



Summer Project 2009

As part of preparing for the AP World History course, students are expected to spend time during the summer to complete specific assignments. This work will address factual information that is relevant at the beginning of our study of history, as well as skills that are critical for success in the class. Specifically, these assignments will address the following:

Major Developments –Foundations 8000 BCE-600 CE

- Locating world history in the environment
 - Geography and climate: interaction of geography and climate with the development of human society
- Issues involved in using “civilization” as an organizing principle in world history
 - Basic features of early civilizations in different environments: culture, state, and social structure

Themes

- Impact of technology and demography on people and the environment
- Systems of social structure and gender
- Cultural, intellectual, and religious developments and interactions among and within societies

Habits of Mind or Skills

- Constructing and evaluating arguments
- Developing the ability to compare within and among societies, including comparing societies’ reactions to global processes

Assignment #1: Geography: Reading and Discussion Preparation

What is the connection between geography and history?

Examine the definitions of geography provided below. What ideas do they share in common?

- The study of the earth and its features and of the distribution of life on the earth, including human life and the effects of human activity. (www.dictionary.com)
- A science that deals with the description, distribution, and interaction of the diverse physical, biological, and cultural features of the earth's surface. (<http://www.m-w.com>)
- The study of the physical features of the earth and of human activity as it relates to these. (<http://www.askoxford.com>)

Geography is critical in learning about the past. Climate changes can be directly related to migration patterns. Resources available at a given location will strongly influence the economic direction and progress of an area. Geographic features may influence cultural values. And while these are just a few examples, the inherent correlation between the sciences of geography and history is clear. Therefore, educators have identified specific themes of geography to guide students in their study.

Develop an Awareness of Place

Geography is fundamentally concerned with the study of place. To understand human events, one must first understand the characteristics of the places in which those events occurred. Physical characteristics of a place include its landforms, water bodies, climate, soils, natural vegetation, and animal life. Human characteristics include the population; the full array of human activities and settlement patterns on the land; the ideological, religious and philosophical beliefs of its people, and their political and social institutions.

Develop Locational Skills and Understanding

To study geography, one must be able to use map and globe skills to determine absolute location. Equally important is the ability to judge the significance of the relative location of a place.

Understand Human and Environmental Interaction

One of the most dynamic aspects of geographic education is the study of the ways people and environments interact in the human modification of the landscape. Geographic systems are in constant flux because of both physical and human influences. Natural resources gain value only through human need, and human need changes over time.

Understand Human Movement

Humans have been on the move since the beginning of history. Later in history, great migrations carried people from one continent to another in the search for places of greater opportunity. Understanding major patterns of domestic and international immigration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, and the frictions that develop between population groups from broadly distinct cultural region is critical. This theme is vital because movement promotes the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods and thereby sets change in motion.

Understand World Regions and their historical, cultural, economic, and political characteristics

Geographers cannot deal with all the earth at once. For that reason, the concept of region has developed.

In order to further your understanding of history, we will continually be examining the role that geography plays on the past. Therefore, begin by identifying the following items on a map. You will have a quiz on this topic.

1. Black Sea
2. Mediterranean Sea
3. Red Sea
4. Persian Gulf
5. Tigris River
6. Euphrates River
7. Plain of Shinar
8. Sinai Peninsula
9. Sahara Desert
10. Aegean Sea
11. Nile River
12. Niger River
13. Congo River
14. Arabian Peninsula
15. Arabian Sea
16. Indian Ocean
17. Hindu Kush Mountains
18. Himalayas
19. Bay of Bengal
20. Deccan Plateau
21. Indus River
22. Ganges River
23. Yellow River (Huang He)
24. Yangzi River
25. South China Sea
26. Sea of Japan
27. Yellow Sea
28. Pacific Ocean
29. Gobi Desert
30. Gulf of Mexico
31. Andes Mountains
32. Aegean Sea
33. Balkan Peninsula
34. Tiber River
35. Adriatic Sea
36. Baltic Sea
37. Rhine River
38. Straits of the Dardanelles
39. Taklamakan Desert
40. Malay Peninsula
41. Pyrenees
42. Volga River
43. Dnieper River
44. Iberian Peninsula
45. Yucatan Peninsula
46. Amazon River
47. Micronesia
48. Melanesia
49. Polynesia
50. Cape of Good Hope

Guns, Germs, and Steel

By Jared Diamond



Readings: Links located on Wikipage

1. Read the excerpt from chapter one by Guns, Germs, and Steel found at:
 - <http://www.wwnorton.com/catalog/spring99/gunsex.htm>
2. Then study the full book summary found at:
 - <http://mcgoodwin.net/pages/gungermsteel.html>
3. Proceed to the variables page and examine a few examples:
 - <http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermsteel/variables/index.html>

Conclusion:

Do you agree or disagree with Jared Diamond's theory about geography being the main determining factor in which countries became rich and powerful through the development of technology and conquest and which countries remain impoverished and underdeveloped in relation to the rest of the world? Be prepared to defend your position in class. You must explain your reasons by citing specific reasons, facts, and examples.

Due date: TBA

Assignment # 2: Note-taking

This activity involves organizing key ideas about the earliest “innovative primary” urban civilizations. These regions of urbanization are those “cities that are believed to have evolved independently, without benefit of the cultural diffusion from the outside”. (Spodek, *The World's History*, p. 44) While there are seven sites identified that meet this criteria according to Spodek, you will be asked to only look at the six that we studied in the ninth grade course. These include:

- Mesopotamia

- Egypt
- Indus Valley
- Northern China (Xia, Shang, Zhou)
- Central Mexico (Olmecs, etc.)
- Andes Mountains (Chavin, etc.)

Your study of these early civilizations should include key features they shared (are there standard features of civilization?), but should also contain distinctive, individual characteristics. Your final product for this assignment can be any form of note-taking or other organizing principle, as long as it is complete and provides the basis for easy further analysis. (see assignment # 3)

Due date: TBA

Assignment # 3: Comparative Essay

One of the key approaches in the study of world history is analyzing global historical patterns and processes. Comparisons are so critical in this course, that one of the essays on the AP exam is specifically dedicated to this skill. In order to begin reviewing this skill, you will be asked to write an essay that compares the political and social structure of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Please complete the comparative graphic organizer that is found on this Wikipage, and carefully study the rubric for this assignment. Please note that a successful essay will have a strong thesis, provide appropriate historical evidence, and be highly analytical by making direct comparisons. The best way to do this is to follow the graphic organizer, and make one portion of the essay [paragraph(s)] dedicated to similarities and another section [paragraph(s)] dedicated to differences. An essay that simply examines the two civilizations separately will not meet the basic core (historical skills and knowledge required to show competence), and certainly would not be considered for expanded core points. Consider that during the AP examination, this essay must be completed in 40 minutes. While you are obviously encouraged to spend more time than that allotted during the exam, please carefully choose factual information that truly furthers the thesis of the paper, and focus on the skill of comparison. Essays must be typed, double-spaced (12 font) and should be no more than three pages in length.

Essay due: TBA

Generic Scoring Guide for the Comparative Essay

Basic Core		Expanded Core	
(Competence)	Points	(Excellence)	Points
Has an acceptable thesis. (Addresses comparison of the issues or themes specified)	1	Expands beyond basic core of 1-7 points. The basic core score of 7 must be achieved before a student can earn expanded core points. Examples:	0-2
Addresses all parts of the question, though not necessarily evenly or thoroughly. (Addresses most parts of the question: for example, deals with differences but not similarities)	2 (1)	Addresses all parts of the question thoroughly (as relevant): comparisons, chronology, causation, connections, themes, interactions, content.	
Substantiates thesis with appropriate historical evidence.) (Partially substantiates thesis with appropriate historical evidence.)	2 (1)	Has a clear, analytical, and comprehensive thesis. Provides ample historical evidence to substantiate thesis. Makes several direct comparisons to larger global context.	
Makes at least one relevant, direct comparison between or among societies.	1	Relates comparisons to larger global context.	
Analyzes at least one reason for a similarity or difference identified in a direct comparison.	1	Consistently analyzes the causes and effects of relevant similarities and differences.	
Subtotal	/7	Subtotal	/9
Total: /9			

If you need any help, please feel free to contact me at my e-mail:
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