

**AP World History
Summer Reading Assignment #1**

Mr. Donohoe

***Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*
By Jared Diamond**

Also available at many libraries is a National Geographic/PBS video narrated by Jared Diamond entitled *Guns, Germs and Steel*. The website with information and resources can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermssteel/>. I have one copy of it that can be made available for people who wish to visit La Salle and borrow it for 3 days at the most (so everyone has a chance to borrow if necessary). You may be able to find it on the internet somewhere and it should also be available in most of your local public libraries.

As you read *Guns Germs and Steel*, you will answer the focus questions based on your reading of the chapters in an organized informal typed journal. Each of these questions should be answered with support from the book (meaning quote from the book to support your responses using parenthetical citations/footnotes) and explain with your own thoughts. **This does not have to be done in "essay form," you are allowed to use bullet points, or some kind of outline or graphic organizer.** Responses should be no more than a page. I will be look at the quality not quantity of your responses.

Any student caught plagiarizing will be given a 0 and will be asked to drop out of the AP course into Western Civilization.

Focus questions for journal:

1. What are the other commonly espoused answers to "*Yali's question*," and how does Jared Diamond address and refute each of them?
2. Why does Diamond hypothesize that New Guineans might be, on the average, "smarter" than Westerners?
3. Why is it important to differentiate between proximate and ultimate causes?
4. Do you find some of Diamond's methodologies more compelling than others? Which, and why?
5. What is the importance of the order of the chapters? Why, for example, is "Collision at Cajamarca"—which describes events that occur thousands of years after those described in the subsequent chapters—placed where it is?
6. How are Polynesian Islands "an experiment of history"? What conclusions does Diamond draw from their history?
7. How does Diamond challenge our assumptions about the transition from hunter-gathering to farming?
8. How is farming an "auto-catalytic" process? How does this account for the great disparities in societies, as well as for the possibilities of parallel evolution?

9. Why did almonds prove domesticable while acorns were not? What significance does this have?

10. How does Diamond explain the fact that domesticable American apples and grapes were not domesticated until the arrival of Europeans?

11. What were the advantages enjoyed by the Fertile Crescent that allowed it to be the earliest site of development for most of the building blocks of civilization? How does Diamond explain the fact that it was nevertheless Europe and not Southwest Asia that ended up spreading its culture to the rest of the world?

12. How does Diamond refute the argument that the failure to domesticate certain animals arose from cultural differences? What does the modern failure to domesticate, for example, the eland suggest about the reasons why some peoples independently developed domestic animals and others did not?

13. What is the importance of the "Anna Karenina principle"?

14. How does comparing mutations help one trace the spread of agriculture?

15. How does civilization lead to epidemics?

16. How does Diamond's theory that invention is, in fact, the mother of necessity bear upon the traditional "heroic" model of invention?

17. According to Diamond, how does religion evolve along with increasingly complex societies?

18. How is linguistic evidence used to draw conclusions about the spread of peoples in China, Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Africa?

19. What is the significance of the differing outcomes of Austronesian expansion in Indonesia and New Guinea?

20. How does Diamond explain China's striking unity and Europe's persistent disunity? What consequences do these conditions have for world history?

21. How does Diamond refute the charge that Australia is proof that differences in the fates of human societies are a matter of people and not environment? In what other areas of the world could Diamond's argument be used?

22. What aspects of Diamond's evidence do lay readers have to take on faith? Which aspects are explained?

23. Diamond offers two tribes, the Chimbu and the Daribi, as examples of differing receptivities to innovation. Do you think he would accept larger, continent-wide

differences in receptivity? Why or why not? How problematic might cultural factors prove for Diamond's arguments?

24. How, throughout the book, does Diamond address the issues he discusses in the last few pages of his final chapter, when he proposes a science of human history?

Question can also be found at:

<http://www2.wwnorton.com/rgguides/gunsgerms.htm>

AP World History

History, A Very Short Introduction by John Arnold

This brief and provocative work needs to be read carefully and thoughtfully. It is deceptively simple in its focus on things which we think we already know, namely 'truth' and 'reality' both present and past. After you've completed reading, I want you to think and write on the following ideas.

There are ***three parts*** to this assignment.

- a) **All must complete the first question.**
- b) **Then choose one (1) other question to write about.**

Bring your work with you to the first day of class in September.

Each answer should be a ***five paragraph unified essay*** with a clearly stated topic sentence and a conclusion, using specific references taken directly from the work (use parenthetical citations (p. # 10) to identify the page number – or footnotes following the Chicago Style- you can view the following site and others for clarification→

<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/3chicago.pdf>

- I. "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."
'The past is truly a foreign country; they do things just like us.'

After reading John Arnold, which of these would *he* agree with?
Which do *you* agree with?

What is the difference between 'history' and the 'past'? What are the reasons for studying history? Should we study it to 'learn lessons for the present'?

Put another way, why does history matter; what is history for; and why ought we bother to do it? And by the way, is history spelled with a capital H or not? (and does 'truth' have a capital T?)

- II. "There is not and never will be one sole explanation for {the past}."

According to John Arnold, history is otherwise known as 'true stories' and that historians 'can never reach the whole truth...and they always get things wrong.'

Yet historians speak confidently of origins (causes) and effects (outcomes) and the need to synthesize and 'tell a story'.

So, what's a good historian to do when trying to tell the 'true story' of the English Civil War?

- III. "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please. History is made by people in circumstances beyond their own choosing" (Karl Marx)

Explain and apply this quote to the telling of the 'true story' of the **English Civil War**. What did English 'football' have to do with all this? How did the world come to be 'turned upside down'?

- IV. History begins with sources and it is sometimes said that "sources speak for themselves".

Is this so, according to John Arnold? Explain the problems of 'sources', 'silences', 'bias', 'forgery', 'gaps' and 'guessing' as they relate to the history (mystery) of **George Burdett** and the colonization of America.

- V. Define and explain the '**Great Men**' theory of historical causation. Contrast this theory of history with the "new" history known as the **Annaliste** approach. How does this 'new' approach go about trying to tell the true story of 'killing cats' (or kissing cats) and the real meaning of the Boss' *Born in the USA*?

VI. “...If a woman have a pint and a man a quart-why can’t she have her little pint full?...And how came Jesus into the world?..Man, where is your part?...he is surely between a hawk and a buzzard.”

“ ...and ar’n’nt I a woman? If my cup won’t hold but a pint and yourn holds a quart, wouldn’t ye be mean not to let me have my little half- measure full? Whar did Christ come from?..Man had nothing to do with him.”

Which of these accounts of **Sojourner Truth’s** address to the Ohio Woman’s Rights Convention is the ‘true’ one? What difference does it make?