

HIST 1301: U.S. History to 1865
Assignment for Paper #2: Book Review, 3-5 pages
Due November 25

Select and read a book from the attached list. All are primary sources dealing with events that occurred during the author's life or that give us some insight into a particular historical era.

Many of the books on this list are available at the DMC or Corpus Christi Public Library, as well as area book stores. In some cases, however, you may want to request a book through interlibrary loan: ask a librarian for help making the request. **Please Note:** It can take a week or more for books requested this way to arrive, and even then you may not be able to get your first choice. Select a few possibilities for this project, and PLAN AHEAD to be sure you have time to complete the assignment.

Begin your paper with a brief description of the work. What kind of writing is it: fiction (that is, a novel or short stories), poetry, essays, journalism, letters, or something else? Who is the author, and where and when was the work produced? What are the work's subject and major themes? Do not provide a detailed plot summary. And please note, there is no such thing as a "fictional novel": *all* novels are fictional.

Next, use the book as a primary historical document. What (in detail) do you learn from it about the period it comes from? What were the major events of the day? How did people live and relate to each other? What important ideas, beliefs, and values were being discussed and debated, and how are these conflicts presented in the book? Consider that the writer may give us clues about the past without really meaning to: read between the lines for what they may be saying without really saying it.

Finally, think about the author's opinion and interpretation of the events they describe. What do they think about important matters of their day, and how do they convey these attitudes in writing? How do they feel about the characters, issues, and/or ideas they include in the book? What is their purpose in writing? Does the author have a particular point to make, what is it, and do they make their point effectively?

Be sure to provide as many specific, relevant details as possible. Direct quotations are always helpful, but don't forget to cite your source if you use quotes.

The key to this assignment is to think critically about a piece of writing. Always consider *what* the author says and *how and why* they say it. And along the way be sure to enjoy reading the book – there are some real classics here!

Reading List

- Catherine Beecher, *Treatise on Domestic Economy* or *The American Woman's Home* (women's roles)
- William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation* ("Pilgrims" and the Plymouth Colony)
- Anne Bradstreet, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Puritan poet)
- Mary Boykin Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (Confederacy and the Civil War)
- Christopher Columbus, *The Log of Christopher Columbus* (or the *Journal* or *Diario*) (Columbus's voyage)
- James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (frontier life)
- James Fenimore Cooper, *The American Democrat* (Jacksonian-era politics)
- Hector St. John De Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (American identity)
- Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (slavery and abolitionism)
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," "Self-Reliance," "The American Scholar," and "Circles" (Transcendentalism)
- Olaudah Equiano, *Equiano's Travels* (slave trade)
- Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Enlightenment)
- Margaret Fuller, *Margaret Fuller: American Romantic; a Selection from Her Writings and Correspondence*, ed. Perry Miller (Transcendentalism and feminism)
- William Lloyd Garrison, *Great Lives Observed*, ed. George M. Fredrickson (abolitionism)
- Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters* (Civil War)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* (American utopianism)
- Washington Irving, *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Esq.* (National period)
- Harriet Jacobs (Linda Brent), *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (slave narrative)
- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Jefferson, slavery, etc.)
- Bartolomé Las Casas, *The Destruction of the Indies* (Spanish in Caribbean)
- Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, ed. Bernard DeVoto, *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* (L&C Expedition)
- Abraham Lincoln, *The Literary Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Carl Van Doren (Lincoln and Civil War)
- J. Madison, J. Jay, A. Hamilton, *The Federalist* (or *The Federalist Papers*) (support for the Constitution)
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (whaling, 19C life)
- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (support for the Revolution)
- R. G. Shaw, *Blue-Eyed Child of Fortune: The Civil War Letters of Robert Gould Shaw* (Civil War and racism)
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences, 1815-1897* (women's rights)
- The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, ed. Ann D. Gordon (women's rights)
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (slavery and abolitionism)
- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Transcendentalism and self-reliance)
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (abridged edition) (Jacksonian era)
- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855 edition!) (greatest American poet)