

Advanced Placement Modern European History (AP MEH)

2011 Summer Reading Assignment

The Great Train Robbery by Michael Crichton

Where to get the book: Used copies will be available in the MAPPS office starting May 9th. You may also purchase the book online. Books-A-Million will stock the book starting in June.

What to expect from the book: *The Great Train Robbery*, a New York Times Bestseller in 1975, was an unexpected change in topic for an author who already had a growing reputation as a science-fiction writer (*The Andromeda Strain*). You are encouraged to read the reviews, plot summaries, etc... about the book. **None of my questions come from those sources, but they may be helpful in explaining the motivation of characters or historical context of the various events.** The one thing you will notice in all the reviews is the book is considered a “good read.” Please read the book first (look things up if you don’t understand something), then complete the various tasks I have assigned.

Adult topics warning and alternative assignment option: The story is told primarily through the point of view of English criminals in the mid-1800s. Therefore, the behavior of these characters is in sharp contrast to the Victorian middle-class upon whom they prey. This includes various criminal acts, to include prostitution and dog fighting, Because of the lack of medical knowledge in that time, myths about venereal disease also play a role in the plot.

Although *The Great Train Robbery* is considered a young adult read, a student may request an alternative reading. The alternative book is *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens. Written at the same time as the fictionalized events of *The Great Train Robbery*, Dickens puts forth his opinion that the general attitudes of the English middle class toward their lives restricts the natural development of the human spirit. He also points out the negative impact of the Industrial Revolution on the lower classes. The books are both three pages. However, Crichton’s modern style is easier to read. *Hard Times* also contains scandalous behavior, but Dickens’ Victorian audience would not tolerate modern graphic details. The assignments for both books will be similar and grades will reflect the same level of student performance.

Instructor expectations of student performance: Your performance on the various tasks of the assignment will be assessed with the understanding that most of you have not yet received training in college-level analysis and writing skills. Therefore, your performance will be evaluated based on your freshman year training in writing, analytical thinking, and knowledge of the Industrial Revolution. Putting forth the appropriate amount of effort, combined with your skill level, and academic ability should result in mastery (therefore a high grade) of the tasks in the assignment.

How does the assignment prepare you for the AP course?

It is very important for your success in this class to be exposed to and practice the curricular requirements and historical themes set forth by the Advanced Placement Program as soon as possible. Each task in the assignment will correspond to one of the curricular requirements (skills) and one or more themes. For example, your first task will require you to read the **Introduction** and decide on what facts are most important. The task will also be built around an AP historical theme. Both theme and task will be described in detail later.

AP Curricular Requirement 1 emphasizes the importance of learning the pertinent historical facts associated with each era we will study. The task is designed to engage you in an activity where you decide what facts in the **Introduction** are significant and write a brief rationale as to why you chose them. During the first week of class, we will use your responses, along with those of your peers, to establish the criteria for the recognition of and proper format of factual information related to the historical themes we will study. The summer assignment will clearly establish the significance of learning and retaining the pertinent facts of each historical period. You will not be successful in the course if you do not have a method for mastering appropriate vocabulary and historical facts. Although a relatively easy skill for students of your ability, Curricular Requirement 1 demands consistent effort, organization, and timely review to master college-level material.

How do you contact the instructor if you have a question?

Because this is a summer assignment and you will be on your own, I have designed the tasks, as noted earlier, to correspond with the skills you bring with you to the course. Also, past students have not reported having any major issues with understanding the book. However, that does not mean you will not have questions. I expect you to contact me if a question should arise.

Contacting Mr. Czupryk:

“Email all questions to czupryt@bay.12.fl.us or use the ‘contact’ on www.mosleymapps.com.” If I do not respond in 48 hours, leave a voice mail at 872-4400 x 3040.

Summer Assignment Due Date: We will use Task 1 the first week of class. Tasks 2, 3, & 4 will be due on the first day of the second week of school.

Assignment Grade: There is only one grade for this assignment, 100 for a test grade (summative). Your paper will be accepted once it meets criteria for mastery on all four tasks. Failure to turn in work on the agreed upon date is completely another matter. You will be required to contact your parent/guardian and explain to them your reason for not completing the assignment in the specified time. An additional task will be assigned to your work for you to score a 100 (this is not optional). If your assignment (parts of) requires more work, a new target date for submission will be established by me.

TASK ONE

1. Read the Introduction of *The Great Train Robbery*, pages XIII to XX.
2. You are to select 20 specific facts mentioned in the Introduction that you consider significant information to understanding the following AP Scoring Components associated with Curricular Requirement 1 (Factual Knowledge & Historical Themes). Review the Scoring Component summaries below to help you determine what a “significant” fact should refer to.

Scoring Component 2: Intellectual & Cultural Themes

- Goal: Familiarize yourself with the thinking and beliefs of the age (intellectual). Science and technology are two areas that display the intellectual currents of the period. Trains and their impact should not be overlooked.

Scoring Component 3: Political & Diplomatic Themes

- Goal: Note the difference between domestic and foreign political issues of the day. British political party activity, events in Parliament, etc... would be domestic politics. The Crimean War, often mentioned in the book, would be foreign policy and diplomatic history.

Scoring Component 4: Social & Economic Themes

- Goal: Note mannerisms, habits, and rules of the various social classes. The main compare and contrast opportunity is between the Victorians (middle class) and working class (to include the criminal class). It is also important to note any gender issues (how women might be treated differently than men). It is also important to note the economic history of the Industrial Revolution. It is not just new technology, but machines that make profits for their owners. The economic point of view of the Victorians is very different from the workers they employ. Look for it!

Task One: RUBRIC

1. Write out 20 facts you have chosen from the Introduction, placing quotations around the cited information, and referencing the page number.
2. List the Scoring Component category (2, 3, or 4) that pertains to the fact.
3. Write a two to three sentence explanation of the significance of the fact, including why it is an example of the historical theme you have placed it under.
4. Mastery is achieved by having all twenty words with required tasks.
Also be prepared to work in a group to share your decisions the first week of school.

AP Curricular Requirement 2 emphasizes analysis (determining the parts or factors that make up a system or event, explain a change in a system, determining the nature of a “belief,” or noting a relationship between events such as cause and effect) of historical evidence. CR2 also asks a student to develop an interpretation of events based on well-established historical thesis (why are things happening.) Use CR2 and Scoring Component 7 (interpretation of historical evidence) for Task 2.

TASK TWO

1. Task 2 can only be completed after reading the book.
2. Use the following historical theme for Task 2: Changes in elite and popular culture, such as the development of new attitudes toward religion, the family, work, and ritual.
3. Focus on Mr. Henry Fowler and Mr. Edward Trent as examples of elite Victorian (middle class) culture.
4. List four “beliefs” (religion, the family, work, and ritual, to include leisure activities) these men held as central to their Victorian point of view of life. **Cite an example from the text of each of these “beliefs” by writing a one paragraph explanation of the “belief” (point of view on a particular topic or a strong personal compunction).** Include Crichton’s explanation for this “belief” in your answer. Cite the page(s) the example(s) is found on.

Task Two: RUBRIC

- Mastery is achieved by determining four “beliefs” of the Victorians and providing an explanation of the beliefs as noted above.

TASK THREE

- Repeat Task Two using examples from “popular” culture.
- The key difference is that the working class (to include the criminals in Pierce’s gang) will demonstrate their thinking through actions more than statements. Behaviors more than beliefs will be what you are looking for.
- You may use any two common people, except Pierce.

TASK FOUR

While *The Great Train Robbery* is historical fiction (based on true events), Crichton is known for his extensive research on his topics. So, although the book can not be used as a “primary” source, much of the historical context surrounding the plot is accurate. Therefore, I am adapting Curricular Requirement 3 (analysis and interpretation of primary sources) to this assignment.

1. Task 4 can only be completed after reading the entire book.
2. Find passages in the text that could be used as examples for the following historical themes:
 - Scientific developments and their consequences
 - The role of urbanization in transforming cultural values and social relationships
 - The influence of sanitation and health care practices on society; food supply, diet, famine, disease, and their impact
 - Gender roles and their influence on work, social structure, family structure, and interest group formation
3. List an example from the book for each theme. Cite the page(s) it is found on.
4. Write a one to two sentence explanation of how this example relates to the historical theme.

Task Four: RUBRIC

- Mastery is achieved by determining four examples of the historical themes and providing an explanation of the relationship of the example to the themes as noted above.

A few closing directions and comments...

1. Your answers may be typed (double spaced) and submitted by email after July 1st. There is no bonus for finishing early, other than you have the assignment out of the way and will get faster feedback from me.
2. Again, feel free to use internet sites, but do not copy anything as part of your answer. First, these questions do not appear anywhere on the net (so your answers wouldn't make any sense.) Second, if you don't want to do this work, you should reconsider taking this class. An addendum to this would be **NOT TO SHARE YOUR WORK WITH OTHERS**. I hope you do discuss this assignment with your classmates, but sharing work is **CHEATING** on this assignment.
3. Do not wait till the last minute if you want the alternative assignment. I would prefer that decision be made by June 1st.
4. If you are wondering about a five page set of instructions, please understand that it is important for you to understand the AP standards you will be assessed by next year. Therefore, I have spent a lot of space explaining those standards in advance. I will refer to them constantly from now on.
5. **WHAT ARE WE NOT COVERING WITH THIS SUMMER ASSIGNMENT?**

AP Curricular Requirement 4: Frequent Writing Practice

- One of our chief goals for the course is to become a college-level writer.
- I want to start building your skills in this area once school starts.
- As mentioned earlier, the writing skills you bring into the summer will be sufficient to complete this assignment.

Enjoy your summer break!