Hello and congratulations for taking on the challenge of Advanced Placement United States History. This course will be one of the most rigorous academic endeavors of your high school career, and will require a substantial commitment on your part. But as with most things in life, the greatest challenges reap the greatest rewards, and the reward here will be a thorough college prep experience in U.S. history, along with the potential to earn college credit for your effort.

In order to help you prepare for the challenge ahead, you will be required to complete an assignment over the summer, due upon the first day of school.

1) Book Review- You are required to read and provide a written review of a scholarly work covering a subject directly relevant to United States history, of the time period up to and including the Civil War, 1865. (You'll be writing a second book review covering the period since 1865 in the second semester). Choose a book or topic that interests you, but keep in mind your choice must be scholarly (fully cited) non-fiction, and must reflect contemporary standards of historical interpretation. There is any number of older history “classics” that would be perfectly appropriate, but avoid clearly outdated works (for example, an analysis of the Cold War published in 1978). If you have any doubt about a book’s appropriateness, it is strongly recommended you contact me via e-mail for approval. (See e-mail address at header above). You will not receive credit for reviews of unapproved books that are deemed inappropriate by subject, style, or relevance. See the rubric for more detailed instructions. For those of you that are especially eager to prepare for this course, you may complete a second book review for extra credit.

Assignment Rubric
SUMMER READING/BOOK REVIEW

Objective: Students will read a scholarly (non-fiction) work on a subject with direct relevance to United States history, covering the period up to and including the Civil War (1865). In a lucidly written, well-organized essay, students will provide a critical review of the book, including a summary and evaluation of its content, central thesis, related sub-theses, and research methods/sources. Book reviews should be 2-4 pages (typed, 12 point font, double-spaced). Your grade will be derived from how well you meet the following criteria:

1) Header and Citation: In the top left header of page 1 include your name, Islands High School, Course (AP US History), and the date of your final draft. Below the header, center the title and citation as follows:

   Review of: Author Last Name, Author First Name. Complete Book Title(Italized), Year of Publication.

2) Thesis- Identify the central thesis of the work- What is the main idea the author intends to convey? What is the historical significance of the subject, according to the author?

3) Summarize- Review the topic/s and major theme/s presented in the book- How is the content organized? How does the author present the research?
4) **Critique**- Critically assess the effectiveness of the author’s thesis and the quality of the research and writing. How effectively does the author develop the central thesis? Does the research and scholarship support the thesis? Are there any alternative views or counterpoints to the author’s thesis? What kind of bibliographic sources inform the work? Do you agree or disagree with the author’s analysis of primary and secondary sources? Is the book well written? Is it enjoyable to read?

5) **Style/Grammar/Mechanics**- Use a concise, academic style of prose (3rd person, avoiding contractions, colloquialisms, and non-standard usages), free from grammatical and mechanical (punctuation) errors.

Each of the above criteria will be assessed on a five point scale, converted to percentage. Note that the prompt questions above for your summary and critique are merely guides to help you consider the common elements of a thorough critical review. Use your discretion to demonstrate in your essay that you read the book and that you understand the content, and can summarize and critique the author’s thesis and research.