AP US History
Mr. D'Amico/Mr. Gizzo
Summer Assignment 2026-27

To develop a worthwhile understanding of United States history, we must consider the varied perspectives of the many individuals and events that have made American history so rich. Your task this summer is to begin to consider American history from different perspectives. Please select and read one of the following historical novels or non-fiction books.

Berkin, Carol. *Civil War Wives*. (384 pages)
Bernstein, R.B. *Thomas Jefferson*. (253)
Brookhiser, Richard. *Alexander Hamilton, American*. (240)
Brookhiser, Richard. *Founders' Son: A Life of Abraham Lincoln*. (376)
Catton, Bruce. *The Civil War*. (400)
Clinton, Catherine. *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*. (304)
Cooper, James Fenimore. *Last of the Mohicans*. (Historical novel of the French & Indian War) (389)
Douglass, Frederick. *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. (496)
Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. (320)
Foner, Eric. *The Story of American Freedom*. (448)
Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. (460)
Keith, LeeAnna. *When it was Grand: The Radical Republican History of the Civil War*. (352)
Kidd, Sue Monk. *The Invention of Wings: A Novel.* (Historical novel about the Grimké sisters) (384)
McCullough, David. *1776*. (386)
Meacham, Jon. *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*. (448)
Merry, Robert. *Where They Stand: The American Presidents in the Eyes of the Voters and Historians*. (320)
Morgan, Edmund S. *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. (320)
Paulsen, Michael Stokes. *The Constitution: An Introduction*. (368)
Peters, Ralph. *Cain at Gettysburg: A Novel*. (448)
Reed, Lawrence W. & Folsom Jr., Burton W. *A Republic – If We Can Keep It*. (340) (I have extra copies if you choose this book. Come see me before the summer break.)
Roberts, Cokie. *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*. (384)
Roberts, Cokie. *Ladies of Liberty: The Women Who Shaped Our Nation*. (481)
Robinson, Jackie. *I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography*. (320)
Robson, Nancy Taylor. *A Love Like No Other: Abigail & John Adams, A Modern Love Story*. (Historical novel about the Adams' lives together and apart) (376)
Shaara, Michael. *The Killer Angels*. (Historical novel about the Civil War battle of Gettysburg) (368)
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. (Historical novel of Native American experience post-WWII) (243)
Silver, Peter. *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America*. (434)
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (Historical novel of life under slavery) (438)
Taranto, J. & Leo, L. *Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and Worst in the White House*. (304)
Thomas, Clarence. *My Grandfather's Son: A Memoir*. (289)
Thomas, Evan. *First: Sandra Day O'Connor*. (496)
Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. (A transcendentalist's memoir of life and self-discovery) (262)
Williams, Juan. *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*. (336)
Williams, Juan. *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary*. (Biography of 1st African American US Supreme Court justice) (512)
Wood, Gordon S. *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Great*. (336)
Yenne, Bill. *Indian Wars: The Campaign for the American West*. (336)

Goal: The summer assignment in AP US History is designed to help you to review some of the key events that transformed our nation, as well as to reflect on how we have perceived and narrated the story of our nation from the vantage of hindsight. It should assist you in developing engaging and accessible background knowledge for your college-level AP course, and help you meet your goals for success on the AP exam.

While it might be tempting to wait and do the reading assignments during the first few days before the due date, working throughout the summer allows you the ability to review some of the important concepts at your own pace, without feeling rushed or under an imminent deadline. Spread it out to improve your own understanding, time-management, and keep the stress levels low. The books listed have all been top-sellers, and can be purchased at your local bookstore or online, or found in public library systems. **Note that some books feature adult themes. Parents/guardians have the final word on which books their student will read**.

Reading Assignment: Select **one** historical novel or non-fiction/memoir book from the list provided above. You are responsible for procuring copies of the books you have chosen. If you cannot buy one, it is usually available for check out from the public library. You may also want to take advantage of used books available through on-line sources at very reasonable prices. Regardless of the method you choose, **don't wait until the last minute**. It is recommended that you buy a copy of your book, as annotating (even electronically) is a helpful reading tool. Small post-it notes could be used for books you do not own.

Specific Instructions for Written Assignments:

- Use MLA formatting
- Use formal and academic voice
- Use **12-pt conventional font, single-spaced** (do not double-space)
- Submit/share all your work in electronic format, as a single document – either Microsoft Word or Google Docs

Writing Assignment: Analysis Paper

Please read one book of fiction or non-fiction selected from the reading list. Your assignment is to write an analysis paper that focuses on key portions of the book, as chosen by you. **Your paper should be approximately four to five (4-5) pages long**. It should include enough detail to make a good paper that clearly explains your analysis. You should make references to the text to support and illustrate your points. You should not be overly wordy, and should be cautious when using direct quotations.

(1) Write two to three paragraphs summarizing the key focus and themes of the book. *This should not exceed ¼ of your paper; if it does, you are writing a book report and should revise your paper immediately*. What is the historical intent of the author? What major theme(s) is(are) the author interested in exploring in the book? To assist in this part's discussion, investigate the author's background so as to consider how it impacted the author's reasoning in writing the story/narrative. Please be sure to clearly explain your reasoning and conclusions.

(2) Select **four (4)** key historical events, ideas, and/or concepts that are explored in the book. For **each** of your selected 4 events, ideas, and/or concepts, briefly summarize and explain **why** it was so significant in American history (suggested 2-3 paragraphs each). In fiction, you should be explaining how the event/idea/concept is a reflection of US history at the time. For both fiction and non-fiction, be sure to look out for and explain key connections to past and/or future events and themes from US history. Be sure to read the entire book, as often the historical context for an event is discussed in later chapters.

Due Dates:
Completed and turned in by **Wednesday, September 9th: due with no penalty**
Completed and turned in by **Monday, September 14th: late – 20% penalty applied**
Completed and turned in by **Wednesday, September 16th: last date for acceptance – 33% penalty applied**.

★ **This assignment will be the equivalent of a major unit test for point value.**

Assessment: As with all individual assignments for Eastchester High School, you must do your own work, and you should do your best-quality work. Do not just quote sections of the book. Use your own skills and understanding to do the assignment.

A range – Written reflection and analysis of the significance of the events indicate critical and close reading, thoughtful engagement and analysis. Strongly grounded in historical context. Very few if any grammatical or formatting errors are present. Academic voice. All directions followed.

B range – Written reflection and written analysis of the significance of the events indicate predominantly critical and close reading, and mostly thoughtful engagement and analysis, with some historical context. Some few grammatical or formatting errors may be present. Academic voice. All directions followed.

C range – Written reflection and analysis of the significance of the events indicate some critical and close reading and analysis, although understanding of the text and historical context may be superficial. Very few if any grammatical or formatting errors are present. Academic voice. All directions are followed.

D or F range – Not acceptable for AP-level work, and does not engage with or analyze the material in any meaningful way. It is unclear whether the book was read, or understood. Multiple errors in grammar, voice and formatting may be present.

Questions? (Please put "summer reading" in the subject line of your email)

We do not anticipate that this will be an assignment you will need help on, but if you are having trouble understanding any portion of the assignment or reading, you may contact us at our respective EHS e-mail addresses. We check e-mail periodically over the summer, and will respond as quickly as possible.

We are hopeful you will enjoy your reading. You should see this as an opportunity to learn and review important information that will help you in our APUSH class for the 2025-26 school year.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. D'Amico and Mr. Gizzo

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