

During the year, in the AP American Studies course, we will read fiction, non-fiction, and poetry to examine American experiences, voices, styles and the ways in which language is used to impact, persuade, and entertain readers.

For AP American Studies, we value writing that shows a precision of language, focus of topic, use of relevant support, and a personal voice that reveals a critical and reflective outlook. For AP American Studies, we value the kind of thinking that shows authentic creativity and curiosity.

The following assignments will provide you with a foundation for ideas and writing styles we plan to discuss throughout the year. The completion of these assignments is a course requirement and the expectation is that they are prepared thoroughly for the first day of class. Students who have not completed the summer assignments by the first day of class may not remain enrolled in the American Studies course.

AMERICAN STUDIES SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT: **AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

- * All assignments must be typed – 12pt double-spaced.
- * Use your preferred method of note-taking - double entry journal, sticky notes, underlining and annotation, etc. to guide your study and consideration of key literary and rhetorical elements
- * Be prepared to discuss and write about these works in a thought-provoking manner.

1. Read John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*

*Create a 500-word essay that answers the following question: Why did this novel win the Pulitzer Prize?

3. Read the following ten essays from *The Best American Essays 2007* edited by David Foster Wallace.

*Write ONE sentence, for each essay, that answers the following question: What is the author's intent in writing the essay?

- A) Ian Buruma's *The Freedom to Offend*
- B) Mark Danner's *Iraq: The War of the Imagination*
- C) Malcolm Gladwell's *What the Dog Saw*
- D) Garret Keizer's *Loaded*

- E) Louis Menand's *Name that Tone*
- F) Cynthia Ozick's *Out from Xanadu*
- G) Molly Peacock's *Passion Flowers in Winter*
- H) Marilynne Robinson's *Onward, Christian Liberals*
- I) Roger Scruton's *A Carnivore's Credo*
- J) Peter Singer's *What Should a Billionaire Give and What Should You?*

Required books to purchase:

- 1) John Kennedy Toole's, *A Confederacy of Dunces*
- 2) *The Best American Essays 2007* edited by David Foster

If you have any questions about the summer assignment, you may contact me at gmishuck@fairfield.k12.ct.us

American Studies Summer Reading Assignment: US History

In your text, *Inventing America*, you are to read and take notes on chapters 1-4. This will cover the period of early exploration in the western hemisphere, the competition for empire, as well as the settlement of North America and the development of colonial society.

For each chapter, you are expected to write ONE essay. Each essay should be typed and its length should be approximately two pages. Essays must have an introductory paragraph with background information on the topic, and a thesis statement. Essays must also have supporting paragraphs that provide both evidence and analysis of the argument presented, as well as a conclusion.

Chapter 1 Men Prone to Wonder pages 5-35

Choose ONE of the following:

- A. “With the dawn of the 16th century, there came together in Europe both the motivation and the means to explore and colonize territory across the seas.”

Assess the validity of this statement with respect to (a) religion (b) trade and (c) technology.

- B. “European colonists generally viewed the Native Americans as inferior people, who could be exploited for the benefit of the colonists.”

Assess the validity of this statement.

The following questions should be used to guide your reading for Chapter 1 and are NOT to be answered in written format but understand these will appear in future assessments in class.

1. What were the motives that drove European exploration during the 1400's and 1500's? What did the monarchs, the explorers themselves, and other parties hope to accomplish? What did they actually gain?
2. What natural resources, technological knowledge, and cultural strengths did various Native American peoples possess in the centuries before European conquest? Why were these things important?
3. What did the Europeans bring to the New World, in the way of both tangible and non-tangible items? What did they take home that influenced European culture?
4. What new knowledge did Europeans acquire in the process of their exploration? How did it affect their assumptions about the world?
5. Explain why the animals and plants (list/name several) of the New World become important in Europe, and what European animals and plants helped the New World.

Chapter 2 The European Settlement of North America pages 36-72

Choose **ONE** of the following:

- A. In what ways did the English colonies develop differently from the Spanish and the French colonies?
- B. “From the beginning, the English colonies had democratic characteristics.”

Assess the validity of this statement with reference to majority rule and representative government in Virginia and Massachusetts.

The following questions should be used to guide your reading for Chapter 2 and are NOT to be answered in written format but understand these will appear in future assessments in class.

1. What was the link between the Reformation in Europe and the settlement of America? How did the split between Catholics and Protestants affect life in the New World?
2. What was the role of religious belief in the establishment of the American colonies? Be Specific. What were the limits of religious tolerance?

3. What problems did the first colonists in Jamestown face? How did they cope?
4. Compare and contrast the history of settlement in the Chesapeake and in New England. What were the differences in government, culture, and social values?
5. Discuss the nature of the Puritans' religious beliefs. How did those shape the communities they created in America? What did the notion of a "city on a hill" mean?

Chapter 3 Empires pages 73-104

Choose **ONE** of the following:

- A. Compare and contrast the English relationship and the French relationship with the Native Americans.
- B. "Beginning with the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the English government made a continuous effort to exercise control over its American colonies."

Give examples to prove this statement.

The following questions should be used to guide your reading for Chapter 3 and are NOT to be answered in written format but understand these will appear in future assessments in class.

1. How did changes of reign in Britain during the 1600's affect policy toward the New World settlements? How was life in the settlements affected? Be specific. How did the Crown attempt to maintain control over distant territories, and what complications arose?
2. Describe settlers' relationships with Native Americans during this period, with specific reference to King Philip's War and Bacon's Rebellion. What do such episodes suggest about the tensions inherent in American life of the 1600s and about the problems of government?
3. What was at stake in the rivalries between England, Spain, and France in this period? How were Americans involved? How were Native Americans involved?
4. What happened in Salem in 1692, and why? What does it reveal about the structure of colonial society? What does it reveal about the beliefs and fears of Americans at that time?
5. How did British rulers envision the proper economic relationship between their country and the American colonies? How did their assumptions and decisions affect Americans, and how did people

react? Discuss the Navigation Acts and their effect.

Chapter 4 Benjamin Franklin's World pages 103-136

Choose **ONE** of the following:

- A. Why did slavery in the colonies grow more rapidly in the last decades of the 17th century than in the earlier decades of that century?
- B. Comment on the extent to which each of the following contributed to a more democratic society in the American colonies: (1) the Great Awakening (b) immigration (c) the Zenger case.
- C. "The American colonists of the 18th century were slow to develop academic and artistic pursuits." Assess the validity of the this statement by commenting on THREE of the following

Architecture
Science

Literature
Education

Painting

The following questions should be used to guide your reading for Chapter 4 and are NOT to be answered in written format but understand these will appear in future assessments in class.

1. What were the major factors driving colonial population growth during this period? How did this sizable population increase affect political, economic, and social conditions?
2. Compare and contrast the systems of indentured servitude and slavery as they existed in colonial America. What were the similarities and differences? What role did race and ethnicity play in these systems? How did the existence of these systems shape colonial economic development and social conditions?
3. Evaluate the significance of Ben Franklin's science during the 18th century. What did it mean to both his fellow American colonists and his European intellectual counterparts?
4. Why were the wars fought by Britain and France not necessarily advantageous to the American colonists, and how did the results of the French and Indian War affect the colonists?

You will be tested with multiple choice questions from the first 4 chapters in the first week of school when you return. Basically know your chapters well. I encourage you to utilize the questions provided for each of the chapters to guide your preparation.