

Advanced Placement United States History

Summer Preparation For Class

Mr. Bédard

Congratulations on accepting the challenge and responsibility of taking Advanced Placement United States History. If you show up each day, listen well, understand “the story”, and above all, enjoy learning about some pretty interesting people and events, you will pass the AP Exam in May and get college credit for this class. Can you make sense of things? Are you a “disciplined” person? Bring your sense of humor because US History is pretty funny sometimes. It will help you better understand life today and even have some lessons for your own personal life. I’m looking forward to meeting you.

Here’s The Deal:

The AP US History Test is on “US History” ! Questions can be on anything ! Don’t worry, Mr. Bédard has done this a few times before so we will be able to narrow down what we need to know. And there’s lots of help available. But our first job is to find a darn good book on US History to read to get the basics down. Gee.....guess what ? I have one for you ! Problem is: if we want to read and cover all the material in the book (mostly during class time !) then we will need you to cover some of the chapters on your own. Otherwise we won’t get through the book with much time to review in the end. So here’s a way you can do your first couple of weeks homework before the class starts !!

The first week of class I’ll be telling everyone they need to read chapter’s 2-5 in their book, “The American Pageant”, by David M. Kennedy. You can have that done before school starts by **checking out a book from the library** and reading those pages before school starts in August. And I’ll make you a deal: Please take some good general notes of the things you read about. And if you turn in your notes along with a page that has three of the most important general points made from each chapter from chapter’s 2-5 on it, I’ll give you 100 points out of a possible 100 for your efforts. That’s an “A” to start your semester off. This won’t count against anyone who chooses not to do this over the summer. Bu remember everyone will be assigned this the first week of class. Did you get that? Read Chapter’s 2 thru 5. For each Chapter take usual good notes on what you read—so you don’t forget it. Put all the notes together with a sheet that states what you thought the top three main points for each Chapter was. Put this assignment sheet on top of your work. Put your name on it, staple it all together and turn it in when you come to class. That’s it.

(By the way, if the library runs out of books to check out at the end of the school year, then see Mr. Bédard in room 402 for a “rental” copy. But ONLY if the library is out of books.)

Note: Do NOT turn in xeroxed or internet notes. Point here is for YOU to take notes and show me what skills you have coming in. Copied or notes from the internet will result in no points given. If we find you need help with note taking—you will get it. All part of making you the best student you can be.

Do I have to do this? Nope. But remember, you will be assigned this the first week anyway. The class will begin the coverage of the book with Chapter 6. It's not imperative that you read Chapter 2-5 first, but it sure makes things more "orderly" for you. And you can earn the extra points.

Why aren't you covering Chapter's 2-5 in class? You'll understand everything as the class actually begins, but the short answer is we DO refer to the information in Chapter's 2-5 AND there are items in these chapters that are reflected in questions on the AP Exam. However in the interest of time, with the goal of getting through all the basic information by April, it's best to accomplish these chapters this way. We WILL go over these chapters when we first open the book, but will not be reading them word for word.

Anything else I should do or know before the class? You should know the general geography of the United States. (Major rivers, mountains, states) It will also help you very much to know the basic working of the United States Government. By this I mean generally how things work. The Three Branches and their jobs, what makes up each branch, how a Bill becomes a law, in general. If you have a basic knowledge of these things, I'll take it from there as the year goes on. If you feel a bit rusty on some of these things, ask your parents or get a book that describes the general workings of the government. By the way, actually looking through the US Constitution (there's a copy in our book) doesn't hurt either. Don't memorize anything, just see what it actually says in a few places. As the year goes on, you will learn all of these things in order to better understand what is happening in US History.

So there's some reading that I don't HAVE to do, but it would be helpful if I did, and there's the basic workings of government that I should have. Is that it?

Pretty much. I try to keep things as simple as I can. But when I ask you to do something during the year it is important that you do it. For example any specific reading homework that comes up during the year. Other than that, bring an eagerness to be successful, determination to see this challenge through, and your smiling face and mind ready to enjoy the story that is the United States. In the end, if you do your part, you will earn college credit and learn more about US History than I think you would have expected, and perhaps learn about a few other things as well. When we're all done, you might just have an addiction to learn even more, and hopefully will remember this coming year as one that was time well spent. In the end, it's quite possible you will be a better student, and better person. All this from AP US History?!! See you in the Fall.

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