American Studies
Summer Work 2026

Google Classroom Code:

omjkrmxz



Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1 by Georgia O'Keeffe, 1932, Sotheby's

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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 all text references must be cited 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. 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. Ensure you use direct quotes from the speech for your analysis. 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

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A. 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 *Give Me Liberty!* with a quote and page # to support your analysis of the individual within the colony. Be certain it is clear which colony and which specific individual you are writing about. Try to choose lesser known historical figures. Analysis means you are explaining how and why the individual represents the value then and how and why it has continued today. .

- 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**

B. 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 2025-26 Historical 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 it's boring for me. Think outside the box.

Formative: 20 points

Part 3: AP American Studies

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

Synthesizing History and Literature:
Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks & Chapters 1 - 3 of *Give Me Liberty!

A. Read *Give Me Liberty!* and 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. Critically read and annotate Geraldine Brooks' novel *Caleb's Crossing*. These will not be collected. Annotations are invaluable for deepening your understanding of literature.

C. **Choose two groups** identified in both texts (e.g., women, Puritans, Native Americans, etc.). **For each group**, write a multi-paragraph response to the following question: **What were the adversities faced and how did this particular group work to overcome them?** Each response should contain at least one quote from each chapter (1 - 3) in *Give Me Liberty!* and at least one quote from each third of *Caleb's Crossing* with proper in-text citations.

Format: (**two-page maximum PER response, 4 pages total, Times New Roman, 12pt, double-spaced)**

Summative: 60 pts total
(30 pts each)