

# AP US HISTORY

# SURVIVAL GUIDE

## *BRFHS 2009-10*

*"EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AP HISTORY, BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!"*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WELCOME PAGE	Page 2
2. THE NATIONAL EXAM: WHAT TO EXPECT	Page 3
3. GRADING PHILOSOPHY	Page 6
4. ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS	Page 7
5. GRADING RUBRIC/ PROCESS WORK	Page 9
6. REFLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT	Page 10
7. AMERICA'S TOP 40 EVENTS	Page 11
8. PRIMARY SOURCES: ESSENTIAL SKILLS	Page 13
9. ESSAY WRITING GUIDELINES	Page 14
10. ESSAY GRADING STANDARDS: THE RUBRIC	Page 16
11. TEN-POINT CHECKLIST FOR WRITING DBQ's	Page 18
12. FILM REVIEW GUIDELINES	Page 19
13. ARTICLE REVIEW GUIDELINES	Page 20
14. THE BIG PICTURE	Page 21
15. TURNER PROJECT INFORMATION	Page 22

*PS Rykken*  
*BRFHS*  
*284-4324 (#2226)*  
*paul.rykken@brf.org*

#### YOU ARE TRULY A STUDENT IF YOU CAN:

1. MAINTAIN YOUR INTENSITY
2. PROCESS LARGE AMOUNTS OF INFORMATION
3. ORGANIZE YOUR THINKING
4. VIEW LEARNING AS A PROCESS

*"ALTHOUGH WE MAY EVENTUALLY SEE HISTORY'S UNDERLYING CURRENTS MORE CLEARLY,  
THE MEANING OF THE PAST NEVER BECOMES FIXED."*

*(Daniel Boorstin)*

## **WELCOME TO THE STUDY OF HISTORY!**

AP courses originated 50 years ago in the northeastern part of the United States. The intention was to give high school students the opportunity to experience the study of various disciplines at a college level. When you enrolled in this course, you became part of that tradition, part of the AP community. Over 400 students have taken AP History at BRHS in the 19 years we have offered the class.

I use the word *community* when describing my AP students because I expect this to be a TEAM effort. We need to develop a high level of *esprit de corps* in a class like this! Certainly history can be studied independently, and much of your work will be of an independent nature. Nevertheless, in order for us to truly interact with the subject of history, we must hear the voices of other students. We must also interact with the authors that we read --- they are part of our community as well. If we fail to operate collectively, our depth of understanding will be diminished.

The word *community* also indicates that there are *shared values and practices* among the various members. What values and practices are we attempting to develop in a class such as this? Let me suggest the following:

- #1: Developing the heart and mind of a scholar (this is big!)
- #2: Being willing to take full responsibility for your education
- #3: Learning to read more critically and to interpret challenging information
- #4: Developing confidence with verbal skills by interacting with others
- #5: Learning to write historical essays
- #6: Learning to interpret primary historical documents
- #7: Becoming more effective at using the world wide web for research
- #8: Getting in tune with what is going on currently in the news
- #9: Developing a greater appreciation for the subject of history

If you stay focused on these 9 things as we proceed, I can guarantee you that you will walk out of this class a stronger and more prepared student. My hope for all of you is that you have a great year with AP History!

Yours in history,

PS RYKKE 2009-10

***“WE MUST KNOW HISTORY SO THAT HISTORY MAY KNOW US!”***

**--- THE OFFICIAL MOTTO OF BRHS AP HISTORY**

## ***WHAT IS THE NATIONAL EXAM ALL ABOUT?***

In May of 2010 you will have the opportunity to take the National Exam in United States History. The exam is produced by the College Board and is taken by thousands of students across the country who are studying history this year. The cost of the exam is around \$85.00. You will receive a score of 1-5. 3's, 4's, and 5's are considered by most colleges and universities for credit (ranging from 3-8 credits depending on how well you do). The College Board Exam is not mandatory, but I TEACH THE COURSE AS IF YOU PLAN ON TAKING THE EXAM.

### ***MY PHILOSOPHY CONCERNING THE NATIONAL AP EXAM***

I have been working with students in AP history since the mid-1980s. Much of our time and energy throughout the year needs to focus on exam preparation. Obviously, I cannot guarantee your success on the test. Nationwide, approximately 50-54% of students that take the AP exam in American history receive a 3 or higher. There is no question that the test is difficult. For your information, we have managed to stay somewhat above that national average at BRFHs for the past 19 years. I look at the test this way: if you do well on the exam, you can receive college credits and *advanced placement* when you begin to register for college classes. If you do not score a "3" or higher on the exam, you are out some money, but you will learn many things in the process of preparing for it. I say that based on the experience of talking to AP students that I have worked with over the years. NO STUDENT has ever told me that they regretted taking the test. The bottom line is this: if the only reason you are taking the course is for the exam, you are missing the point somewhat. The skills you will acquire along the way are what it is all about. HOWEVER, if you work hard and develop the skills, IT IS NATURAL to take the national test. THIS MUCH I CAN GUARANTEE YOU: I will do the very best I can to help you prepare for the test. My attitude toward the test is like a coach taking athletes into a post-season tournament -- we will prepare ourselves physically and mentally to perform at our highest level on test day.

### ***FORMAT OF THE NATIONAL EXAM***

The Exam (extensively revised in 1994) is 3 hours and 5 minutes in length and consists of two sections: a 55 minute multiple-choice section and a 130 minute free response section. The free response section begins with a mandatory 15 minute reading period. Part A of the free response section is known as the Document-Based Question (DBQ) and you will have 45 minutes on that. Parts B and C each include two standard essay questions that, with the DBQ, cover the period from the first European explorations of the Americas to the present. You are required to answer one essay question in each part in a total of 70 minutes. Suggested time to be spent on each of the essay questions you choose to answer in Parts B and C is 5 minutes of planning and 30 minutes of writing your answer.

### ***CONTENT***

Both the multiple-choice and free-response sections cover the period from the first European explorations of the Americas to the present, although the majority of questions are on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the multiple-choice section, approximately 1/6 of the questions deal with the period through 1789, 1/2 with the period from 1790-1914, and 1/3 with the period from 1915-present. Whereas the multiple-choice section may include a few

questions on the period since 1980, neither the DBQ nor any of the four essay questions in Parts B and C will deal exclusively with this period.

Together, the multiple-choice and free-response sections cover political institutions and behavior and public policy, social and economic change, diplomacy and international relations, and cultural and intellectual developments. Political institutions and behavior and public policy account for approximately 35% of the questions and social change for approximately another 35%. The remaining questions are divided between the areas of diplomacy and international relations, approximately 15%; economic developments, approximately 10%; and cultural and intellectual developments, approximately 5%. A substantial number of the social and economic history questions deal with such traditional topics as the impact of legislation on social groups and the economy or the pressures brought to bear on the political process by social and economic developments. Because historical inquiry is not neatly divided into categories, many questions pertain to more than one area.

The 80 questions in the multiple choice section of the exam measure your knowledge of the subject matter commonly covered in introductory college courses in United States History. These questions test your factual knowledge, breadth of preparation, and knowledge-based analytical skills. *YOU WILL BE EXPOSED TO THE TYPES OF QUESTIONS INCLUDED IN THE MULTIPLE CHOICE PORTION OF THE EXAM THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER ON OUR REVIEW TESTS.*

The standard essay questions may require you to relate developments in different areas (e.g., the political implications of an economic issue), to analyze common themes in different time periods (e.g., the concept of national interest in United States foreign policy), or to compare individual or group experiences that reflect socioeconomic, ethnic, racial, or gender differences (e.g., social mobility and cultural pluralism). Although historiography is not emphasized in the examination, students are expected to have a general understanding of key interpretations of major historical events. When questions based on literary materials are included, the emphasis will not be on literature as art but rather on its relation to politics, social and economic life, or related cultural and intellectual movements.

Answers to standard essay questions will be judged on the strength of the thesis developed, the quality of the historical argument, and the evidence offered in support of the argument, rather than on the factual information per se. Unless a question asks otherwise, students will not be penalized for omitting one or another specific illustration. *YOU WILL BE EXPOSED TO SAMPLE EXAM ESSAYS THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER DURING CLASS AND ON THE REVIEW TESTS.*

The required DBQ differs from the standard essays in its emphasis on the ability to analyze and synthesize historical data and assess verbal, quantitative, or pictorial materials as historical evidence. Like the standard essay, however, the DBQ will also be judged on its thesis, argument, and supporting evidence.

Although confined to no single format, the documents contained in the DBQ are unlikely to be the familiar classics (the Emancipation Proclamation or Declaration of Independence, for example), but their authors may be major historical figures. The documents vary in length

and are chosen to illustrate the interactions and complexities within the material. The material will include -- where the questions is suitable -- charts, graphs, cartoons, and pictures, as well as written materials. In addition to calling upon a broad spectrum of historical skills, the diversity of materials will allow students to assess the value of different sorts of documents. ***YOU WILL BE EXPOSED THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER TO THE TYPES OF DOCUMENTS AND THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THE DBQ!***

The DBQ will typically require students to relate the documents to a historical period or theme and, thus, to focus on major periods and issues. **FOR THIS REASON, OUTSIDE KNOWLEDGE IS VERY IMPORTANT AND MUST BE INCORPORATED INTO THE STUDENT'S ESSAY IF THE HIGHEST SCORES ARE TO BE EARNED.** It should be noted that the emphasis of the DBQ will be on analysis and synthesis, not historical narrative.

#### **SCORING**

Scores earned on the multiple-choice and free-response sections each account for ½ of your exam grade. Within the free-response section, the DBQ counts for 45%; the two standard essays count for 55%. ***I WILL GRADE YOUR ESSAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR ACCORDING TO THE RUBRIC ESTABLISHED BY THE COLLEGE BOARD!***

#### **MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS**

The 80 questions that appear in the multiple-choice section of the exam are designed to measure what you know of the subject matter commonly covered in introductory college courses in US History. **THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION IS SET DELIBERATELY AT SUCH A LEVEL THAT A CANDIDATE HAS TO ANSWER ABOUT 60% OF THE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY TO RECEIVE A GRADE OF 3, IN ADDITION TO DOING ACCEPTABLE WORK ON THE BROADER QUESTIONS IN THE FREE-RESPONSE SECTION.** Haphazard or random guessing is unlikely to improve scores because 1/4 of a point is subtracted from the score for each incorrect answer. However, if you have some knowledge of the question and can eliminate one or more answer choices, selecting the best answer from among the remaining choices is usually to your advantage. ***WE WILL WORK ON MULTIPLE-CHOICE STRATEGIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!***

#### **EXAM PREPARATION**

My philosophy on this is very simple: **OUR PREPARATION FOR THE EXAM IS AN ONGOING THING!** I weave the skills necessary for the exam into the course. **YOUR ATTITUDE IS REALLY THE KEY TO THE WHOLE THING! YOU NEED TO VIEW THE EXAM AS A REALISTIC CHALLENGE! WORK HARD AND WORK SMART!**

(This material was adapted from the ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM in History, published by the College Board.)

**\*\* YOU WILL NOTE LINKS ON THE BRFHS AP HISTORY WEB SITE RELATED TO EXAM PREPARATION! CHECK THOSE OUT!**

"Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from their self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. This minority is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! Dare to be wise! Have courage to make use of your own understanding! is thus the motto of Enlightenment."

## **RYKKEN'S GRADING PHILOSOPHY**

**#1: SCHOOL IS A GAME, BUT AN IMPORTANT GAME. TREAT IT THAT WAY.**

**#2: YOU ARE COMPETING AGAINST A SET STANDARD, NOT EACH OTHER. SINCE I SET THE STANDARD, I GUESS YOU ARE COMPETING AGAINST ME.**

**#3: QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUANTITY. PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL.**

**#4: GRADING IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERSONAL. WHO YOU ARE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME.**

**#5: YOU NEED AUTHENTIC INTELLECTUAL WORK, NOT BUSY WORK. IF I WOULD NOT DO THE ASSIGNMENT, I WILL NOT ASSIGN IT.**

**#6: GRADES ARE NOT THE SOLE ANALYSIS OF YOUR EFFORT.**

**#7: NO ONE ASKED ME MY GPA AT HIGH SCHOOL REUNIONS.**

**#8: FEAR OF A LOW GRADE IS A POOR REASON FOR AVOIDING CHALLENGES.**

**#9: YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED. THAT'S MY JOB.**

**#10: YOU NEED A LOT OF COACHING, THEN A LOT OF PRACTICE. NEITHER OF THOSE THINGS IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT A LOT OF EFFORT.**

**#11: YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO SUCCEED IN WHATEVER SYSTEM YOU ARE IN, BUT SUCCESS CANNOT BE FAKED. YOU NEED THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR EFFORT.**

**#12: HIGH EXPECTATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL. YOU WILL WORK HARDER IF I PUSH YOU THAN YOU WILL ON YOUR OWN.**

**#13: YOU CAN TEACH OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS. YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR APPROACH TO SCHOOL AND STUDYING OVERNIGHT, BUT IT MIGHT TAKE LONGER.**

## 2009-10 AP UNITED STATES HISTORY GRADING POLICY AND ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

YOU WILL EARN your grades in this course by accumulating points on a variety of assignments as described below. I use a criterion-based grading system -- that is, you are competing against a set standard. Points are converted to a percentage of the total possible and that, in turn, will determine your grade. I will try to be as explicit as possible in my explanation of the standards necessary for achieving certain grades, particularly with writing assignments. Here is the grading scale:

93-100%	A	EXCELLENT
90-92%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
83-86%	B	GOOD
80-82%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
73-76%	C	ADEQUATE
70-72%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
63-66%	D	LESS THAN ADEQUATE
60-62%	D-	
Below 60%	F	FAILURE

It is important that you understand the implications of that type of grading from the beginning and that you work and plan accordingly. The work that you turn in for credit is not designed to be busy-work but rather should be approached as a high-quality effort. Not everything we do will be turned in due to the fact that we have to practice techniques in the classroom just for the sake of practice. The following overview of assignments is not all-inclusive, but it does describe the main components of the work you should expect to be confronted with over the next 18 weeks.

### OBJECTIVE COMPONENTS

1. **READING/REVIEW TESTS:** (30% of your grade) Near the end of each unit, you will take an exam that includes multiple choice questions and an essay. I model these after the AP national exam components and will often use questions from previous exams. These are designed to test your reading of the text and writing skills. Always remember that in AP, the text reading is entirely your responsibility. You will have the opportunity to complete BONUS PROMPTS as you prepare for these tests.
2. **CHRONOLOGY TESTS:** (15% of your grade) Several times during the semester you will be given a test over 40 CORE DATES in US History (I refer to these as *America's Top 40*). All 40 dates will appear on every test. This memorization process will help you put together a solid chronological perspective on our history. If the principle of cause and effect is to mean anything to you, you will need to develop this basic historical literacy.

3. **READING FOR SIGNIFICANCE (RFS): (30% of your grade)** A reading schedule is included with the course calendar. The RFS is a method of active reading in which you must identify a set number of items as to their significance in the big picture of history and provide an adequate explanation of each item. We will go over the particulars of this method during our first week of class.
4. **REFLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT: (5% of your grade)** Verbal participation in class is essential to your progress in this course. We will talk about this from the very beginning and we will work together to become more articulate in how we interact in the classroom. There is a more explicit discussion of this further in this Guide.
5. **FINAL EXAM: (20% of your grade)** At the end of each term you will be taking a final exam that may include individual research, a presentation of some kind, and a Review Test similar to those described previously. Details will be provided well in advance.

#### ***SUBJECTIVE COMPONENTS***

We will use various ways of exploring history in the process of completing dialectical journals. These are examples of things that may be included as we proceed:

1. **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS EXERCISES:** To practice the craft of the historian, you must be willing and able to interpret a variety of primary sources. Throughout the course you will be exposed to a number of outside readings, mostly primary in nature, which you will need to critically analyze. This is a skill we will work on from day one and is central to AP work.
2. **INTERPRETIVE EXERCISES:** As historians we need to be exposed to a wide variety of images and sounds which reflect our cultural development. An understanding of the development and evolution of art in American history is something we deal with in our study. This will involve visual interpretation and analysis. Other visuals will be used as well including political cartoons and photographs, as well as video recordings. Also, expect to hear much music throughout the course, reflecting various periods in our history.

**YOU WILL BE PRESENTED WITH BONUS OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER. THEY WILL ALWAYS BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MATERIAL WE ARE STUDYING. THEY ARE NOT MEANT AS BUSY WORK.**

## **AP US HISTORY/ GRADING RUBRIC PROCESS-ORIENTED WORK**

Use the following as a guide for understanding your grade on process-oriented work such as the RFS work. Realize that ESSAYS will be graded differently from other work in the class. No matter what point value is assigned to the work you are doing, I will use the guideline indicated here.

### **EXCELLENT WORK (90-100% OF THE POINTS)**

- ◆ The work is done thoroughly and with obvious care and depth
- ◆ There are few, if any, mechanical errors in the presentation
- ◆ All parts of the work are completed according to the directions given

### **GOOD WORK (80-89% OF THE POINTS)**

- ◆ The work is thoroughly done, although not with the same care and depth as the excellent-level work
- ◆ The mechanics are solid, with very few errors
- ◆ The work is completed, but perhaps lacking full development

### **ADEQUATE WORK (70-79% OF THE POINTS)**

- ◆ The work is completed, but somewhat superficially
- ◆ More mechanical errors are evident
- ◆ The work is inconsistent – some parts are sub-par, even though completed

### **BELOW AVERAGE WORK (60-69% OF THE POINTS)**

- ◆ There is an obvious lack of care in the work
- ◆ Mechanical errors are prevalent
- ◆ The work smacks of the “I did this just to get it done” syndrome

### **FAILURE (BELOW 60%)**

- ◆ The work is not completed and/or . . .
- ◆ It is so far “off the mark” that it does not warrant credit



## **AP US HISTORY: "AMERICA'S TOP 40" EVENTS WHICH CHANGED OUR HISTORY FOREVER**

### **PREMISE**

The following dates are critical to a sound understanding of the development of American history. You will be tested several times during the semester on these. My intention here is that these 40 dates will form the hooks or links that will solidify your sense of the broad sweep of our chronological development as a nation. Each event was selected due to the fact that they represent a broad or significant development in our history. You will notice that the focus of this list is primarily political. Throughout the course, we will fill in important social, cultural, and intellectual events.

1492	First Voyage of Columbus to "New World"
1588	Defeat of the Spanish Armada by England
1607	English settlement begins with founding of Jamestown
1620	Pilgrim's arrival at Plymouth in New England
1763	Peace of Paris ends French and Indian War/ Proclamation Line
1776	Declaration of American Independence
1781-87	Critical Period (Articles of Confederation)
1789	Ratification of US Constitution/ New Government Established
1800	Election of Jefferson/ Transfer of Power to New Political Party
1803	Jefferson Purchases Louisiana from the French
1828	Election of Andrew Jackson
1838	Trail of Tears (Cherokee Indian Removal)
1845	"Manifest Destiny" Reaches Peak
1850	Compromise of 1850 delays Civil War for 10 years
1860	Election of Lincoln/ Beginning of Southern Secession
1861-1865	American Civil War
1864-1877	Reconstruction Period in American South
1890	Census Bureau Announces the End of the Frontier
1896	Election of McKinley/ End of Populist Movement
1898	Spanish-American War
1898-1917	Progressive Era
1914-1918	World War I
1929	Crash of Stock Market Marks Beginning of Great Depression
1932	Election of Franklin Roosevelt
1941	Pearl Harbor/ US Enters World War II
1945	Yalta Conference; V-E Day and V-J Day end WW II in Europe and Japan
1947	Truman Doctrine
1950-53	Korean Conflict
1957	Sputnik; Birth of a History Teacher
1963	Assassination of John Kennedy
1964	Civil Rights Act; Tonkin Gulf Resolution
1964-1973	Direct Involvement by United States in Vietnam
1968	Tet Offensive in Vietnam; Anti-War Demonstrations; Riots at Democratic Convention; Assassinations of MLK and RFK

1974	Resignation of Richard Nixon/ Watergate
1979	Establishment of Formal Relations With China
1979-81	Americans Held Hostage in Iran for 444 Days
1980	Election of Ronald Reagan Marks Conservative Political Swing
1989	End of Cold War; Fall of Berlin Wall and Political Changes in Eastern Europe
1991	Gulf War
2000	Bush v. Gore Supreme Court Decision

-----  
The following Presidencies are helpful for chronological reference:

George Washington	1789-1797	Franklin Roosevelt	1933-1945
Thomas Jefferson	1801-1809	Dwight Eisenhower	1953-1961
Andrew Jackson	1829-1837	Lyndon Johnson	1963-1969
Abraham Lincoln	1861-1865	Richard Nixon	1969-1974
William McKinley	1897-1901	Ronald Reagan	1981-1989
Theodore Roosevelt	1901-1909	George Bush	1989-1993
Woodrow Wilson	1913-1921	William Clinton	1993-2001
		George W. Bush	2001-2009
		Barack Obama	2009-Present

***FOR STUDY PURPOSES, I WOULD SUGGEST MAKING A SET OF FLASHCARDS. YOU NEED PLENTY OF REPETITION TO GET THESE DOWN. ALSO REALIZE THAT YOU WILL HAVE ONE RETAKE OPPORTUNITY ON EACH OF THE TESTS.***

## **APUSH: INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

### **ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

#### ***WHY DO HISTORIANS USE PRIMARY SOURCES?***

Primary sources (documents, books, pictures, film footage, artifacts, letters, recordings, etc.) give us a window into the past -- as direct a look as we can get from our vantage point. They derive their value from the fact that they remove the layers of interpretation that secondary sources obviously must include. If history is, in fact, the interpretation of past events, then primary sources allow us to become interpreters in our own right. In short, they help us to think for ourselves about the past and present.

#### ***WHAT SKILLS MUST BE DEVELOPED RELATED USING THESE SOURCES?***

For our purposes, the historical document or periodical is used quite a bit. As students of history, you must develop the ability to analyze a document related to the following things:

1. Identifying the author
2. Recognizing the purpose of the document
3. Recognizing the medium or form of the document
4. Recognizing the historical context of the document
5. Understanding who the intended audience is
6. Recognizing the bias of the author
7. Identifying the author's authority, specialized knowledge, or experience
8. Determining the author's "tone"
9. Detecting underlying assumptions being made by the author
10. Evaluating contradictory and conflicting attitudes or issues
11. Recognizing how ideas might affect an audience (the reading public?)
12. Recognizing "hidden agendas" of the author
13. Using the document logically in an essay response

### **THE APPARTS METHOD**

**APPARTS is an acronym for a document analysis procedure that will help us get at the preceding questions. The letters stand for:**

**A = Author**

**P = Place and Time**

**P = Prior Knowledge**

**A = Audience**

**R = Reason**

**T = The Main Idea**

**S = Significance**

We will utilize this approach throughout the semester. There is a fuller explanation of APPARTS linked to the AP US History home page.

Constructing solid essay responses to questions on exams, particularly document-based essays, is an essential skill for successful completion of AP work. As you approach your essay assignments during the year, be patient and willing to take a lot of correction. Essay writing is challenging even for the brightest students. What you are being asked to do, essentially, is to analyze and interpret information in such a way as to present your own viewpoint. When writing an essay it is sometimes helpful to put yourself in a situation, to play a role. Think of yourself as a defense attorney engaging in an argument, the intention of which is to convince a jury to vote in your favor. Think of writing essays as simply an extension of speaking. Present a well-conceived and well-constructed argument on paper. The essay is simply a vehicle for developing your ability to think deeply about significant issues.

Effective answers to essay questions depend in part upon a clear understanding of the meanings of important directive words. These are words that indicate the way in which the material is to be presented. Here are the most common “directives” on history essay questions:

<b>ANALYZE:</b>	<b>BREAK DOWN INTO COMPONENT PARTS</b>
<b>ASSESS:</b>	<b>JUDGE THE VALUE OR TRUTH OF</b>
<b>COMPARE:</b>	<b>NOTE THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES</b>
<b>CONTRAST:</b>	<b>FOCUS ON DIFFERENCES ONLY</b>
<b>DESCRIBE:</b>	<b>GIVE A FULL ACCOUNT OF</b>
<b>DISCUSS:</b>	<b>WRITE ABOUT IN FULL DETAIL</b>
<b>EVALUATE:</b>	<b>CONSIDER BOTH SIDES (PROS AND CONS)</b>
<b>EXPLAIN:</b>	<b>MAKE CLEAR OR PLAIN IN DETAIL</b>

### **THE RYKKEN RULES**

Over the years I have helped hundreds of students develop essay-writing skills. Below are suggestions related to writing historical essays. A clear understanding and application of these rules will help you become excellent writers:

- #1: Thoroughly understand what you are being asked. Focus on the key words of the question.
- #2: Develop a clear thesis.
- #3: Start Fast! Keep your intro paragraphs lean. Don't waste time getting into your answer.
- #4: Consider the essay a draft. To “essay” means to try -- not to perfect.
- #5: Make an outline of the main points you will make before you begin writing. The outline of your paper should be evident in your proof statements in your intro paragraph.
- #6: Use strong prose. Use active language and write aggressively.
- #7: Refer to the terms used in the question (key words) throughout your essay.
- #8: Follow up any general statements with concrete examples. Support all your argument with evidence (including dates, names, terms).
- #9: Make concession statements. In writing an essay you should be able to see the other side of a position that you are taking and to concede that it exists. Keep the refutation of your thesis in mind throughout your answer! When you make such a “concession statement,” you are acknowledging an

opponent's viewpoint, even if you have decided that it has little merit. "Although it can be argued that . . ." is a good way to begin a concession statement.

**#10: Think Quality and not Quantity.** A structured and compressed essay in which every sentence "speaks" is much more impressive than a long rambling essay.

**#11: Use transitional expressions to clarify relationships among the sentences in your essay.** The expressions serve as connecting links in a narration. Here are several examples:

*TO CLARIFY A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS: First, second, third, next, finally, last*

*TO SHOW A SIMILAR RELATIONSHIP: similarly, in like manner, likewise*

*TO POINT OUT A DISIMILARITY: In opposition to, in contrast to, on the other hand, conversely*

*TO SHOW OR POINT OUT A RESULT: consequently, as a result, therefore, hence, accordingly*

*TO SUMMARIZE A POSITION: In summation, finally, in conclusion, in short*

*TO ILLUSTRATE A POINT: for example, by way of illustration, for instance*

*TO CONTRAST A POSITION: on the other hand, however, yet, despite, although, nevertheless*

*TO RECORD TIME: now, gradually, later, eventually, immediately, at once, at this point, next, afterward*

**#12: Avoid the use of abbreviations (such as gov't for government)**

**#13: Avoid the use of contractions (such as can't or didn't)**

**#14: Avoid the use of "etc."**

**#15: One sentence does not a paragraph make.**

**#16: WRITE WITH CONFIDENCE!!**

**#17: Talk about your essay writing with people who know what they are doing!**

**#18: Understand the AP rubric! In other words, you need to know what an outstanding essay is supposed to look like.**

## **ADVANCED PLACEMENT HISTORY**

### **ESSAY GRADING STANDARDS: UNDERSTANDING THE RUBRIC**

#### ***THE PURPOSE OF ESSAY WRITING***

Writing the essay on an exam or for another type of assignment requires you to do two things: one, to display your knowledge of basic historical information; and two, to display your ability to interpret the information in writing. **THINKING** is the central goal!

#### ***ESSENTIAL SKILLS WHICH NEED TO BE DEVELOPED***

1. Identify the **KEY WORDS** of the question or problem posed
2. Develop a thesis statement
3. Write a clear introductory paragraph
4. Provide support for the thesis
5. Counter the refutation of your thesis
6. Provide a solid conclusion for your essay

#### ***HOW ARE ESSAYS GRADED IN AP CURRICULUM***

Essay writing is a subjective sort of thing. Different ability levels will produce different levels of quality. It is my contention that **ANYONE** can write essays if they are willing to make the effort. Generally speaking, I will use the following categories as the standard which you must strive to meet. They are consistent with the **RUBRIC** for AP essays, as defined by the College Board.

#### ***EXCELLENT PAPER = A OR CATEGORY 5***

1. Ideas are expressed in a clear and organized way.
2. Ideas indicate a mature level of thought as evidenced by originality, insight, and/or the ability to draw inferences and make analogies.
3. There is a clear purpose that is consistently developed throughout the essay.
4. General ideas are supported by specifics such as examples, illustrations, facts, and details.
6. The essay is clearly organized, presenting a logical flow of ideas, including a beginning, middle, and end -- with effective transitional phrasing.
6. Sentence structure includes variety and word choice is accurate and effective.
7. The paper is neat with few, if any, spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.
8. Descriptive phrases for the "A" paper:

Truly Superior  
Original and Creative  
Well Organized and Comprehensive  
Logically Argued

**A CATEGORY "5" PAPER IS THE  
ULTIMATE GOAL. IT WILL TAKE TIME,  
BUT YOU CAN GET THERE IF YOU ARE  
WILLING TO WORK ON IT!**

#### ***GOOD PAPER = B OR CATEGORY 4***

1. Good understanding of the material and clear expression of ideas.
2. The essay is clearly organized, presenting a logical flow of ideas, including a beginning, middle, and end -- with effective transitional phrasing.
3. The "Thesis-Support-Conclusion" components are solid.
4. Sentence structure includes variety.

5. The paper is neat with few, if any, spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.
7. General ideas are almost always supported by specifics such as examples, illustrations, facts, and details.
8. THE PAPER LACKS ONE OR MORE OF THE QUALITIES OF THE SUPERIOR PAPER.

**COMPETENT PAPER = C OR CATEGORY 3**

1. The answer is adequate.
2. Knowledge of the material is average.
3. The paper is potentially a good paper, but shows definite weaknesses in one or more of the following areas: organization, accuracy of information, clarity, depth of understanding, and the proper use of the English language.
4. If there are any problems with one of the three major components of the answer (thesis-support-conclusion), the answer cannot be rated above a C.

**UNSATISFACTORY PAPER = D OR CATEGORY 2**

1. Knowledge of the subject matter is limited.
2. The effort appears to be minimal.
3. Little thought has gone into the writing of the paper -- the "I just wanted to get it done" syndrome.
4. High number of spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors will mean a D, particularly if you have had time to work on the paper outside of class.

**ROCK BOTTOM PAPER = F OR CATEGORY 1**

A total lack of effort is the only way to get to this level!

**FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE AP RUBRIC**

***Essay writing is a skill which involves thinking and writing -  
- PRACTICE!!! Like any other skill, it can be developed if  
you are willing to work hard, work smart, and ask the right  
questions. YOU MUST BE ABLE TO TAKE CRITICISM!! The  
grading standards are high because you need to be pushed  
to do your best. An unsatisfactory paper is potentially a  
good paper, and a good paper is potentially an excellent  
paper.***

## TEN-POINT CHECK LIST FOR WRITING DBQ'S

1. READ THE QUESTION CAREFULLY AND MAKE A "SURVIVAL" OUTLINE BEFORE READING THE DOCUMENTS. THEN TURN TO THE DOCUMENTS AND SEE WHERE THEY NATURALLY FIT IN.
2. DON'T FORGET OUTSIDE INFORMATION! WRITE DOWN 7-10 PIECES OF INFORMATION YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SUBJECT BEFORE YOU START YOUR ESSAY.
3. FIND A SEQUENCE IN THE DOCUMENTS, EITHER CHRONOLOGICAL OR POINT/COUNTERPOINT.
4. UNDERLINE YOUR THESIS STATEMENT.
5. PERIODICALLY RESTATE THE THESIS DURING YOUR ESSAY. STAY FOCUSED ON THE KEY WORDS IN THE ORIGINAL QUESTION.
6. HANDLE THE DOCUMENTS AS PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED . . . SMOOTHLY . . .
7. WRITE IN COMPLEX SENTENCES.
8. ALWAYS BE AWARE OF THE SOURCE OF THE DOCUMENT: WHO SAID IT? WHEN DID THEY SAY IT? WHY DID THEY SAY IT?
9. QUOTE SPARINGLY FROM THE DOCUMENTS --- NO MORE THAN A PHRASE.
10. HAVE A POWERFUL CONCLUSION. RESTATE YOUR CONCLUSION, BUT NOT IN A CUMBERSOME WAY.

### APPROACHING THE DOCUMENTS – KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND . . .

1. You should not feel that you have to refer to all of the documents in your answer. However, the more you can use the better. If there are 8 documents, you should deal with AT LEAST 6 of them.
2. Avoid LAUNDRY-LISTING the documents. In other words, DO NOT simply "hang them out there on the line" for people to see with no apparent rationale. This often happens toward the end of an answer if students feel they have not made enough references throughout the answer.
3. ALWAYS! ALWAYS! ALWAYS! Remember to think about "point of view" and "context" as you deal with documents. Identifying the underlying assumptions inherent in the documents is really the key to doing this.

### HOW TO REFERENCE THE DOCUMENTS (simple mechanics – note parenthetical references)

1. **PARAPHRASING**  
During a campaign speech in 1860, Lincoln contended that the Democrats are using John Brown against the Republicans for political gain (Document E).
2. **SHORT QUOTING**  
Editorial writer Horace Greely reflected some in the North when he described Brown's actions as "utterly mistaken and, in its direct consequences, pernicious" (Document A).
3. **SIMPLE REFERENCE**  
The image of Brown in the popular culture of the North is evidenced by the Currier and Ives print (Document H). Here Brown is depicted as a martyr on his way to his death, perhaps connecting Brown to Christ in the minds of the people.

## ***AP HISTORY***

## ***FILM REVIEWS FOR BONUS***

Important or notable films reflect the contemporary culture and may also offer provocative interpretations of important moments in our history. There are many feature-length movies that can help any student of history understand a period of time, event, or development in greater depth. Very often, in fact, film defines history for the popular culture and therefore plays an important role in society. These are considered bonus credit in AP History. You may do one per term. I may offer a film in class or out of class for bonus during the term.

### **WHAT FILMS CAN BE USED FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT?**

I will help you with film lists and suggestions. However, you may rent (or tape) a different movie that you believe fits with the spirit of this assignment. For those of you with cable TV the AMC and TMC channels, for example, VERY OFTEN play films of genuine historical value also. Use the following guidelines for selection:

1. The film you choose needs to be relevant to the time period we are studying.
2. The film needs to be a "popular" film -- that is to say, one that was (or is being) viewed by general audiences. Part of what we are trying to learn about here is how history is being conveyed to the general public.
3. The film needs to be of reasonable length (90 minutes or longer).
4. ALL FILMS MUST BE APPROVED BY ME FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT! IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, LET ME KNOW!

### **WATCHING THE FILM (THIS IS IMPORTANT!)**

Prior to watching, find out WHEN the film was produced and get a handle on some of the important historical context of the period (for example, films produced in the 1950s often reflected Cold War themes). Look over the Review Guidelines below and determine if you need to write anything down while watching. Relax and enjoy!

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITTEN REVIEW**

<b>MINIMUM LENGTH OF REVIEW: 2 pages, double-spaced typed (roughly 500 words)</b>
---

### ***QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN THE REVIEW***

1. What is the basic story line of the film? (short summary)
2. What historical events, developments, or themes did you learn about while watching the movie?
3. Did the film raise important questions in your mind?
4. Does the film appear to be especially biased in its presentation of history? Explain.
5. Does the film reflect important historical/cultural developments related to its production date?

What was your general impression of the movie? Is there anything that you found unique in the production? Would you recommend it to others?

## **GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL REVIEW OF ARTICLE**

### **RATIONALE**

You will be exposed to a number of secondary readings in this class. One of the skills that you must acquire is the ability to critically analyze what you are reading concerning various historical periods. Article Reviews will be offered for bonus credit from time to time. Each reading should provide you with a legitimate COGNITIVE EXPERIENCE! Use the following as a guideline for approaching the review.

### **READING THE ARTICLE**

As you read, take notes and highlight what impresses you, favorably or not, as well as on material that confirms or challenges previously held beliefs. As you finish the interpretation as yourself: “What is my reaction to this account and why?” Remember that we are reading for depth of understanding!

### **LENGTH OF WRITTEN REVIEW**

Reviews should be 2 pages in length, double-spaced typed. They can be longer than that, of course, but do not need to be.

### **PREPARING THE ACTUAL REVIEW**

Your final product should serve three functions: first, it should describe the content of the article; second, it should clearly spell out your evaluation of what you read; and third, it should provide a subjective and reflective analysis of what you read. A good review IS NOT a recitation of content – “regurgitation” requires no special mental skills. The review should be INFORMATIVE, ANALYTICAL, AND CRITICAL. I expect you to address the following questions in your review:

1. What is the author’s purpose in preparing the article? Did they succeed in that?
2. Is the article convincing? Is it comprehensive? Does it neglect important aspects of the topic?
3. Does the author appear to be biased?
4. What intellectual questions has the author raised in your mind?
5. Is there anything unique about the article?
6. What is the style of the writing? Popular? Scholarly?
7. Does the author use outside sources effectively? Do you see evidence of primary historical research? Secondary sources? Are the sources cited?

## **THE BIG PICTURE: A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING US HISTORY**

One of the challenges in studying history is to make sense of all of the information and see things from a broader perspective. In this course we will use the following structure to organize our journey. We will revisit these categories and themes in each unit of study.

### ***THE THREE CATEGORIES***

#### **Category 1: Intellectual and Cultural History**

This includes the history of thought (religious, scientific, economic, and social) and all the major trends in literature and arts.

#### **Category 2: Political and Diplomatic History**

This includes the history of the political struggles within the US and the nation's relationship with the world community.

#### **Category 3: Social and Economic History**

This includes the day to day lives of normal people, the history of social structures and demographic developments, and the economic dimension of historical development.

### ***THE SIX MAJOR THEMES***

**Theme #1: Change and Continuity in American Democracy: Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies**

**Theme #2: The Gathering and Interaction of Different Races, Cultures, and Religious Traditions Forming a Complex and Unique Society**

**Theme #3: Intellectual and Cultural Developments as Statements of Societal Values and as Historical Evidence**

**Theme #4: Economic and Technological Changes and Their Relation to Society, Ideas, and the Environment**

**Theme #5: The Relationship Between Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy**

**Theme #6: American Exceptionalism**

## **THE TURNER PROJECT**

*"We must not lose our past. Our libraries hold histories; but without recognition who will read them, and what kind of men will choose the calling?" (FJ Turner)*

### **RATIONALE**

Within the last two weeks of both terms you will be working on something I call the Turner Project. Named for Wisconsin's preeminent historian Frederick Jackson Turner, the project will involve individual research of some kind and/or specific work designed to improve your essay and document skills. Completing the project will force you to sharpen many of the skills that we work on throughout the semester. For grading purposes, the Turner Project will comprise 40% of your Final Exam grade, the other 60% being determined by an in-class exam. We will work on the project during designated class days toward the end of each term. Keep in mind that your Final Exam accounts for 20% of your term grade. This will be handled somewhat differently during each term and I keep the project flexible to react to the kinds of work I believe we need at the time.

### **TERM 3: THE TURNER PROJECT**

We will use the first round of the project to do some intense NATIONAL EXAM PREPARATION. We must be prepared to confront the National Exam just beyond the midpoint of term 4 and we will use the last week of term 3 to SYNTHESIZE a number of skills that we will need for the exam. You will receive clear information on this as we get closer to the end of the term.

### **TERM 4: THE TURNER PROJECT REVISITED!**

Turner was big on the practical use of history and promoted the idea of seeing the big picture. Our second Turner Project will be our grand culminating activity for the course. We will use the post-national exam portion of the course to explore the various "generations" that have come of age in America since 1945. Again, you will receive good directions on how to do this with plenty of time to get the work done.

## **NEVER FORGET THE BRFHs AP MOTTO:**

**"WE MUST KNOW HISTORY SO THAT HISTORY MAY KNOW US!"**