

SUMMER READING FOR PRE AP WORLD HISTORY

Guns, Germs and Steel by Jared Diamond

Questions? Email sherrington@huntsville-isd.org or school_teacher_sam@yahoo.com

Mrs. Samantha Herrington at your service!

Answer these questions to guide your reading: To be successful in Pre AP World History, you must begin to understand that reading is not simply looking at words on a page. It is a process of reviewing those words, and analyzing their greater meaning. Often, this requires the material to be read multiple times in order for the larger meaning in the text to ‘click’. There is no special technique or shortcut in this process. Only through reading and analysis of information on a repeated basis can a person hope to develop this skill. Eventually, our goal will be the ability to read a series of documents, process their meaning, and organize a coherent outline of ideas for an essay.

There may be opinions expressed in the book you find to be true or you may find the opinions expressed to be untrue. The purpose of education is to grow and learn and to come up against thoughts we can believe and agree and to also listen to and evaluate opinions we do not agree with.

You should endeavor in your personal beliefs to align yourself closely with your parents and your own religious convictions. World History provides us with the opportunity to explore other beliefs or viewpoints...but that doesn't mean we should abandon our own.

These questions are due the first day you come to my class the last day this will be accepted is September 4th. We will take a test over the general information and summer reading on September 2nd and 3rd in class. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL SCHOOL STARTS TO BEGIN THIS ASSIGNMENT.

If you read and answer the questions as well as study the “Knowledge you must have” information...You will be off and running for the 2009-2010 school year!

Prologue

1. Summarize Yali's question. This requires mentioning race, intelligence, and development of technology.
2. Summarize the three main objections to answering Yali's question.
3. What is meant by a “eurocentric” approach to history?
4. Summarize Diamond's response to the idea that Europeans may perhaps be more innately intelligent than New Guineans. Use his major points to support your summary.
5. Give an example of “passive entertainment”. Explain why we seem to have a better opportunity to experience this type of entertainment in America and its possible effect on our ability to think critically.
6. Explain the theory of how cold European weather may have affected mental development of Europeans.

7. Explain how the theory of irrigation development may have affected the mental development of river civilizations.

8. Summarize Diamond's thesis. This requires you to first understand Yali's question, and outline how Diamond proposes to answer this question.

Up To The Starting Line

9. What is significant about 13,000 years ago or 11,000 B.C.?

10. What stage in human development does Diamond characterize as the Great Leap Forward?

11. What are the major human achievements that characterize this Great Leap Forward?

12. What technological advancement (and give the date) was necessary for the colonization of New Guinea and Australia.

13. What theory does Diamond propose for the disappearance of mega-fauna in Australia/New Guinea?

14. What mega-fauna existed in the North America prior to 11,000 B.C. (for more information on this topic, watch *What Killed the Mega Beasts?* on the Discovery Channel.

A Natural Experiment of History

15. What about the natural environment of the Chatham Islands caused the Moriori people to develop so differently from their Maori conquerors of the same ancestral heritage?

16. What are the three staple domesticated animals of the Polynesians?

17. What are the main causes of low human population density in many Polynesian islands?

18. What man-made constructions allowed for increased human population density in islands such as Hawaii?

Collision at Cajamarca

19. If you had witnessed Cajamarca prior to the overthrow of Atahualpa, explain why you may not have believed Pizarro's overthrow of the Incas was possible.

20. Explain the role of technology in the overthrow of the Inca.

21. Explain the role of religion in the overthrow of the Inca.

22. Explain the role of disease in the overthrow of the Inca.

23. Explain the role of literacy and government organization in the overthrow of the Inca.

Farmer Power

24. Using the chart on 87, explain which of the five proximate factors is the most important product on an agricultural society.

25. Explain how an agricultural society naturally provides the opportunity to develop the proximate factors.

26. List all of the economic products and services provided by the following agriculture and livestock:

a. cotton

b. flax

c. hemp

d. camel

e. horse

f. donkey

g. cow

h. water buffalo

i. Goat

27. How does animal domestication affect plant (corn) production? (at least 2)

28. In what ways do animals affect military success?

29. Name the date and the invention that make horses a viable military option.

History's Haves And Have Nots

30. List the three areas of the world that are the earliest “haves”.
31. List the three places of the world that are the later “haves”
32. List the three areas of the world that borrowed the stuff of the “haves” earliest.
34. Make a statement about the relative location in approximation to each other of the haves in #30 to the borrowers in #34.

To Farm Or Not To Farm

35. What are the four major factors that allowed farmers to dominate hunters and gatherers?

How To Make An Almond

36. Use an example that explains how the tastier plants we have today went through the process of natural selection.
37. Give five examples of different characteristics a plant could possess to allow it to be naturally selected.
38. How did the industrial revolution affect the moth population in England?
39. How and where were the fruit trees we have today such as cherries and apples developed for agriculture?
40. Why were almond trees domesticated for consumption but oak trees were not?

Apples or Indians

41. What are the major advantages of the fertile crescent that predispose this region to early agricultural development?
 42. What is the major key to plant success regarding pollination and how did this affect the fertile crescent?
 43. Why are barley and emmer wheat the two best grasses to domesticate?
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44. What are the three major limiting factors that encourage the hunter-gatherer lifestyle on New Guinea to continue long after other areas have turned to agriculture?
45. Based upon the preceding chapter, explain why it is best to characterize Diamond as a cultural or an environmental historian. (which does he see as the driving force in history)

Zebras and Unhappy Marriages

46. Why did Africans domesticate Eurasian animals when they had a food source equivalent to a modern zoo in their backyard? In other words, what’s up with those Zebras?
47. You need to make a cute copy of page 167. Use markers and have fun. You will refer to it for the rest of the year. This will become vitally essential to you exactly one year from now.
48. Explain the many different characteristics of the Anna Karenina principle.

Spacious Skys and Tilted Axes

49. Explain the advantage of an east-west continental axis.
50. How does the north-south axis prevent diffusion of crops?

Lethal Gift of Livestock

51. What evolutionary benefit do microbes derive from making humans sick in bizarre ways such as genital sores or diarrhea?
52. Give an example how the evolutionary process of natural selection has resulted in immunity to certain diseases.
53. What are the four characteristics of “epidemic” diseases that cause them to die out and not reappear for a long period of time?
54. Why does it make sense that slow developing/spreading diseases such as leprosy, polio, etc. must be the oldest diseases in the history of mankind?
55. What aspects of farming civilizations make them more adept at sustaining the development of infectious crowd diseases?

56. Explain why the exchange of diseases from the old world (Europe) and the new world (America) was so one-sided (America got killed off, not Europe). In doing so, make sure to explain exactly what is a “social” animal.

Blueprints and Borrowed Letters

57. What is the importance of a writing system to a civilization?

Necessity’s Mother

58. How does Edison’s phonograph help disprove the theory of necessity as the mother of invention?

59. If you believe in Diamond’s theory, which is more important: the ability to invent, or the ability to borrow inventions and find new uses?

60. Once again we visit Diamond’s thesis. How does geography effect the ability to adapt and refine inventions for use?

From Egalitarianism to Kleptocracy

61. Read between the lines. Diamond’s religious beliefs should be transparent after reading this chapter. Give a brief analysis of how useful he deems religion for the average Joe in society.