

AP World History Summer Assignment 2016-2017

This summer, you will be reading parts 1 and 2 of the book *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari. The school has copies of the book for you to check out for the summer, or you can buy the book on your own. You will be reading the first 8 chapters of the book and answering questions on each chapter (we will read remaining chapters during the school year). This will serve as an introduction to the beginning phases of human history and therefore world history.

Book Details:

- Title: *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*
- Author: Yuval Noah Harari
- Harper, 2015
- ISBN: 978-0-06-231609-7

For each of the 8 chapters you will be reading in parts 1 and 2 of the book, you will be writing a **paragraph-length response to the questions below**. Each answer should be a minimum of 7 sentences long and should address all parts of the question. You are allowed to comment on the veracity of the author's theses and agree or disagree with his assertions as part of your answers.

Here are the questions you will be answering. You should create a Google Doc to answer these questions, which will be submitted on Google Classroom approximately one week into the school year in September (a more exact due date will be discussed in the first few days of class in the fall). If you would like, you may make a copy of this document and use it as a template. Points will be awarded based on effort and quality and depth of response. Total grade will be 25 points.

Part One: The Cognitive Revolution (numbers refer to chapter numbers)

1. An Animal of No Significance
 - In what ways were *Sapiens* like many of the early human species that coexisted with us? In what ways were we unique? What does the author believe happened to those earlier human species?
2. The Tree of Knowledge
 - How does the author argue that the development of abstract language was the key element to the "cognitive revolution" and ultimately the development of human society?
3. A Day in the Life of Adam and Eve
 - Why does the author argue that pre-agricultural *Sapiens* lived in "the original affluent society?" What evidence do you think supports this idea? What evidence do you believe disputes this claim?
4. The Flood
 - How did the spread of mankind across the globe affect the environment and species of the earth? In what ways has this continued to today?

Part Two: The Agricultural Revolution (numbers refer to chapter numbers)

5. History's Biggest Fraud
 - In what ways was man's domestication of plants and animals "history's biggest fraud?" Despite this, why did man choose an agricultural existence over hunting and gathering?
6. Building Pyramids
 - What does the author mean by the idea of an "imagined order"? How and why have humans created them in the last several thousand years?
7. Memory Overload
 - Why and how did humans methods to store information outside of their brains? How and why did this develop into written language, bureaucracy, and mathematical notation?
8. There is No Justice in History
 - How and why did social hierarchies develop among humans? Discuss the three examples given in the chapter: India's caste system, America's racial hierarchy, and gender hierarchies (patriarchy in particular).

Remember, you are only required to read chapters 1-8 of the book during the summer. Chapters 9 through 20 are not part of the summer assignment. Some or all of those additional chapters will be assigned during the school year.