

Middlesex School Department of Social Sciences Junior Class Summer Read

American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America
By Colin Woodard

ISBN-10: 9780143122029

ISBN-13: 978-0143122029

****Please purchase this book; you will not be given a copy from the History Department****

This summer assignment is designed to help you more intimately navigate the arguments presented by Woodard. The purpose of this assignment, beyond maintaining your reading level over the summer months, is to help prepare you for your junior history research paper, with an eye toward critiquing and analyzing regionalism and the American identity.

Your study guide will need to be handwritten and in your own words! One of the most basic principles of an historian is originality of ideas. We want you to take responsibility for your work. Collaboration is fine; discussing ideas is acceptable. Taking someone else's work is not. All of the work must be your own!

The US history teachers will be comparing all study guides and we take the honor code very seriously. Integrity violations will be reported to the Deans' Office and will result in a zero for the assignment.

Directions for the Summer Read Assignment:

Please read pages 1-313 of *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*. Of course, you may read the entire book, but the Summer Read Assignment focuses on pages 1-313.

Task 1: Identify Woodard's overall argument (i.e. what is his thesis?).

- A **thesis** offers an argument and starts to introduce the analysis by answering the questions "why?" or "how?", thereby establishing a line of reasoning.

Task 2: Supply 2 examples from each section that support his argument. Since there are four sections, this means you will need to provide a total of 8 pieces of evidence. Of the 8 pieces of evidence you select, you must then analyze the 4 most compelling pieces of evidence (i.e. explain how those pieces of evidence help to prove his argument).

Task 3: Develop 3 discussion questions about the book. When developing discussion questions, keep in mind these guidelines:

- Good discussion questions are not answered by "yes" or "no." Instead they lead to higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, comparison, evaluation) about the work and the issues it raises.
- Good questions recognize that readers will have different perspectives and interpretations and such questions attempt to engage readers in dialogue with each other. They are open-ended, leading to a variety of responses.
- Good discussion questions depend on a careful reading of the text. They often cite particular scenes or passages and ask people to look at them closely and draw connections between these passages and the rest of the work.
- Good discussion questions are useful to the students. Good questions can help to clarify passages or issues students may find difficult. They help students understand cultural differences that influence their reading. They invite personal responses and connections.

We will ask you to hand in this study guide on the first day of class. You will be graded on the content and analysis of your study guide.

Task 1: Identify Woodard's overall argument (i.e. what is his thesis?).

- A **thesis** offers an argument and starts to introduce the analysis by answering the questions “why?” or “how?”, thereby establishing a line of reasoning.

Overall Argument

Task 2: Supply 2 examples from each section that support his argument. Since there are four sections, this means you will need to provide a total of 8 pieces of evidence.

Part 1 (Origins: 1590-1769), pp. 23-111

Evidence #1:

Page #: _____

Evidence #2:

Page #: _____

Part 2 (Unlikely Allies: 1770-1815), pp. 115-170

Evidence #3:

Page #: _____

Evidence #4:

Page #: _____

Task 2 (continued): Supply 2 examples from each section that support his argument. Since there are four sections, this means you will need to provide a total of 8 pieces of evidence.

Part 3 (Wars for the West: 1816-1877), pp. 173-239

Evidence #5:

Page #: _____

Evidence #6:

Page #: _____

Part 4 (Culture Wars: 1878-2010), pp. 243-313

Evidence #7:

Page #: _____

Evidence #8:

Page #: _____

Task 2 (continued): Of the 8 pieces of evidence you selected, you must then analyze the 4 most compelling pieces of evidence (i.e. explain how those pieces of evidence help to prove his argument).

Analysis of the most significant examples

Evidence # _____

Analysis:

Evidence # _____

Analysis:

Evidence # _____

Analysis:

Evidence # _____

Analysis:

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Discussion Question #1:

Discussion Question #2

Discussion Question #3