



A.P. African American Studies Summer Assignment 2026

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Welcome to AP African American Studies

This packet is designed to help incoming students begin the year with background knowledge, source-reading practice, and geographic awareness. Read carefully, answer in complete sentences, and bring your completed work on the second day of school unless Canvas gives another date.

Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School | White Tigers

Course Welcome

AP African American Studies is an interdisciplinary course that examines the diversity of African American experiences through direct encounters with authentic and varied sources. Students will study history, literature, art, geography, music, politics, economics, and culture. Students will also learn how to analyze evidence, ask thoughtful questions, and explain ideas clearly.

At its core, AP African American Studies is not:

- **A political movement or advocacy course.** This class is an academic course based on evidence, careful thinking, and primary sources. It is not political indoctrination or graduate-level Critical Race Theory.
- **A replacement for U.S. History.** This course does not only focus on the United States. It is a global and interdisciplinary elective that studies the history and culture of the African diaspora. This history began long before the American colonies.
- **A low-rigor or rigid class.** This is a college-level course with high expectations. Students will read complex texts, study different types of sources, and complete an independent research project. The course also grows as new research and scholarship develop.

What You Will Turn In

Assignment Part	What You Do
Part 1: Textbook Reading Guide	Read the Chapter 1 excerpt from <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , then define key terms and answer review questions. *Click here to view Chapter 1.
Part 2: Black Experience Reflection and Theme Connection	Choose one Black cultural, historical, artistic, or community experience. Reflect on its meaning and connect it to one AP African American Studies theme.
Part 3: African Geography Map	Label major landforms, rivers, cities, empires, and trade routes on the map.

Student Work Expectations - Use your own words. Parts 1 and 2 Responses must be neatly handwritten. Answer every question in complete sentences. Cite the source when a question asks for evidence. AI may not write the assignment for you. You may use tools for spelling, reading support, or brainstorming, but the thinking and final answers must be yours.

Part 1: Textbook Reading Guide

Reading: Chapter 1, ***“African Origins: Beginnings to ca. 1600,” from Freedom on My Mind: A History of African Americans, with Documents.*** This reading starts the course before the United States existed. It explains Africa as the homeland of humankind, introduces early African societies, and shows why African American history must be understood as part of a larger African diaspora.

Short textbook excerpt to guide your reading - The textbook explains that African American history is connected to American history, but it also reaches back to Africa and across the African diaspora. It asks students to think about freedom, culture, identity, migration, and resistance as connected parts of history.

Primary Source Skill - A primary source is a source created during the time period being studied. Ask: Who made it? When? Where? For whom? What does it reveal?

Directions: Define each term using the textbook excerpt. Do not copy full sentences. Write a clear definition that a classmate could understand. **Write the definition on lined notebook paper.**

Key Term
Diaspora
Dynasty
Hominins

Hunter-gatherers
Manumission
Matrilineal Succession
Oba
Patrilineal Succession
Pharaoh
Sahel
Trans-Saharan trade

Part 1 Review Questions

1. When does African American history begin? Explain why the history of Africa matters when studying African American history.

2. Africa has many climates, landforms, and regions. How did geography affect the history of African peoples?

3. What was the trans-Saharan trade, and how did it affect West Africa?

4. Slavery existed in different forms in African societies. What were some of those forms, and how were they different from racial slavery in the Americas?

5. Choose one early African society from the reading. What made it significant?

Part 2: Black Experience Reflection and Theme Connection

African American Studies includes many types of evidence and many forms of lived experience. For this assignment, choose one Black cultural, historical, artistic, literary, family, or community experience. Your choice should help you think about African American Studies beyond the textbook.

Important Note - Choose an experience that is respectful, school appropriate, and connected to learning

Step 1: Choose one experience. You may choose one of the options below or another teacher-approved option.

- History: Visit or research a Black history site, historical marker, museum exhibit, cemetery, church, neighborhood, or local landmark.
- Art: View artwork by a Black artist through a museum, online museum collection, public mural, gallery, or classroom-approved source.
- Literature: Read a short story, poem, speech, essay, or book excerpt by a Black author.
- Music: Listen to an album, song collection, spiritual, blues, jazz, gospel, hip-hop, or other work connected to Black culture and history.
- Foodways: Learn about a food tradition connected to the African diaspora, family history, community life, or cultural memory.
- Dance or performance: Watch or attend a performance connected to African, African American, Caribbean, or broader Black diasporic culture.
- Family or community history: Interview a family member, elder, mentor, or community member about an experience connected to Black history, culture, education, work, migration, or community life.
- Digital option: Explore a credible archive, museum website, documentary, podcast episode, or AP African American Studies source set.

Step 2: Connect your experience to one AP African American Studies course theme. Review the four themes below before writing your reflection. Carefully read the explanation of each of the themes located in the [AP African American Studies CED](#) (attached). *Click [here](#) to view attachment.

AP Theme	What It Helps Us Study
Migration and the African Diaspora	This theme focuses on forced and voluntary movement, the African diaspora, and how people of African descent built communities in many regions.
Intersections of Identity	This theme asks how race, class, gender, region, religion, nationality, and other identities shape people's experiences.
Creativity, Expression, and the Arts	This theme studies art, music, literature, language, performance, and other creative forms as evidence of history and culture.
Resistance and Resilience	This theme explores how people resisted oppression, asserted agency, built community, and created survival strategies.

Part 2 Written Reflection

Reflection Directions - Write no more than one page. Use complete sentences. Explain what you experienced or studied, why it matters, and how it connects to one AP African American Studies theme.

1. What experience or source did you choose? Why did you choose it?

2. Describe what you saw, read, heard, watched, or learned. Include specific details.

3. How did this experience affect your thinking about African American Studies?

4. Which AP theme connects best to your experience? Explain the connection clearly.

5. What question do you want to explore further when the course begins?

Part 3: African Geography Map

Directions: Use colored pencils to label the map. For deserts and empires, draw a rough boundary. For trade routes, draw lines or arrows. Use a map source to check your work. The goal is not just labeling. The goal is to understand how geography shaped movement, trade, settlement, and culture.

Category and Color	Labels to Add
Deserts, brown	Sahara, Kalahari, Namib
Oceans and seas, blue	Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea
Rivers and water, green	Nile, Zambezi, Orange, Congo, Niger, Kasai
Mountains, orange	Atlas Mountains, Nuba Mountains, Ethiopian Mountains, Rwenzori Mountains, Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya, Mount Karisimbi
Empires and kingdoms, red	Mali, Songhai, Kush, Egyptian, Yoruba, Ashanti, Congo, Zulu
Cities and places, purple	Timbuktu, Aksum, Morocco, Cairo, Jenne, Ethiopia, Carthage, Mbanza Kongo

Trade routes, black	Trans-Saharan trade routes
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References

College Board. (2024). AP African American Studies course and exam description. College Board.

White, D. G., Bay, M., & Martin, W. E., Jr. (2021). Freedom on my mind: A history of African Americans, with documents (3rd ed.). Bedford/St. Martin's.

Jackson, L. (2024). A.P. African American Studies summer assignment 2024. Chapelgate Christian Academy.