

June 5, 2020

Dear Advanced Placement U.S. History Students:

Welcome to A.P. U.S. History. This has been a very difficult year so far, but I am looking forward to meeting you all in the fall. 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 book on the Great Depression. This year we will be reading Twelve Years A Slave by Solomon Northup. I think you will gain much insight from this firsthand account of slavery in the antebellum period. Hopefully you will be able to make connections to it throughout the entire year.

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

Please complete these written assignments by August 14, 2020.

- Grandparent interview (may send in as soon as it is finished)
- *Twelve Years A Slave*, Solomon Northup – (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. 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 a later time period) 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

Twelve Years a Slave by Solomon Northup

Solomon Northup was a free African-American in New York in the antebellum period who was abducted and sold into slavery in the South. His autobiography occurring in the years leading up to the Civil War leaves you with a direct and visceral account of life for free African-Americans in the North as well as the enslaved African-Americans in the South. This will be the first of many voices from the past we will hear from on our journey through American history. While you read, you should be a keen observer of many ideas. Please keep a notebook and write down your thoughts on the following subjects.

Life in general in the Antebellum Period for:

- the free man (the African-American)
- the white non-slave holder
- the white slave holder
- women
- the economy built on the institution of slavery
 - What is the **property** value of a slave?

Life in detail for the Slave ---Slaveowner also*

- Family/Marriage
- Work
- Society (Religion, Music, Meals, Free Time, Holidays?)
- Punishment
 - How does brutality affect slaveowner?
 - How does brutality affect the slave?
- The concept of Freedom/Escape/

Book as a Primary Document

- Why was it written? Several times in the book Northup speaks more directly to the reader almost to sum up his point.
- What audience was he trying to reach? How would readers' reactions differ?
- How reliable do you believe this account is? Why?

When we return to school, I would like to give you a grade for your handwritten notes that will be based on their inquisitiveness and depth of thought. You may organize them by chapter or by subject. You will also have a 10-question quiz on the book. Your notes will be weighed 85% and the quiz 15%.