

U.S. History Summer Reading Assignment

For your summer reading assignment, I would like you to choose your own book about American history, read it, and write a paper about it. The book that you choose must be non-fiction, and it can be about any event, development, person, etc. in American history. Please do not choose a general history of a long period of time (for instance, the history of the 19th century or the history of colonial America). In addition, its subject matter should not be about current (21st century) affairs. Once you identify the book that you would like to read, please send me an email (thunt@allendalecolumbia.org) as I will need to approve it. Please have your book selected and approved by August first.

I would like you to write an approximately four page essay that provides two things: a summary of the book, and an analysis of why that particular event, person, etc. was so significant to American history. Please write the paper in the following fashion, as this will be the way that you will write your papers throughout the year:

1. Type your essay on a computer, making it your best possible effort
2. Save it and also print it; put it aside for at least a day
3. Scrutinize your essay with a red pen, marking the mistakes that you see, and writing instructions about what you need to revise (this is now your rough draft)
4. Make the changes that you have noted on the file that you saved
5. Print it up again (this is your final draft)
6. Put both drafts into a two-pocket folder (this is what you will hand in)

The paper should be written while adhering to the guidelines of the “Pet Peeves” sheet that accompanies this assignment. Note: you do not need to use citations, as I will know what book is the source of your information. If you have any questions about the assignment, you may reach me at my school email address.

Mr. Hunt's Writing "Pet Peeves"

- 1) Write in the past tense. After all, you are writing about history.
(Note: a sentence like "Washington would sign the law" is an example of the conditional. Instead, write "Washington signed the law.")
- 2) Do not use the "Passive Voice". Bad: "In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was passed." Good: "In 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act."
- 3) Do not use the word "you" (Ex.: "If you were a communist, you would be persecuted.") I am not a communist, so please do not write about me. Instead write: "If *one* were a communist..."
- 4) Do not use contractions (don't write don't; you shouldn't write shouldn't).
- 5) The word "this" should not stand alone as a noun or direct object.
(Ex.: do not write "This resulted in...". Instead, write "This change resulted in...").
- 6) The most commonly misspelled word in my classes: led. (The past tense of the verb "lead" is "led". Do not write "He lead the charge").
- 7) The word "its" is the possessive of "it". Notice that there is no apostrophe. "It's" is a contraction of "it is" and thus should not be used anyway.
(See #4)
- 8) The verb "try" should be followed by an infinitive, not "and." You are describing one action, not two. (Not "try and show the way;" rather: "try to show the way.")
- 9) The word "fewer" should be used if you can count the number ("fewer calories"). The word "less" is used when the amount cannot be quantified ("less food").
- 10) The word "who" refers to a person ("the woman who led the movement"); the word "that" refers to groups or things ("the law that changed the tax policy")
- 11) Avoid slang and clichés ("In 1865, Abraham Lincoln bought the farm").
- 12) Note: Presidents do not pass legislation. Congress does.
- 13) Write out numbers less than thirteen (one, two, three, etc). Use numbers if it is 13 or over.

****Always strive for precision and clarity!****