

Classical High School Summer Reading 2020



Advanced Placement United States History Summer Reading Essay Assignment

There are **TWO** Summer assignments for Advanced Placement United States History
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Assignment # 1

- Read and understand the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence.
- Use this excerpt as the foundation for *Liberty*.

Task 1: Write a brief biography for the following four authors (see documents below). The biographies should be approximately one page each, concentrating on the writer's major accomplishments and the historical context in which each author lived. Do Not Use web sites such as: Wiki, biography.com, infoplease.com, etc. A works cited page is mandatory

Task 2: Write a persuasive and analytical essay based on the following prompt. *Essay Prompt: Use the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence as the foundation for Liberty: Compare and contrast the ways that liberty was defined by the four writers in the following documents.*

Compare and contrast the documents to each other and to the Declaration of Independence.

- **Comparison:** Describe, compare, identify, and/or evaluate, in various chronological contexts and/or multiple perspectives on a given historical experience.
- **Contrast:** to set off in contrast, appraise in respect to differences, to set side by side in order to show/emphasize differences, note the opposite natures, purposes, to differentiate.
- **Cite** sources in the essay by author's name or document title.
- *Do Not Quote from the documents – Interpret the documents

Essay Writing Tips

Answering essay questions generally requires a good deal of training and practice. Students too often begin to write immediately, creating a string of disconnected, poorly planned thoughts. You need to learn to attack questions methodically and to plan your answers before putting pencil to paper.

Carefully analyze the question, thinking through what is being asked, and identify the elements that must be addressed in the response. Others require you to consider all the similarities between people or events, and then to think of all the ways they are different.

After you have determined what is involved in answering the question, consider what evidence you can incorporate into your response. Review the evidence you learned during the year that relates to the question and then decide how it fits into the analysis. Does it demonstrate a similarity or difference? Does it argue for or against the generalization that is being addressed?

Whenever you offer evidence to illustrate contrast or similarity, clearly state your intent. Then, with additional information or analysis, elaborate on the ways in which these pieces of evidence are similar or different. If there

is evidence that refutes a statement, explain why it argues against the statement. Your answer should reflect an understanding of the subtleties of the questions.

Begin writing only after you have thought through the evidence you plan to use, and have determined what your thesis statement will be. Once you have done this, you will be in a position to answer the question analytically instead of in a rambling narrative. You will also know whether you are going to argue on a side that supports or refutes the statement, and whether similarities outweigh the differences.

Learn how to present your thesis statement: describe your overarching framework and then position your supporting evidence so that it is obviously directed to the question—not just a string of abstract generalizations. State your points as clearly as possible, not leaving it to the reader to infer what is meant or how something illustrates a point.

If you have done the analytical work required prior to writing, you should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of the question. You should be able to state your thesis, introduce the elements that support the thesis, and demonstrate the logic that led you to link the elements in support of the thesis. By applying these ideas, you will construct an excellent essay.

While essay writing in general is a valuable exercise, you may wish to work specifically on free-response questions from previous AP Examinations. This will allow you to compare your own responses with those that have already been scored and evaluated by faculty consultants. Free-response questions are available through the Advanced Placement Program in numerous formats.

Supporting Documents

Declaration of Independence - July 4, 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

David Walker's Appeal - 1829

It will be recollected I promised to demonstrate that we Colored People of these United States, are, the most wretched, degraded and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began, down to the present day, and, that, the white Christians of America (more properly, pretenders to Christianity) treat us more cruel and barbarous than any Heathen nation [ever] did.

We were *stolen* from our mother country, and brought *here*. We have *tilled* the ground and made fortunes for thousands, and still they are not weary of our services. Why should they send us into a far country to die? This land which we have watered with our *tears* and *our blood* is now our *mother country*, and we are well satisfied to stay.

Will any of us leave our homes and go to Africa? I hope not. Those who are ignorant enough to go to Africa, the colored people ought to be glad to have them go, for they are ignorant enough to let the whites *fool* them off to Africa. America is more our country, than it is the whites--we have enriched it with our *blood and tears*.

They tell us that we are an inferior race of beings! incapable of self government!! --We would be injurious to society and ourselves, if tyrants should lose their unjust hold on us!!! That if we were free we would not work, but would live on plunder or theft!!!! That we are the meanest and laziest set of beings in the world!!!! That they are obliged to keep us in bondage to do us good!!!!!! --That we are satisfied to rest in slavery to them and their children!!!!!! --That we ought not to be set free in America, but ought to be sent away to Africa!!!!!!

See your Declaration Americans!!! Do you understand your own language? Hear your language, proclaimed to the world, "We hold these truths to be self evident--that all men are created equal!! That they *are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights*; that among these are life, *liberty*, and the pursuit of happiness!!" Compare your own language above with your cruelties and murders.

Hear your language further! "But when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their *right*, it is their *duty*, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." Now, Americans! I ask you candidly, was your sufferings under Great Britain, one hundredth part as cruel and tyrannical as you have rendered ours under you?

From *The Liberator* by William Lloyd Garrison - 1831

I determined to lift up the issue of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, *within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birth place of liberty*. Let southern oppressors tremble -- let their secret abettors tremble -- let their northern apologists tremble -- let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

Assenting to the "self-evident truth" maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights -- among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population.

I am aware, that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I *will* be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hand of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; -- but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest -- I will not equivocate -- I will not excuse -- I will not retreat a single inch -- AND I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

***Legal Disabilities of Women* by Sarah M. Grimké - 1837**

There are few things which present greater obstacles to the improvement and elevation of woman to her appropriate sphere of usefulness and duty, than the laws which have been enacted to destroy her independence, and crush her individuality; laws which, although they are framed for her government, she has had no voice in establishing, and which rob her of some of her *essential rights*. Woman has no political existence.

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, *the very being, or legal existence of the woman* is suspended during the marriage.... Here now, the very being of a woman, like that of a slave, is absorbed in her master. A man may spend the property he has acquired by marriage at the ale-house, the gambling table, or in any other way that he pleases. Many instances of this kind have come to my knowledge; and women, who have brought their husbands handsome fortunes, have been left, in consequence of the wasteful... habits of their husbands... and [have been] compelled to toil for the support of their families.

A woman's personal property by marriage becomes absolutely her husband's, which, at his death, he may leave entirely away from her.... I know of a woman, who married without the least idea that she was surrendering her rights to all her personal property. All that a slave possesses belongs to his master; he possesses nothing of his own, except what his master chooses he should possess. By the marriage, the husband is absolutely master of the profits of the wife's [assets] during the marriage.

As these abuses do exist, and women suffer intensely from them, our brethren are called upon in this enlightened age, by every sentiment to honor, religion and justice, to repeal these unjust and unequal laws, and restore to woman those rights which they have wrested from her. The various laws which I have transcribed leave women very little more liberty, or power, in some respects, than the slave. I do not wish by any means to intimate that the condition of free women can be compared to that of slaves in suffering, or in degradation; still, I believe the laws which deprive married women of their rights and privileges, have a tendency to lessen them in their own estimation as moral and responsible beings, and that their being made by civil law inferior to their husbands, has a debasing and mischievous effect upon them - teaching them practically the fatal lesson to look unto man for protection and indulgence.

John Brown's Last Speech - 1859

I have, may it please the court, a few words to say. In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted -- the design on my part to free the slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter when I went into Missouri and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.

I have another objection; and that is, it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case)--had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends--either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class--and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

This court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me, further, to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done--as I have always freely admitted I have done--in behalf of His despised poor was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments--I submit; so let it be done!

Let me say one word further.

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances it has been more generous than I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated that from the first what was my intention and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

Let me say also a word in regard to the statements made by some of those connected with me. I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure

them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated.

Now I have done.

Assignment # 2

Read *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* by Timothy Snyder

Question 1. Describe and explain several comparisons Timothy Snyder draws between Donald Trump and Adolf Hitler. What might be the author's purpose for these comparisons? In what ways are the comparisons effective and in what ways are the comparisons exaggerated?

Question 2. According to Snyder, what role do democratic institutions play in preventing tyranny? What responsibility do citizens have to these institutions? Cite examples from the book.

Question 3. Snyder refers to actions supporting tyranny as "the path of least resistance." Using examples from the book and/or current events), explain what Snyder means by this phrase. (In part, see Epilogue)

Victor Klemperer - *Truth Dies in Four Modes*

1. Open hostility to verifiable reality: Presenting inventions and lies as if they were facts.
2. Shamanistic incantation: The fascist style depends upon "endless repetition," designed to make the fictional plausible and the criminal desirable.
3. Magical thinking, or the open embrace of contradiction: The president's campaign involved the promises of cutting taxes for everyone, eliminating the national debt, and increasing spending on both social policy and national defense. Accepting untruth of this radical kind requires a blatant abandonment of reason.
4. Misplaced faith: It involves the sort of self-deifying claims the president made when he said that "I alone can solve it" or "I am your voice." When faith descends from heaven to earth this way, no room remains for the small truths of our individual discernment and experience. Once truth becomes prophetic rather than factual, evidence is irrelevant.

Question 4. Using Klemperer's model (above), current events, **and** examples from *On Tyranny*, describe and explain actions or practices of President Trump that align with each mode. (In part, see Lesson 9 and 10)