

SUMMER READING FOR AP EUROPEAN HISTORY
EXTRA CREDIT

I encourage you to expand your knowledge and interests by reading books and viewing videos for extra credit. Reports are due the first day of class. It is possible to receive up to 40 extra credit points per quarter, but you must earn them. Each book or film review is worth 20 points unless otherwise noted.

Book and Film Review Format

Write a minimum four paragraph review only if you read the book or saw the movie in its entirety.

Criteria for your review:

- A clear well-developed thesis
- The review is well organized
- Thesis is supported with specific evidence
- A unique conclusion that is not merely a regurgitation of the thesis statement
- Typed. Doubled-spaced.

All of the recommended books and videos have been read and enjoyed by many people. You can find them at you local library.

[General Histories of Extraordinary Scholarship and Varying Styles](#)

Stringfellow Barr, *The Pilgrimage of Western Man*

Greenwood Press

ISBN 0-8371-6152-5 (Currently out of print)

With chapter titles like "The Paragon of Animals," "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Money," and "Men Like Beasts," this book, more like a set of historical essays, runs the gamut of European history from the Middle Ages to the cold war.

Jacob Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*

Little, Brown

ISBN 0-316-10930-4

A volume on the history of science in Europe, derived from the 1973 BBC television series of the same name (see below).

James Burke, *The Day the Universe Changed*

Back Bay Books

ISBN 0-316-11704-8

This extraordinary book shows the impact that events both large and small had on the history of Western Europe and the world.

George Fasel, *Modern Europe in the Making*

Dodd, Mead

ISBN 0-396-06895-2

This book begins with the French Revolution and ends with the common market.

Topics in History

Frederick F. Cartwright, *Disease and History*

Sutton Publishing

ISBN 0-750-93526-X

Chapters 1 through 7 are most relevant to the AP European History course, including detailed and graphic accounts of the devastation caused by the plague in Europe in the 1350s.

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre* (French cultural history)

Basic Books, Inc.

ISBN 0-465-02700-8

This amazing book about eighteenth-century France examines the views of ordinary and extraordinary people in France during the Enlightenment. Included in this strange history is a primitive version of "Little Red Riding Hood," an account of a massacre of cats, a bizarre description of a city, and a curious file kept by a French police inspector.

Mike Dash, *Tulipomania*

The story behind frantic Dutch tulip speculation craze of the mid 17th century- and the economic, political, and social consequences.

Paul DeKruif, *Microbe Hunters* (history of science)

Harcourt Brace and Company

ISBN 0-156-00262-0

This is the story of the scientists who discovered microbes and invented vaccines: Leeuwenhoek, the first person to view microbes; Spallanzani, who found that microbes multiply; Pasteur, whose vaccine for rabies convinced the world that disease could be conquered; and Ehrlich, who discovered that arsenic could cure as well as kill.

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (scientist looks at history, 30 points)

W. W. Norton and Company

ISBN 0-393-31755-2

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this book is more than just European history. It attempts, on a grand scale, to understand the impact that environment and biological factors had on history. Why did some people fail to domesticate animals? Why did food production spread at different rates on different continents? Perhaps the most compelling section of the book is part 3, "From Food to Guns, Germs, and Steel," in which the author discusses the evolution of germs, writing, technology, government, and religion

Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World* (philosophy, 30 points)

Berkley Books

ISBN 0-425-15225-1

Sophie comes home from school to find two questions in her mail: "Who are you?" and "Where does this world come from?" Soon she is enrolled in a correspondence course covering Socrates to Sartre. But who is Hilde? To solve the riddle, Sophie has to use every aspect of philosophy she is learning. But the truth is far more unnerving than she expected. This is a book that takes time to digest. Don't plan on reading it quickly.

Bernard Jaffe, *Crucibles* (history of science)

Dover Publications

ISBN 0-486-23342-1

Beginning with Trevisan and his search for the "philosopher's stone," the reader learns about Joseph Priestley's search for phlogiston ending with his discovery of oxygen, Lavoisier's creation of a new language for chemistry, Mendeleev and his "table of the elements," and Marie Curie's isolation of radium. The book ends with an account of the development of nuclear fission and nuclear fusion.

Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*

The subtitle tells you what this is about: *Economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000*. A classic for those interested in military/political history.

Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: Biography of a Fish That Changed the World*

Penguin Books

ISBN: 0-140-27501-0

Simply put, it's an unbelievable book. The codfish really did have an extraordinary impact, and its history affects many other aspects of human endeavor.

Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History*

Penguin Books

ISBN: 0-142-00161-9

Homer called salt a divine substance. Today, we take it for granted. Without it, we would not be alive. Drilling for salt led to drilling for oil, and the money made from salt funded the building of the Great Wall of China as well as the Erie Canal! I personally like authors and teachers who can tie many things together and make sense of otherwise disparate and unconnected information. James Burke is another author in this category.

William Manchester, *A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance*

Back Bay Books

ISBN 0-316-54556-2

From tales of chivalrous knights to the barbarity of trial by ordeal, no era has been a greater source of awe, horror, and wonder than the Middle Ages. But a rebirth occurs -- an explosion of energy that spawned some of history's greatest poets, philosophers, painters, adventurers, reformers, and villains. The best part of this book for me was the essay at the end entitled "One Man Alone," about Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe.

William H. McNeil, *Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Forces and Society since AD 1000*

A truly great historian and a comprehensive look at the history and impact of military technology

Garry Wills, *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit*

Doubleday

ISBN 0-385-49411-4

Popes in the Roman Catholic church were not always very saintly, as you learned if you read Manchester. Although a little difficult to get into at first, this book is historically more accurate and compelling than the Manchester book, which tends to be sensationalistic and reports some rumors as fact.

Fiction and Historical Fiction

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Anchor Books

ISBN 0-385-47454-7

Relentlessly unsentimental rendering of Nigerian tribal life before and after the coming of colonialism. Good chance will be part of your English curriculum, consider getting a head start.

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*

Anchor Books

ISBN 0-385-47455-5

The sequel to the classic, *Things Fall Apart*, tells of a troubled young African whose formal education separates him from his roots and makes him part of a corrupt ruling elite he despises.

A Man of the People

Anchor Books

ISBN 0-385-08616-4

This famous trilogy from a Nigerian (Ibo) author is about Western civilization and its effect on the native peoples of Africa. Set in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it chronicles the effects of Western civilization on the society and culture of native African peoples. It was written around the time that Biafra attempted to achieve independence from the rest of Nigeria. Biafrans starved while the rest of the world watched in horror.

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness . . . it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us." This story is set in the context of the French Revolution. I enjoyed reading only parts of it.

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* "Please, sir, may I have some more?" The great English novelist shows the evils of the Industrial Revolution and exposes the plight of children. It's worth reading.

Ken Follett, *The Pillars of the Earth*

Signet Books

ISBN 0-451-16689-2

A story of life in the Middle Ages and the construction of a cathedral. This book has been considered by some students to be the best book they have ever read. I personally thought it was great, *but* there is one controversial scene in the book. I would want to inform your parents of this myself, so if you select this book to read, please allow me to speak with your parents before you begin it.

Ken Follett, *The World Without End*

NAL Trade

ISBN 045122499X

The World Without End takes place in the same town of Kingsbridge, two centuries after the townspeople finished building the exquisite Gothic cathedral that was at the heart of *The Pillars of the Earth*. This time the men and women find themselves at a crossroad of new ideas--about medicine, commerce, architecture, and justice. In a world where proponents of the old ways fiercely battle those with progressive minds, the intrigue and tension quickly reach a boiling point against the devastating backdrop of the greatest natural disaster ever to strike the human race--the Black Death.

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a 16th Century Miller*

Gives a real feel for life in the time of the Inquisition

Philippa Gregory, *The Constant Princess*

Touchstone

ISBN 0-7432-7249-8

After her husband and heir to the English throne dies, Catalina (Katherine) uses her faith, her cunning and her utter belief in destiny to reclaim her rightful title – Katherine of Aragon.

Philippa Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*

Touchstone

ISBN 0-7432-2744-1

This is the story of Anne Boleyn, her sister Mary and their brother George who are brought to the king's court to help their uncle advance the family's fortunes. Initially, Mary wins King Henry VIII's favor when she is barely 14. Their affair lasts several years but her dark, clever, scheming sister, Anne, insinuates herself into Henry's graces, styling herself as his adviser and confidant. Soon she displaces Mary as his lover and begins her machinations to rid him of his wife, Katherine of Aragon.

Philippa Gregory, *The Boleyn Inheritance*

Touchstone

ISBN 0-743-27250-1

The story continues of Henry VIII's wives with the explanation of Anne of Cleves's decision to stay in England after her divorce, and offers contemporary descriptions of Lady Rochford's (Jane Boleyn) madness and a captivating portrayal of Katherine Howard, the clever yet naïve 16th-century adolescent who makes one miscalculation and fatally suffers Henry's vindictive wrath.

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

This is a ghastly, but brilliant, novel about a future utopian society. Far from the utopia envisioned by Thomas More, people here are engineered through genetics.

Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought Great Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War*

(10 points) examines the naval competition that preceded WWI.

Robert K. Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra*

The last Russian tsar and tsarina – a fascinating, fictionalized account of the last Romanovs to rule Russia.

Robert K. Massie, *Peter the Great*

Pulitzer Prize winning biography - "Enthralling . . . As fascinating as any novel and more so than most." *The New York Times Book Review*

Thomas More, *Utopia*

How would you know a perfect society if you saw one? The word *utopia* comes from this book. Do you think that the New World society he envisions is what the United States has become, or what it was *before* the U.S. came to be? Or is it just a dream More had? This is a challenging book to read.

Irene Nemirov, *Suite Francaise*

Book-Club-In-A-Box

ISBN 1897082460

This extraordinary work of fiction about the German occupation of France is embedded in a real story as gripping and complex as the invented one. A gifted novelist's account of a foreign occupation, written while it was taking place, with history and imagination jointly evoking a bitter time.

George Orwell, *1984*

Another novel about a future society, this is a twentieth-century horror story of Nazi terror and Soviet brainwashing.

George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

A brilliant fable about fascism and communism. If you have never read it, read it. Consider getting a head start, since you will most likely read this in English class.

Erich Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

This is the most famous antiwar novel to come out of World War I and perhaps the most powerful antiwar book ever written. When I first read it in high school, I would have given it a three-star rating. But I have read it several times since then, and each time makes me appreciate it more. Consider getting a head start, since you will most likely read this in English class.

Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*

While it is a great story about the human impact of apartheid in South Africa. It's an important book.

David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*

The story of the last years of Communism in the Soviet Union by the reporter who covered those events for *The Washington Post*

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

"Bubble, bubble toil and trouble." The great English Renaissance playwright deals with witches, murder, and Machiavellian themes in this extraordinary drama. Great.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

"To be or not to be: that is the question." The great English Renaissance playwright deals with the challenges of the religious wars and questions whether we can keep our sanity when absolute values seem to exist no longer, and all "knowledge" is questionable at best. Great.

B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*

This clever novel by a famous behavioral psychologist depicts a utopian society in the United States. Everything seems perfect. And everyone is so happy. Or are they? What a great book this is, and it will keep you hanging on until the very end.

David Sobel, *Galileo's Daughter*

Galileo's letters to his daughter - real fly-on-the-wall history that reveals the controversy surrounding his scientific research.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

This gruesome and tedious novel is about life in the Soviet gulags.

Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*

The events and preparations immediately preceding World War I. This, too, is a classic.

Voltaire, *Candide*

Is it the best of all possible worlds? Well, that's what Dr. Pangloss says, but *Candide's* escapades would seem to indicate that the opposite might well be true. This is one of the greatest satires written in any language. Try reading it in French, if you really want a challenge, and be treated to a masterpiece of the French language.

Films and Television Documentaries

Amadeus (10 points)

Amusing, irreverent, and controversial portrait of one of the greatest composers of Western music -- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart -- includes clips of some of his greatest works. Fun to watch.

Das Boot (10 points)

The story of a WWII German U-Boat crew that examines how these submariners maintained their professionalism as soldiers, attempted to accomplish impossible missions, while all the time attempting to understand and obey the ideology of the government under which they served.

Empire of the Sun (10 points)

Directed by Steven Spielberg the story is based on the autobiographical novel by J.G. Ballard and stars Christian Bale as Jim Graham, a British schoolboy separated from his upper-class colonial parents when the Japanese sweep into Shanghai during World War II.

Gandhi (10 points)

Powerful story of India's struggle for independence. I admit that there were tears in my eyes on more than one occasion when I watched this movie. It is a great film.

Life Is Beautiful (10 points)

Deals with Italian fascism and its impact on the lives of people. It is very moving.

Becket (10 points)

A depiction of Thomas Becket's struggle with the king of England while remaining true to his own principles. The dialogue is great, and the acting is exceptional.

Bridge Over the River Kwai (10pts)

After settling his differences with a Japanese PoW camp commander, a British colonel co-operates to oversee his men's construction of a railway bridge for their captors - while oblivious to a plan by the Allies to destroy it.

A Man for All Seasons (10 points)

Focuses on Thomas More's conflict with Henry VIII.

Jacob Bronowski's "Ascent of Man" (Each episode is worth 5 points)

A television series (which inspired the book of the same name, above) on the history of science discussing the intellectual, social, cultural, and political history of the centuries of European history that we study.

James Burke, The Day the Universe Changed (Each episode is worth 5 points)

Wonderful episodes show the impact that events both large and small had on the history of Western Europe and the world. Sample titles: "Printing Transforms Knowledge," "Just What the Doctor Ordered."

The Man in the Iron Mask (10 points)

The Musketeers return to correct the injustices perpetrated by spoiled monarch Louis XIV, whose misdeeds include imprisoning his twin brother on an island and encasing his visage in the titular mask.

Paths of Glory (10 points)

The story takes place in 1916 France, as the French command orders an exhausted unit to wrest control of an anthill from the Germans--expecting a casualty rate of 60 percent.

The Red Violin (10 points)

It is an unusual journey of an original and unique violin as it survives three centuries, ultimately turning up at a present-day auction in Montreal. The violin transforms all those who play it.

The Return of Martin Guerre (10 points)

Based on a true story from 16th century France, is the tale of a man who, after a pre-arranged marriage, abandons his family -- but then, following an 8-year absence, suddenly returns to his native village.

Scarlet Pimpernal (10 points)

A classic play and adventure novel by Baroness Emmuska Orczy, set during the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution.

Sister Wendy's Story of Painting (Each episode is worth 5 points)

Lively, informative, and somewhat controversial, Sister Wendy has a lot to say about art and artists that is worth seeing. Each episode will make the beginner aware and more appreciative of great works in art history.

The Three Musketeers (10 points)

Richard Lester's rendition of Alexandre Dumas' classic swashbuckling adventure is a tongue-in-cheek comedy that thumbs its nose at its more serious predecessors. Having divided the story into two separate films, Lester manages to capture some of the more intricate details of book.