

June 5, 2019

Dear Advanced Placement U.S. History Students:

Welcome to A.P. U.S. History. I love teaching this class and am always sad at the end of the year when I know I must bid you all adieu after working so hard together for nine months straight. We have a big journey ahead, and I would not recommend it for the fainthearted. You will need to read about half-an-hour to an hour (depending on your reading speed) five days a week for nine months. You will learn how to think like a historian, comparing and contrasting events, ideas, people and time periods, identifying causes and prioritizing them, connecting between the particular to the general, linking eras and recognizing change over time. You will be writing, writing, writing, and honing these skills into effective essays of causation, comparison, contextualization and continuity.

I would like you to begin developing your historian skills by doing research on one of your own grandparents. I have an attachment with questions to ask them. When you are finished interviewing, please type their answers into the document online and email it to me at bmcmillan@behs.com. If you can use their exact words, often it is even better. Hopefully, you and your family will enjoy this project together. By the way, you are welcome to use substitute grandparents if you are unable to interview any of your own. As you read the questions you will notice that not all questions will apply. Do your best and have fun with this.

In the past I have asked the students to get a head start on the textbook by reading two chapters and answering questions on them from a packet. Last year we read instead a delightful book called *Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. I have read it twice and enjoyed it both times for many reasons. The life lessons about teamwork and leadership may be more important than the history you will pick up. My students reported that they had a much better feel for life during the Great Depression than any textbook or lesson in class could provide and recommended this summer reading project again.

The game is afoot—our journey into history begins. Enjoy!

Please complete these written assignments by August 19, 2019.

- Grandparent interview (may send in as soon as it is finished)
- *Boys in the Boat*, Daniel James Brown – (Take notes as you read using the attached guided reading questions and turn them in the first week of school.)

If you have any questions about the assignments, do not hesitate to email me at bmcmillan@behs.com. Have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Betsy McMillan
A.P. U.S. History Teacher

Hardcore Historian Primary Document Exercise
Your most important query -- your grandparent (s)

Your Name _____

Name of your Grandparent: _____

1. When and where were you born?
2. What were your parents' names?
3. What is your happiest memory of your father? Your mother?
4. What is the most important lesson your parents taught you?
5. What are the names of your grandparents?
6. What is your happiest memory of your grandfather? Grandmother?
7. Where did you grow up?
8. What did you do for fun as a child?
9. How did you like school?
10. What did you want to be when you grew up?
11. How did you meet Grandma/Grandpa (your spouse)?
12. Tell me about the day my mom/dad was born.
13. What jobs have you had?
14. Were you in the military? If so, what are your strongest memories from your time in the military?
15. What did your job(s) entail? Did you enjoy your work?
16. Did you attend college? If so, what did you study?
17. Did you have any dangerous and/or life threatening experiences? If so, what happened?
18. What presidents (or national leaders) do you recall?
19. What were some of the important news (current) events that you remember?
20. How did you receive the news?
21. What wars did you experience directly or indirectly? What was your experience?
22. Did you experience the Great Depression or hear about how it affected family members? If so, please describe.
23. Describe your kitchen and school rooms. What technological items were in these places? What were some of the new inventions?
24. Describe the cars that you owned. What were some other modes of transportation you have taken?
25. Tell a family story or a family event.
26. Describe and briefly talk about someone you admire.
27. What advice would you give to our generation about our role as citizens?
28. What would be your recipe for happiness?

Reading Assignment
***Boys in the Boat*, Daniel James Brown**

As soon as you begin reading, take notes. I want you to think about the following questions while you are reading. You will need these notes for our first *graded* class discussion and in-class essay and then later in the second semester. I will review your notes before the class discussion and essay. It may help you to write in the margins of your book while reading. A marked up book is a sign of THINKING!!!

1. Discuss the United States and the historical information given at the beginning of the novel.
 - What was the role of government in Americans' lives during the Great Depression?
 - As an American living in the 1930s, what would your attitude be towards the shift in power when FDR replaces Hoover and introduces an array of government programs?
2. Compare the different social classes' experience of the Depression.
 - What were the class differences between Joe and his classmates in college?
 - What were the difficulties that shaped Joe Rantz's life and made a college education almost unattainable?
 - What were the class differences between the University of Washington's rowing team and the east coast rowing teams?
3. What was the role of sports in Americans' lives during the Great Depression?
 - To what extent did sports give hope to the nation as a whole?
 - How have sports or any specific extracurricular activity given you hope similar to the characters in the book?
4. What makes a good leader? What makes a good team?
 - What were the strengths Joe developed that enabled him to overcome the many obstacles in his life? What did Joe Rantz accomplish?
 - Who else was instrumental in his success? Why?
5. Examine the American team's experience in Berlin.
 - How did the rowing team represent the U.S. to other cultures during the Olympics?
 - What were the Americans' reaction to the people they encountered?
 - How did Germany mask itself and hide its identity?
5. How has the United States changed since the 1930s?
 - How is it similar?
 - What is one thing you read about that you wish people held in greater esteem today?
7. To what extent did Joe live out the American Dream?
 - Define the American dream through Joe's eyes.
 - Was it always an achievable feat from his perspective?