

Summer Reading Assignment
US History
June 2010

“The beginning is the most important part of the work.” Plato

Whether you agree with Plato or not, it is hard to argue that the Revolutionary Generation played an enormously important role in shaping the fledgling United States and its future history. In Founding Brothers, Joseph J. Ellis explores the first decade of America’s history under the Constitution through the eyes of our founding fathers.

The book is comprised of a preface and six chapters each detailing important events in American History. As you read, please jot down reading notes in the margin to help you keep track of the important concepts you are reading about. Upon finishing the preface and each chapter, please write a paragraph that summarizes the major ideas from the chapter with the goal of using these summaries to help you remember the most important events from the book when we begin to discuss it next October.

After you have completed the book, please choose one of the following assignments and write a two-page essay.

- 1) Choose a major character from the book and write your essay comparing the founding father with an important politician from the present. For example, you could explain how Alexander Hamilton reminds you of George Bush.
- 2) Explain how an event that you read about impacted not only America’s history but also changed our country’s present.

Your answer should be typed and double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font. You must use several examples from the book to support your thesis. While I don’t want you to spend your entire summer in the library, you may need to spend a couple of hours in order to be able to answer these questions.

This paper is due at the beginning of our first class in September.