SUMMER READING QUESTIONS

The Civil War Era*

Historian,

Welcome to The Civil War Era*. This document will help you organize your thoughts as you complete the summer reading assignments. I will give you a test on the summer reading during the first week of school; you may bring in handwritten notes for that test.

I encourage you to read closely and deeply. Were I you, I would annotate the text with care.

Good Luck — and Enjoy Your Summer!

Mr. Lengel

Summer Reading Assignment:

- *Fateful Lightning: A New History of the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Allen C. Guelzo. Pages 3-137
- *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*, Charles B. Dew

Suggested Level of Detail for Notes:

The following questions form a rough outline of Chapter One of *Fateful Lightning*. I have given you these questions to suggest the level of understanding I would like you to bring to class. I trust that you can form your own questions and make your own outline for the rest of the assigned reading.

Fateful Lighting: A New History of the Civil War and Reconstruction, CHAPTER ONE: A NATION ANNOUNCING ITSELF

1. Why does Guelzo start his book with Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address?" What is his goal in setting the scene with a speech given at the very end of the war?
2. On page 6 and following, Guelzo argues that one fundamental issue that led to the "abyss" of the Civil War was the idiosyncratic political structure of the United States as established and developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What is his argument? Do you agree with him?
3. On page 9 and following, Guelzo highlights the role that religion played in establishing a common American culture. What are his main points?
4. On page 10 and following, Guelzo discusses an intellectual tradition that characterized the young United States. How was that tradition built on European influences, and how did Americans transmute it into something new?
5. Having spent the first twelve pages of his book discussing forces that brought people together, Guelzo shifts to discussing centrifugal forces. What are those forces he lists?
6. Guelzo devotes serious space from page 12 to page 16 or so about the friction between democratic republicanism and liberal capitalism. How does he define each term, and what implications does he think that push—pull had on history?
7. What effects did the dynamic from Question 6 have on the early political-economic history of the United States?
8. From pages 16-23 or so, Guelzo covers many events that should be familiar to you from US History Survey. What shading does he add to the events you learned about last year? How would you characterize the lens through which he is analyzing these events? Do you agree with his read of the history? If not, where would you push back?

9. The SOCIOLOGY FOR THE SOUTH section runs from pages 23-40. In it, Guelzo details several trends and concepts peculiar to the South.
    a. Pages 23-26 or so detail the cotton boom. What does Guelzo attribute this boom to? What were its drawbacks as described by Guelzo?
    b. Guelzo argues that there was a sort of cognitive dissonance in the white South — on the one hand, they clung to cotton because it was profitable, but on the other hand, they largely refused to diversify their economy even when they realized that they needed to do so. What explanations does Guelzo give for this split thinking?
    c. Pages 26-28: Guelzo introduces us to his contention that the South was characterized by a "Romantic conservatism." What does he mean by this?
    d. Page 28 and following: Guelzo gives us his first lengthy discussion of southern slavery. To what extent does Guelzo argue that American enslavement is part of a long historical trend in Western culture from the classical world onward?
    e. How did the general practice of subservient labor turn into race-based slavery?
    f. How did enslaved people demonstrate their own humanity?
    g. On page 32 and following, Guelzo points out the "universal hymn of the South." What was this hymn?
    h. One important concept to remember moving forward is that "the South" was not and never has been one single unified thing. On page 33 and following, Guelzo points out several areas in which the South was split. How did the following factors contribute to a picture of a complicated region?
        i. The ideal of liberal democratic order vs. the proud recognition that enslavement was a part of the basic fibre of the South
        ii. The "three Souths" (pp 33-35)
    i. One of the great questions of the nineteenth century is why non-slaveholding whites in the antebellum south were so enthusiastically pro-slavery. What reasoning does Guelzo give for their loyalty to the slaveholding elite on pages 38-41?
10. In "AND I WILL BE HEARD," (pages 41-53), Guelzo outlines several sources of growing friction between the North and South in the Antebellum period. How does he think the following helped lead to a collision between the two regions?
    a. Two "facts of geography" argument
        i. Change of slavery from a national institution into a regional one
            1. Subset of Southern anti-slavery (or at least squeamish-about-slavery) thinkers
        ii. Abundance of western land
11. 47-50: How and why did the northern abolition movement come to represent a counterbalance to the "slave power" in the South?
12. Pages 50-53 are largely about the extent to which slavery was enmeshed in the Constitution. How would Guelzo answer that question?