

AP US History Summer Reading Assignment

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Stuart Pollock
spollock@sdja.com
AP US History
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Welcome to AP US History! I applaud your decision to enroll in this course at such a pivotal time in our nation's history. With the volatile state of the global economy and the challenges facing America domestically, this is an excellent time to analyze the United States, its storied past, and its promising future.

We will open the semester with a discussion of where America is today, philosophically. You can think of this as a "temperature check," whereby we may analyze changing American identity, Americans' current values and beliefs, and connections to our founding principles. To prepare yourself for this discussion, I would like you to spend a portion of your summer absorbing news from various sources and familiarizing yourself with the issues America faces today, both domestically and abroad. Knowledge of contemporary America will be needed to complete one of the following project options.

Option 1: The Great American Collage [35 Points]

- ✓ **Consistently read newspaper and/or magazine sources; listen to the radio, live/travel abroad and look at "America" or "Americans" from a more objective perspective; visit museums; or watch the news in an effort to get a better feel for what it means to be an American in today's world.** Try to make your exposure to this information as broad as possible. Consider articles from various sources. Some ideas might include the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, San Diego Union Tribune, Los Angeles Times, US Magazine, People, NPR, The Economist, and so forth. You are not limited to print sources, but at least 2-3 print sources are required.
- ✓ **Define identity and then explain your view of American identity in a 1-2 page written response that is clearly based on the information you've gathered from your readings or from other various sources.** *No in text citation is needed unless you make a direct quote.*
- ✓ **Include a works cited page that lists the different sources you read in MLA format.** Please refer to the formatting style at the bottom of this page.
- ✓ **Represent the written understanding of American identity you completed above in the form of a collage (carefully arranged quotes and/or images & symbols) whose meaning and arrangement you would then explain to the class.**

Grading will be based on the depth of your insight as well as a clear, meaningful representation of modern day examples that illustrate your informed perception of American identity. The written response, works cited page, and collage will all be graded.

Option 2: Monitor the 2012 Presidential Campaign [35 Points]

- ✓ Consistently peruse various news sources (print, audio, and video are all acceptable) throughout the summer that shed some light on the 2012 election.
- ✓ The summer (pre-Labor Day) can often be a slow time in politics, but take the time to familiarize yourself with current issues at the local, state, and federal levels.
- ✓ **Attach a 4-5 page response that addresses ONE of the following prompts:**
 - **Candidates/Issues:** Using the articles you've read over the summer, discuss the main issues that seem to be highlighted in this upcoming election and what each candidate's views on those issues are. Consider whether or not their view matches their political party's stance on that issue. Then explain which candidate's views/rationale appeal to you the most.
 - **Consider the Source:** Follow the reporting of the candidates from various sources (print, audio, video). Based on the coverage of these candidates over a set time period, do certain sources seem to favor one candidate over another? To what extent, if any, do you think such reporting shapes public opinion? How do you anticipate this affecting future campaigns/elections? Be sure to explain your rationale thoroughly.
 - **Pick a Winner:** Of the candidates running for the presidency in 2012, which one do you think has the best chance of winning? [eg. How much do their views match those in their party and does that matter? Consider personality, age, appeal, public opinion, and political experience as well.] How did the articles you read help inform your thinking? Do you think this candidate is the best person to deal with the current issues in our country and our world? Be sure to explain your opinion thoroughly.
- ✓ **Include a works cited page that lists the different sources you read in MLA format.** Please refer to the formatting style at the bottom of this page.
- ✓ Attach **three highlighted articles to your explanation.** These three print sources (newspaper articles, magazine articles, books, blogs, web articles) are required. Beyond that, I would love for you to include at least one non-print source in your works cited page (radio interview, TV appearance, campaign speech, etc.).

Grading will be based on the depth of your insight along with a clearly expressed knowledge of the current 2012 presidential candidates gleaned from your sources. The highlighted articles, works cited page, and the written response will all be graded.

Required Citation Format

To ensure that you are following MLA format, I recommend using the following website as a reference. This is Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) guide to using MLA. Using the links on the left hand side of the page, you will find examples on how to cite a variety of sources.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Please email me with any questions you may have!