

AP U.S. History/APUSH - Summer Assignment

AP US History

Summer Reading Assignment 1-2-3

(2022-2023)

Welcome to AP US History! I hope you are having a great summer, and I hope you are looking forward to becoming a part of this intense, rigorous, and rewarding experience, APUSH! This coming fall we will begin our investigation of the dynamic, troubling, confusing, and inspiring history of this continent and nation. **In preparation for our class, I am asking that you do three things that are listed below.** Thanks. Don

(Have any questions? Please just email me at dkaplan@solebury.org)

1) Read and mark up a copy of David O. Stewart's The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution (ISBN-10: 0743286936; ISBN-13: 978-0743286930)

- Feel free to skip Chapters 7, 15, 20 & 21.
- Try <https://www.thriftbooks.com/> for used, inexpensive copies or your local bookstore!

Why read this book? The historical content and characters surrounding the creation of the Constitution are certainly important for our class, and over the years I've come to see the Constitution as THE central document of the American Experience. Another very important aspect of this history of the Constitution is that the author, Stewart, refuses to simply retell the prepackaged story of American history; rather, he debunks the mythology that we often refer to as *history*. This method of "pulling aside the curtain" and peering into the raw evidence of the past is what we will be doing all year in AP U.S. History. As you read, I encourage you to avoid getting overwhelmed with the details but instead focus on the main issues that the delegates battle with, the alliances that are made and broken, and the compromises that are ultimately agreed upon throughout the text. I hope you'll like this text!

2) Using The Summer of 1787, write a 3-4 page essay due at the beginning of the first day of class.

Possible prompts to choose from:

- a) Explore Stewart's approach as a historian and how he interprets this era. In what way was the history we typically associate with the Constitutional Convention and the creation of its central document (the Constitution) different from that provided by Stewart? How does he explain this?
- b) Explain the failures of the Articles of Confederation and how the Constitution attempts or succeeds in addressing these same failures.
- c) According to Stewart, the Convention was contentious and laborious and seemed to draw from the best and worst aspects of each of the state delegates. Identify the key issues that the Convention had to address and describe in detail how these same key issues were finally resolved.
- d) Ben Franklin famously declared that "it was one thing to found a republic—and quite another to keep it." How does Stewart bring to life Franklin's assertion, and what would you conclude is

Stewart's overall thesis? How does he prove his point about the difficulty of creating and sustaining such bold political enterprises?

3) Finally, read the attached pdf ([attached here](#)) from Alan Taylor's *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*.

Scan the introduction if you like, and then pay attention to the various themes and groups as these worlds are introduced at the beginning of their collision that will be the beginning of this nation and our course.

Once again, have a great summer! Don/dk