

Cornelia Connelly School
2323 West Broadway
Anaheim, CA 92804
714-776-1717

United States History 2008-2009 Summer Reading and Assignment

United States History

***Disclaimer:** Although we are not reading a book for the summer assignment, the readings are not short nor easy to read. Also do not underestimate the difficulty of the questions and essay prompt.

Introduction: Primary sources are original items or records that have survived from the past, such as clothing, letters, photographs, and manuscripts. They were part of a direct personal experience of a time or event. In this summer assignment each student will read 3 primary sources created during the formative years of our nation. Read each item carefully and critically. Answer each of the questions below in regard to those documents and use that information to complete the writing assignment.

Getting Started:

Before you tackle these documents, it will be helpful to know more about the context that surrounds them, so do some reading. Your textbook pages 42-49 will give you a general idea, but for more detail read “A More Perfect Union”:

(http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_history.html)

- Look up the following terms/people/events to help build up your knowledge of this time period: ratification, constitutional convention, Patrick Henry, George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Bill of Rights, Articles of Confederation, federalist, anti-federalist.
- Also look up the following terms to assist with the meaning of the questions below: consensus, compromise, provisions, principles, articulated, ratification, ideological, confederation, consolidated, reactionary, speculation (both lists will be collected).
- Be sure each of the links below work correctly. If they do not work search for these documents on the internet or check your local library.
- All work should be typed and submitted by the 2nd class period of the year: both a paper copy and a digital copy via turnitin.com (link provided on day 1 of school)

Document 1:

The Constitution of the United States (1787)

Textbook, pages 58-77 or http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_transcript.html

1. What major political principles were not only articulated but activated by the Constitution?
2. How does the Constitution reveal not only the intellectual background of the Founders but their practical experiences as well?

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3. Can you tell which provisions were the result of consensus and which were due to compromise? What does such a comparison reveal about the founders and the foundation of the government?
4. What provisions appear to be most open to differing interpretations? Why are the different possibilities for interpretation significant?

Document 2:

Arguments Against Ratification of the Constitution at the Virginia Convention (1788), Patrick Henry and George Mason

http://www2.wwnorton.com/college/history/archive/resources/documents/ch07_04.htm

5. How did Patrick Henry define the differences between a confederation and a consolidated, national government? Why did he see the latter as so dangerous?
6. How did Henry address local, material concerns? How did he present ideological, political ones?
7. Did he appear to be more worried about states' rights and/or people's rights?
8. What were George Mason's particular worries? How did his argument supplement Henry's?
9. Were Patrick Henry and George Mason reactionaries in their distrust of constitutional innovation or were they still revolutionaries?

Document 3:

The Federalist Papers : No. 45, James Madison (1788)

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed45.htm>

10. What anti-federalist arguments did Madison counter in his essay?
11. Why did he begin his essay with questions about the ends or goals of a federal government? What did he say was the ultimate goal of government?
12. How did Madison try to neutralize fears of stronger federal authority? Did he provide speculations or certainties?
13. How did he compare federal and state powers? Why did he say the latter would generally still have the advantage?

Essay

Construct an essay of 2-3 pages on the arguments for and against ratification of the Constitution. Be sure to address the following questions in your essay: What side do you support? Was the outcome of these arguments? Are the arguments still significant today?

Guidelines for writing in US History:

Prewriting:

Think about the issue and decide on your point of view.

Think about what the main ideas of your essay will be. What details will you use to support those ideas?

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Prepare a short outline to organize your thoughts. Remember that your essay will need an organized, coherent structure in order to do well.

Writing

Your essay should be carefully structured and written in paragraph form. You should have three parts to your essay: an introduction, which presents your thesis and main ideas; a body, which elaborates on your ideas and supports those ideas with details (this can be 3 or more paragraphs); and a conclusion, which sums up your essay. It is important to show that you can effectively develop your ideas. Present your point of view logically and clearly. Stay focused on your topic.

Proofreading

Reread your essay and make revisions.
Check the following: capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and spelling

EVALUATING

Essays will be graded on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest score.

- Score of 6: An essay in this category effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates outstanding critical thinking. It is well organized, clearly focused, and free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Score of 5: An essay in this category effectively develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates strong critical thinking. It is well organized and focused, and is generally free of most errors in grammar, usage and mechanics.
- Score of 4: An essay in this category develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates competent critical thinking. It is generally organized and focused, and has some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Score of 3: An essay in this category develops a point of view on the issue, but may do so inconsistently or use inadequate evidence to support its position. It is limited in its organization or focus, and contains an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Score of 2: An essay in this category develops a point of view on the issue that is vague or seriously limited and provides inappropriate or insufficient evidence to support its position. It is poorly organized, and contains errors so serious that meaning is somewhat obscured.
- Score of 1: An essay in this category develops no viable point of view on the issue, or provides little or no evidence to support its position. It is disorganized or unfocused, and contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that persistently interfere with meaning.
- Score of 0: Essays not on the assignment will receive a score of zero.