

Pre-AP World History Summer Assignment Part A: *Guns, Germs, Steel*

To gain an understanding of how geography determines the success (and failure) of civilizations, and the subsequent hegemony of certain civilizations, students will need to read the book *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Dr. Jared Diamond (440 pages). It is readily available online (typical price including shipping approximately \$10-15) and at new and used book retailers. Some on-line retailers include abebooks.com, half.com, alibris.com, bn.com, borders.com, amazon.com

As you read *GGS*, here are some hints. First, unlike a novel, this book does not have to be read in order. Obviously, read the prologue first, but the chapters in each part can be read in any order. Second, Dr. Diamond uses maps, graphs, and charts to illustrate his points. Read the accompanying graphics as you read the book. Third, the first chapter, *Up to the Starting Line*, is the most difficult of chapters to understand. So, I suggest reading the first and last sections of the chapter, then the first and last sentences of each paragraph, paying attention to the accompanying graphics. Fourth, as you read, highlight important info, write comments and/or questions in the margins, or if you can not stand to write in your book, affix sticky notes to various pages with important information. Fifth, since this is a college-level book, procrastination will severely hinder your ability to answer this assignment. Pacing is strongly urged.

This assignment has three parts. Parts I and II should be typewritten. Part III needs to be hand written. Parts I and II will be due the first day of school. Late work is not accepted. Part III will be due Friday, August 28, 2010. Again, late work is not accepted. The work must be your own work; plagiarism is academic dishonesty, and will earn you a grade of zero for this assignment, plus whatever additional punishment is determined by the assistant principals. This assignment will count six times, or approximately 30% of your first six weeks average.

I. Vocabulary. You need to define each word, write a sentence that illustrates your understanding of the word, and give a page number of *GGS* where it was used by Dr. Diamond.

Auto-catalytic process

Proximate

Egalitarianism

Kleptocracy

Social organization

Ruling elite

Distinction

Fragmentation

Domestication

Nomadic

"Founder" crops

Cuneiform

Hegemony

Metallurgy

Infrastructure

Sedentary agriculture

Subsistence agriculture

Diffusion

Indigenous

Neolithic

Cultivation

II. Short answer

For each of the following questions, you need to submit a well-written paragraph of at least three sentences, unless the question states otherwise.

1. What is Yali's Question? What is the short answer to Yali's Question? (Summarize Diamond's book in one sentence.)
2. What are some alternative answers to Yali? What are the weaknesses of these answers?
3. What is the difference between proximate and ultimate factors?
4. Around 50,000 YA there occurs a "Great Leap Forward" in terms of tools, weapons, jewelry and art work. To what does Diamond attribute this leap?
5. Why does Diamond call Polynesia a "Natural Experiment"?
6. Discuss the relationship between subsistence and population density.
7. "Availability of more consumable calories means more people." Explain.
8. How do domestic animals interact with plants to increase crop production?
9. How do hunter-gatherers control their population size? Why?
10. What does Diamond mean when he says that there are "...five areas where food production definitely arose *de novo*..."? Why might this be important?
11. How do the majority of hunting and gathering peoples acquire the ability to produce food?
12. Give an example of an autocatalytic process.
13. According to Diamond, why were oak trees never domesticated?
14. What are the eight advantages of the Fertile Crescent?
15. What were the major factors limiting crop domestication among eastern U.S. Native Americans?
16. What is the "Mexican Trinity"? What significance did it have for U.S. Native Americans?
17. What are the "Major Five" domestic animals? Where are the wild ancestors of these five located?
18. What is the "Anna Karenina Principle" applied to the domestication of animals?
19. What is it about the Americas that made the spread of food production more difficult than in Eurasia?
20. Why was the spread of crops from the Fertile Crescent so rapid?
21. How are "germs" related to agrarian civilizations?
22. What are the ultimate factors that address Yali's question?
23. What is the significance of the east-west axis of the Eurasian continent to the spread of food crops?
24. Why was writing borrowed instead of invented?
25. Explain the relationship between sedentary agriculture and the development of technology.
26. How did governments and religious institutions develop?
27. How did China become Chinese?
28. How did Africa become black?
29. How did the environment affect the diffusion of population in East Asia and the Pacific Ocean?

III. Analysis.

In Part IV, which chapter is Dr. Diamond's strongest argument? Why? Which one is his weakest? Why? Analyze Dr. Diamond's arguments in a multiple paragraph (at least four paragraphs) essay. Your essay must have a thesis statement, which may be more than one sentence. Highlight your thesis statement.

Assignments may be emailed- adeadwyler@pasadenaisd.org