

Advanced Placement United States History Summer Reading 2025

Part 1: Read the first two chapters of America's History, our textbook for the class. Take notes.

You'll be reading the first two chapters of our textbook and taking notes. Both the reading and the notes guide can be found on the Social Studies home page. The purpose of this assignment is twofold: first, so you can learn how to read our textbook well – not just for completion, but for understanding; and second, so that we will have more time to spend together learning the rest of US history.

Part 2: Complete the multiple choice and short answer questions that correspond with the two chapters. After each chapter, you'll have some stimulus-based multiple choice questions and a short answer question. These will give you a sense of what level of understanding you'll need to achieve through your reading, and preview the types of questions you'll see on the AP exam. Again, these questions can be found on the Social Studies home page.

Bring your notes and the completed questions to school at the beginning of the year.

The reading, note taking and completion of the questions is required. Additionally, we'd like to encourage you to read other books about history. This is not required in any way, but we think you might enjoy some of the books on the back of this page, and doing so would prepare you well for this year.

Finally, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History offers a free summer course for high school students that prepares you for the AP US history course and exam. If you think you'd benefit from a little extra preparation, or simply want to start the year with some extra confidence, you can register here: <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-school/2025/ap-us-history> or by searching "Gilder Lehrman History School". Registration deadline is June 27.

Should you have a question please contact any of us:

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If you're interested in science and medicine:

Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President (Candice Millard)
Hidden Figures: The Untold True Story of Four African-American Women Who Helped Launch Our Nation into Space (Margot Lee Shutterly)

If you're a politics junkie:

The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America (George Packer)
The Politicians and the Egalitarians: The Hidden History of American Politics (Sean Wilentz)
Impeachment: An American History (Jeffrey Engel)
Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America (Ari Berman)

Books about American foreign policy, both familiar and obscure:

The Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy (Matthew Karp)
The Earth is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West (Peter Cozzens)
The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee (David Treuer)
Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq (Stephen Kinzer)
The Lost Peace: Leadership in a Time of Horror and Hope, 1945-1953 (Robert Dallek)
The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War (H.W. Brands)
They Marched Into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967 (David Maraniss)

The Revolutionary Era:

Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution (Kathleen DuVal)
A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution (Carol Berkin)
Founding Rivals: Madison versus Monroe, The Bill of Rights and the Election that Saved a Nation (Chris DeRose)

Books on the history of race and racism in America:

A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riots of 1919 (Claire Hartfield)
Ida: A Sword Among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching (Paula Giddings)
Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights and Murder in the Jazz Age (Kevin Boyle)
Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI (David Grann)
The Blood of Emmett Till (Timothy Tyson)
Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement (John Lewis)
The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America (Richard Rothstein)
Asian American Histories of the United States (Catherine Ceniza Choy)
Mott Street: A Chinese American Family's Story of Exclusion and Homecoming (Ava Chin)
Spell Freedom: The Underground Schools that Built the Civil Rights Movement (Elaine Weiss)

Sports and history:

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics (Daniel James Brown)
Rome 1960: The Olympics that Changed the World (David Maraniss)
October 1964 (David Halberstam)

Books that are very long, but very good:

American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804 (Alan Taylor)
Alexander Hamilton (Ron Chernow)
Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln (Doris Kearns Goodwin)
Grant (Ron Chernow)
The Warmth of Other Sons: The Epic Story of America's Migration (Isabelle Wilkerson)
Parting the Waters / Pillar of Fire / At Canaan's Edge trilogy (Taylor Branch)