

**Advanced Placement United States History  
Summer Reading, 2020-2021**

**Welcome to APUSH!**

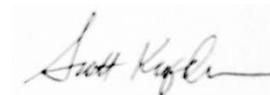
This summer work is designed to help you become familiar with thinking about history. The book selected for this summer is college level, so don't be surprised if at times you have to re-read a section to make sense of it. Don't be surprised if you struggle a bit with reading; the more U.S. history you learn, the easier the reading becomes. Much of APUSH is simply learning to keep working on the course; mastery of the content often comes slowly. I value growth—it is very important to me that you keep growing and stretching and taking intellectual risks.

Reading is fundamental to success in APUSH because the course asks you to analyze a lot of texts—primary and secondary sources—in order to see connections that are thematic in nature across time and regions. As a skill, reading gets better the more that you practice it. At first, you may be tempted to write down everything you read. Don't! Try to focus on the bigger picture—the larger generalizations and understandings. Read a little bit at a time; then think about what you've read. Picture the material in your head. Allow yourself to get lost in the story unfolding before you. Pay attention to maps, graphs, charts, and images. Be sure to put your phone away because constant interruptions will cause you to break concentration and lose your grip on what you are reading.

The summer reading is one book that will be common to us all, but you are not required to read every chapter. We will not tackle the textbook until the fall, so there's no textbook work until then.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. King-Owen at [scott.king-owen@bexleyschools.org](mailto:scott.king-owen@bexleyschools.org).

**Best wishes,**



**Scott King-Owen, Ph.D.**

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***Lies, Lies, Lies: Fake News and Textbooks***

Humans can be exceedingly dishonest--especially when there is something to be gained. We can be deliberately dishonest, especially when it is in our favor. We can also be unwittingly dishonest; when we are so wrapped up in our own worldviews that we can't see how things would appear from the perspective of others, we can even believe the "lies" we tell ourselves and others. **James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*** is a classic exploration of "lies" told in the classroom. "Lies" might be an exaggeration--when teachers and textbook writers tell stories, they often do leave out information that makes the story more complicated. But when leaving out inconvenient information becomes a norm, it does obscure the history of the United States rather than illuminate it. More information gives us perspective and allows us to see the world through not just one set of historical eyes, but through many.

Loewen's task in this book is to analyze how textbooks have distorted the telling of American history. Loewen is not a historian--he's a sociologist (and a very well-read one at that). He does cite his sources, but he is not as well trained in the field as a professional historian, so keep that in mind. What is rather good at doing is looking at how textbooks tell stories and what those stories leave out. We don't use any of the textbooks he cites because many of them are bad, and, a great deal of them are far out of date to be used now. Textbooks should change because our knowledge of the past and our understanding of how to tell the story of the past should change; history is not merely a record of the past--it is an attempt to *explain* the past.

To complete this summer work, you will need **at least the second edition of Loewen's book**, which was published in 2007. **ANY edition after 2007 will work**. This book is so ubiquitous (*everywhere*), that you can find it very cheaply on Amazon, Half-Price books, etc.

**STEP 1: Required Reading for everyone:**

- **Introduction to the Second Edition**
- **Introduction: Something Has Gone Very Wrong**

**STEP 2:** Then, pick any **THREE chapters** besides the introduction and chapter 1 (chapters 2 through 13 are fair game to read for your choice) to read. If you want to focus on chapters that relate to what we will be studying next fall, chapters 2 through 6 are most related to early American history. But, the choice is yours and we will eventually get to the material in the other chapters as well.

**STEP 3:** Pick a topic to write about. You should write about 800 - 100 words in a **double-spaced paper** (that's between three and four pages). Your paper should have a header consisting of your name and the phrase "APUSH Summer Work 2020." You may share your paper with me via Google docs or upload it to Canvas in the fall. The DUE DATE is August 28.

PROMPTS (Pick ONE):

1. Based on what you've read, why do textbook writers "lie" about the past? Are their lies intentional or just the result of leaving out inconvenient information? Use examples from the chapters you've read to analyze the motivations of textbook writers.
2. What "lies" were most shocking to you in the chapters you read? Why did they surprise or shock you? Why do you think these "lies" got told in the first place and what is responsible for them still being around?
3. Based on the chapters you've read, what do you think the public should know about the American past that hasn't been fully told or deliberately obscured? Which things from your chapters do you think would be important for the general public to know about? Why?