

Summer Assignment – AP & Honors US History

BOOK CRITIQUE

The book critique should be written in standard essay form, be about 3 pages in length, typed, 12 point font, Times New Roman/Calibri, single spaced.

1. **The Story** 10 pts.
 - What is the story, in brief?
2. **Background of the book** 20 pts.
 - What is the historical and geographical setting?
 - What historical time period does this book deal with?
3. **Background of the author** 20 pts.
 - Who is the author?
 - Why did the author choose to write the book?
 - Is there a definite viewpoint or bias expressed?
 - If the book is a fictional account, does it cover an historical event, a true story, an eyewitness or autobiographical account, a work of fiction based on general/historical information?
 - If the book is nonfiction, how does the author present the event or time period?
 - Was it written in the time period of which it deals with?
4. **Application** 20 pts.
 - What do you think can be learned in terms of US history and the culture of this nation?
 - What information does it contain that is historically relevant?
5. **Evaluation** 20 pts.
 - What parts of the book or quotation from the book will be indelibly etched on your mind?
 - What human connections did the book help to make for you with other places and peoples, and other times?
 - What makes this story part of history in the US?
 - What makes this story a classic?
6. **Form** 10 pts.

When completing your critique, use specific evidence (quotations) from the book. **AP can select from the entire list.**

You may choose a book from the following list:

- *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jarred Diamond
- *Common Sense** Thomas Paine
- *The Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison
- *The Last of the Mohicans*, James Fenimore Cooper
- *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, Frederick Jackson Turner
- *Civil Disobedience*, Henry David Thoreau
- *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriett Beecher Stowe
- *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane

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- *The Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum
 - *The Gilded Age*, Mark Twain
 - *Twenty Years At Hull House*, Jane Adams
 - *Women and the New Race*, Margaret Sanger
 - *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. DuBois
 - *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, Alfred Mahan
 - *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Ernest Hemingway

Honors select from here down.

- *A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway
- *Fireside Chats of Franklin Roosevelt*, Franklin Roosevelt
- *Franklin Roosevelt*, William E. Leuchtenburg
- *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killer*, Christopher R. Browning
- *Hiroshima*, John Hersey
- *Red Scare or Red Menace?*, John E. Haynes
- *The Cold War – A Military History*, ed. Robert Cowley
- *America's Longest War: The United States in Vietnam*, George Herring
- *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry
- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Alex Haley
- *All the President's Men*, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward
- *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson

Adapted from a summer assignment by B. Williams, Loch Raven High School

FILM CRITIQUE

The film critique should be written in standard essay form, be about 2 pages in length, typed, 12 font, Times New Roman/Calibri, single spaced.

1. **The Truth** **20 pts.**
 - Research the true history of the historical event, person(s), time period, or institution portrayed in the film. For research, use print or online resources.

2. **The Plot** **20 pts.**
 - Write a synopsis or summary of the film. Make sure that your summary makes sense to a reader who does not know the movie. Do not refer to specific scenes and do not try to explain everything. Include place and time. Also, include background such as society, country, kind of people (age, culture, social class), historical time etc.

3. **Comparison & Evaluation** **50 pts.**
 - To what extent is the film historically accurate? Identify specific accuracies and director's liberties with the film. How has the film furthered student knowledge of the history portrayed?
 - Provide an evaluation of the film. Give your opinion, but it must be more than "I liked it." This is important as the reviewer can express the elements of the movie they enjoyed or disliked. However, as in all good journalism, the reviewer should also give impartial details, and allow the reader to make their own mind over an issue the reader liked or disliked. Opinions should be explained to allow the reader to determine whether they would agree with your opinion.

4. **Form** **10 pts.**
 - MLA Heading
 - Followed by:
 - Title of Film (year produced)
 - Genre
 - Director
 - Main Actors
 - Awards
 - The reader understands you are writing this review; therefore, do not use 1st or 2nd person personal pronouns.

You may choose a film from the following list:

Colonial Era – Foundations of America

- John Adams (2008) – HBO series of John Adams
- Last of the Mohicans (1992) – French and Indian War (R)
- The Crucible (1996) – Salem witch trials; Puritans (PG13)
- The Patriot (2000) – Revolutionary War (R)
- Amistad (1997) – Trans Atlantic Slave Trade (R)
- Roots (2016) – History Channel, A&E, mini series

Jacksonian Democracy – Reconstruction

- Gettysburg (1993) – decisive battle of the Civil War (PG)
- Glory (1989) – Civil War; African-American regiment 54th Massachusetts (R)
- On Cold Mountain (2003) – Civil War; wounded Confederate deserter (R)
- Gone With the Wind (1939) – Antebellum and Civil War South (PG)
- Lincoln (2012) – President Lincoln and the Civil War (R)

Immigration & American Frontier

- Gangs of New York (2002) Civil War era cities and immigrants (R)
- Far & Away (1992) – immigration and Western frontier land grab (PG13)
- Tombstone (1993) – Law and order on the Western frontier (R)
- True Grit (2010) – Law and order on the Western frontier (PG13)
- Wyatt Earp (1994) – Law and order on the Western frontier (PG13)
- Little big Man (1970) – Sand Creek Massacre (PG)

Early Twentieth Century

- 42 (2013) – Jackie Robinson and Civil Rights (PG13)
- Cinderella Man (2005) – 1930s working class (PG13)
- Citizen Kane (1941) – turn of the century newspaper tycoon (PG)
- Raging Bull (1980) – Italian-American subculture (R)
- Seabiscuit (2003) – Horse racing and the Depression Era (PG13)
- The Untouchables (1987) – Al Capone and the 1920s (R)
- To Kill a Mockingbird (1962) – Civil Rights and the Great Depression (PG)
- The Help (2012) – Civil Rights Movement (PG13)

World War II & Vietnam

- Band of Brothers (2001) – HBO series; WW II 101st Airborne
- Good Morning Vietnam (1987) – Vietnam War (R)
- Letters from Iwo Jima (2006) – WW II Pacific (R)
- Patton (1970) – WW II General (PG)
- Pearl Harbor (2001) – WW II (R)
- Saving Private Ryan (1998) – WW II (R)
- Tora, Tora, Tora (1970) – Pearl Harbor (PG)
- Red Tails (2012) – Tuskegee Airman (PG13)
- Unbroken (2014) – WW II Japanese prisoner of war (PG13)

Cold War Era

- Apollo 13 (1995) – 1970s Space Race (PG)
- Dr. Strangelove (1964) – Cold War arms race (PG)
- Good Night, and Good Luck (2005) – McCarthyism and the Red Scare (PG)
- J. Edgar Hoover (2010) – FBI director Hoover and the Cold War (R)
- Miracle (2004) – 1980 Olympic Games (PG)
- October Sky (1999) – post Sputnik, boy meet rocketry (PG)
- The Majestic (2001) – McCarthyism; Hollywood blacklisting (PG)
- Thirteen Days (2000) – Cuban Missile Crisis (PG13)
- Argo (2012) – Iranian hostage crisis (R)

Summer Film Study: 1 review due no later than Sept. 5, 2017. **AP only**

1st Semester Film Study: 1 review due no later than Dec. 22, 2017. You may turn in at anytime prior to due date. **AP only**

Summer Film Study: 1 review due no later than Sept. 5, 2017. **Honors only chose from Early Twentieth Century to Cold War Era**

2nd Semester Film Study: 2 reviews due no later than May 1, 2017. You may turn in at anytime prior to due date. **AP only**

1 review due no later than May 1, 2017. You may turn in at anytime prior to due day. **Honors only**

Sample FILM CRITIQUE

John Doe

US History

Mr. Whalen

4 September 2016

Pocahontas (1995)

Animation, Adventure, Drama

Mike Gabriel

Mel Gibson, Christian Bale, Billy Connelly

The Truth: Pocahontas was the daughter of Powhatan, the chief of the Algonquian Indians, near Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement. In 1607, the English leader of the Jamestown settlement Captain John Smith was taken captive of the Algonquian Indians. During a ritual ceremony in which the chief feigns to bludgeon the captive, John Smith was “saved” by the chief’s daughter, Pocahontas, when she covered his body with her own in a dramatic display of saving him. Following the mock execution and saving Smith, Powhatan took Smith as an honorary member of his family. Pocahontas and Smith became friends. Over the next year, relations with the Algonquian and English remained friendly and mutually beneficial via trade. However, by 1609, hostilities grew between the American Indians and the English. Injured in a gunpowder explosion, Captain John Smith was forced to return to England, subsequently eroding existing relations.

In 1613, Pocahontas was initially taken as captive of an English settlement in the Jamestown community. Enjoying relative freedom within the community, Pocahontas began studying Christianity and formed a friendship – and later romance – with the tobacco pioneer John Rolfe. With Powhatan’s consent, and following her baptism and adopting of the English Christian name Rebecca, Rolfe and Pocahontas married. A general peace and a spirit of goodwill between the English and the Indians resulted from this marriage.

In 1616, Rolfe, Pocahontas, and their son Thomas returned to London to much fan-fare as Pocahontas’ arrival generated a fire-storm of interest. She was presented to King James I and even reunited with her friend John Smith, whom of which she believed to be dead. In 1617 the Rolfe family returned to Jamestown. However, Pocahontas did not survive the journey, dying of pneumonia or tuberculosis.

Historians widely credit Pocahontas for not only serving as representative of the Virginia Indians, but also as a vital link between the Indians and the Englishmen. Without her courage and friendship, many believe Jamestown would have suffered more greatly, perhaps even the same fate as the doomed Roanoke colony.

The Plot: Set in 1607 colonial America, Disney’s *Pocahontas* captures the early relationship of Algonquian Indians with the Englishmen and their arrival at Jamestown. The first half of the film depicts the English as gold-hungry settlers woefully prepared for conditions of the Virginia terrain, poor relations between the American Indians and English, and the saving of Captain John Smith by Pocahontas. As a burgeoning friendship and love affair develops between Smith and Pocahontas, the chief’s daughter, rivalries between the groups over land threaten the survival of Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America. Smith and Pocahontas work together to bring peace to their communities, each acting as liaison.

Comparison & Evaluation: Overall, the relationship between Smith and Pocahontas in the Disney film is fairly accurate as she does save Smith from execution, although this was more of an act of ceremony than an actual threat to his life. And though they do develop a strong friendship that helped bring peace and prosperity to the Jamestown colony, Smith and Pocahontas never fall in love or marry. Whereas Pocahontas was only 12 years old when the English arrived and therefore the physical portrayal of Pocahontas is quite exaggerated in the film, the depiction of Jamestown, the gold fever, and rivalries are fairly on target thereby providing audiences an accurate visual of colonial life at the turnoff the 17th century. Considering *Pocahontas* is an animated Disney film, the storyline is well done; the animation and music are appealing and “kid” friendly, the love story is believable and strong, and the history is worthwhile for audiences to learn from.