

## U.S. HISTORY Summer Reading Program (2026-2027)

Welcome to AP US History, what we call APUSH. We will be studying American history from pre-Columbian society to present day. This is a rigorous class that will develop a deep knowledge of US history and develop your critical thinking skills. Solid reading and writing skills, along with the willingness to devote considerable time to outside reading and studying, are necessary for success in this course.

I strongly encourage every US History student to complete the following assignment before the first week of school. Begin your work right away by scheduling regular time during the summer to complete the reading. Avoid doing everything at the last minute (for example the week before school starts)! Dedicate a specific period to do the work, that way, you'll set yourself up for a more successful regimen during the school year.

Uncle Tom's Cabin: **READING FOR IDEAS, IMPORT AND CONTEXT.** Langston Hughes called Uncle Tom's Cabin, "the most cussed and discussed book of its time." Upon meeting the author, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Abraham Lincoln is said to have remarked, "So you are the little woman who started this Great War." And it remains the second most commonly translated book in the world, after the Bible.

The role of this book in perhaps the single most important event in the history of the United States is a continual topic of discussion, and the images and characters retain a currency down to this very day. For many, then and now, this book made the conflict over slavery clearer and sharper. And yet it can be seen as another in a series of steps leading to war, a product of its time which in some fashion or another was bound to happen – bound to be written, bound to be said, bound to galvanize the population of the world.

In short paragraphs of several sentences, respond to the following. Be sure to respond to all elements of each question:

1. What role does religion play in the characters and tone of this book? What things do you learn about faith in America as a result?
2. What do you think Lincoln was saying when he said to Stowe, “So you are the little woman who wrote the book that started this Great War”? Why might this be true?
3. Explain how this is a novel “perfectly situated to its time.”
4. Imagine that you are a southern planter and slave owner; what part of this book raises your anger most and why?
5. Imagine that you are a resident of a northern city, but not a strict abolitionist. Would any part of this book inspire you to become an abolitionist? Explain which part, and why you would be so moved.
6. Do you think it is possible for a book, like this book, to change the course of history, or was the destiny of the United States of the 1850s and 60s already set? Explain.