



Humane Letters III

Aristoi Classical Academy

Summer Reading Assignments - There are two!
DUE: Beginning of class on August 13, 2026

Required Summer Reading:

A History of the American People - Paul Johnson (ISBN-13: 978-0060930349
ISBN-10: 0060930349) Only part 1 is required for summer reading; we will continue to use Johnson throughout the school year.

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (Dover Thrift Editions: ISBN-13:
978-0486290737 ISBN-10: 0486290735)

I look forward to our journey together as we assess the American experience in light of its history, literature, and culture. You have two tasks to complete this summer:

1. Read part 1 of Paul Johnson's *A History of the American People* and **complete the study guide included in this packet.** This is an overview of the age of exploration and early colonial history that will serve as the foundation of our course. Anticipate a few seminars and a test after we have reviewed the material in August.
2. Read *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and write a well-organized, three-page essay in response to the following question:
How does Franklin embody the ideals of the Enlightenment?

Essays should be typed double-spaced in 12-point font with 1 inch margins. The essay will count as your first major grade of the first quarter. I will be looking for the following:

- An introduction with a clear thesis statement.
- At least three body paragraphs that begin with topic sentences.
- Two or three BRIEF quotations that support your argument in each body paragraph.

- Sufficient analysis of each quotation that develops your argument.
- Concluding sentences at the end of each body paragraph.
- A conclusion to the essay that does not begin with “in conclusion”.
- No 1st person (I, me, in my opinion, etc.).
- Prose that is polished and proofread.

Remember to use MLA parenthetical citations for your quotations. Refer to the examples below.

First quotation: “I was so glad to find out what I was” (Twain 167).

Subsequent quotations: “I felt so good and all washed and clean of sin for the first time...” (161).

Summer Study Guide for *A History of the American People* - Paul Johnson Due: First day of class - August 11, 2022

“The past is not dead. It’s not even past.” - William Faulkner

You are **only required to read part I** which provides an overview of the age of exploration in the new world and early American colonial history

Answer the questions completely and define the listed terms on loose-leaf paper in your binder or spiral notebook. Anticipate a few seminars followed by a test on this material within the first few weeks of school. I will review all of this with you beforehand, but that is no substitute for doing the work yourself.

1-1: Europe and the Transatlantic Adventure

1. What key questions does Johnson ask of American history?
2. Describe the transatlantic slave trade in the 15th century. Why was it deemed necessary at the time?
3. Treaty of Tordesillas - 1494
4. How did the Reformation affect geopolitics in the New World?
5. Why was the New World regarded as a place where “the rule of law did not apply”?

1-2: Raleigh, the Proto-American, and the Roanoke Disaster

1. Describe Walter Raleigh. How was he a “proto-American”?
2. Why does Johnson think Roanoke ultimately failed.
3. What was the “English national-religious myth”? Trace this idea through British history. (see pages 19-21)

1-3: Jamestown - the First Permanent Settlement

1. What factors prompted Britain and France to settle in the Americas?

2. How was Jamestown financed?
3. Captain John Smith

1-4: *Mayflower* and the Formative Event

1. Describe the difference between the residents of Jamestown and the people on the *Mayflower*.
2. Puritans
3. *Mayflower Compact*
4. William Bradford and *Of Plymouth Plantation*
5. Massachusetts Bay Company
6. John Winthrop
7. What is significant about Winthrop's writing? How did he view the Puritan project in New England?

1-5: The Natural Inheritance of the Elect Nation

1. How did the Separatists differ from other Puritans?
2. "City Upon a Hill"
3. What natural resources were available in New England? How did the settlers make use of them?
4. How did the early New Englanders benefit from the Native Americans?
5. How was tobacco essential to Jamestown?
6. How did the New England and Jamestown economies differ?
7. How did Winthrop deal with dissent?
8. Theocracy

1-6: John Winthrop and His Little Speech on Liberty

1. Summarize Winthrop's argument about the nature of civil authority and individual liberty. What is the purpose of freedom according to Winthrop?
2. How did Winthrop "cheat" his fellow citizens and what happened to him? How was this process significant?
3. Antinomians
4. How did many Puritans interpret financial difficulties? What happened to Winthrop's reputation as a result of his money troubles?
5. Why is Winthrop a significant figure in American history?

1-7: Roger Williams - The First Dissident

1. How did Williams understand God's covenant with man? How did his thinking lead to a separation between church and state?
2. Describe the political differences between Massachusetts and Rhode Island in the 1640's.
3. Anne Hutchinson
4. How did Winthrop deal with Hutchinson?

5. How was Hutchinson's death interpreted? What political purpose did this serve?
6. Why were the Puritans successful in America?
7. How does Johnson describe the "Yankee"? What do you think he means?

1-8: Origins of Maryland

1. Describe Maryland's origin, economy, and way of life.
2. Why was "society...far more stratified [in Maryland] than in New England"?
3. Maryland's Toleration Act

1-9: The Primitive Structure of Colonial America

1. Describe the history of Barbados. What important crop was grown there?
2. According to Johnson, how can the Civil War be traced back to South Carolina? Describe the key differences between South Carolina and Massachusetts in the late 1600s?
3. What was William Penn's vision for Pennsylvania?
4. How was Philadelphia the cultural capital of America?
5. Why were there so many craftsmen in America?
6. What is "social mobility"? How was it evident in the colonies?
7. "Self-government by the King's command" - define this and how was it evident in the Colonies in the 1660's?

1-10: Carolina: The First Slave State

1. Why was South Carolina the first state to establish slavery as an integral part of its society?
2. Why did plantation owners prefer slave labor over indentured servants?
3. What was the Mercantilist system? How did the lack of currency affect the colonies?
4. Pequot War
5. Bacon's Rebellion (This is important!)
6. King Philip's War (Also known as Metacom's War)

1-11: Cotton Mather and the End of Puritan New England

1. Sir Edmund Andros
2. What was the political context for the Salem witchcraft trials? Explain what happened.
3. What parallels are there between the Salem witch hunts and other events in our history?
4. Who was Cotton Mather and what was his role in the Salem witchcraft trials? What were some of his intellectual/scholarly accomplishments?
5. "Religion brought forth prosperity and the daughter destroyed the mother." - Explain what this means in the context of Puritan New England.
6. Describe how the colonies expanded in the beginning of the 18th century.
7. Explain why Carolina was divided into two colonies.

1-12: Oglethorpe and Early Georgia

1. James Oglethorpe
2. What was the purpose and ideals behind the Georgia colony? Why were they ultimately unsuccessful?

1-13: Why Colonial Control Did Not Work

1. Summarize the excerpt at the end of page 91. Why would such policies be troubling to the Colonists?
2. What were the main industries in Colonial America in the mid 1770s?

1-14: The Rise of Philadelphia

1. How was Baltimore important in Colonial America?

1-15: Elected Assemblies Versus the Governors

1. Describe the different types of colonies in America.
2. What was the role of the governors? How was their position difficult politically?
3. What was the fundamental difference between the English parliament and the colonial assemblies?

1-16: The Great Awakening and its Political Impact

1. Describe America's religious climate in the 18th century.
2. How did Jonathan Edwards offer a new perspective on Calvinism? Be specific.
3. George Whitefield
4. Explain the connection between The Great Awakening and Enlightenment thought.
5. How was the Great Awakening a precursor to the American Revolution?