

AP WORLD HISTORY

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

Plagues and Peoples by William H. McNeill

Directions

- The following reading guide should be completed during the summer.
- There will be class time for discussion before this assignment is due.
- The teacher will provide the students with turnitin.com information when school begins.
- The material discussed in McNeill's book actually spans several units in the AP World History course. Therefore during the course of the year there will be questions related to this material on several exams.
- The reading guide will be graded as part of your first marking period grade.

Instructions

- For each chapter, answer the following questions completely.
- Answers must cite specific, relevant evidence from the text. Include page numbers – i.e. (#)
- All work should be typed in paragraph form – 12 pt., Times New Roman

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Introduction and Chapter 1

1. Define “microparasite” and “macroparasite.”
2. What is the state purpose of the book? Find and record the thesis statement?
3. What makes a parasite or disease “successful”?
4. Can humankind at the time period discussed in the book be considered an “acute epidemic disease”? If yes, why and how? If no, why and how?
5. How did parasites keep the human population within a safe boundary – a certain size or level that could be sustained by available resources? Give examples of how this was achieved.

6. Once humankind had spread to the major land masses of the globe and had become the dominant predator he was faced with two severe crises. What were they and how did man deal with them?

Chapter 2

1. Once man had begun to alter the landscape of his area he opened and kept open the door for hyperinfestation of a few weeds and of parasites, micro-predators. Give a short explanation of this phenomenon.
2. Microparasites often left their hosts (or victims) weak. Did this every work to the advantage of the macroparasites – namely man? Give an example.
3. Name some ways in which a stable demographic balance was maintained. (Give micro- and macroparasite examples.)
4. Explain the role civilized diseases play in the acquisition of new lands from other peoples.

Chapter 3

1. What part did microparasitic infection play in the eventual fall of Athens as an imperial city? Explain specifically.
2. How did the diseases of the early centuries C.E. affect the Church and the views people held of it?
3. What influence did the increase in trade and travel have on the microparasites who had previously been limited?
4. Was the reaction of Europe and China during the first century C.E. similar to that of the Amerindians? If so, explain the comparison.
5. Discuss the parallels between Rome and Chinese history in connection with disease.

Chapter 4

1. McNeill says that he believes that Mongol movements across isolated areas brought *Pasteruella pestis* to the rodents of the Eurasian steppe. What evidence does he give?

2. Explain how the steamship was responsible for spreading the plague. Was its function similar to that of the Mongol horsemen? Why or why not?
3. What three conditions had to exist before the plague of 1346 could begin?
4. How did the Great Fire of London (1665) help to drive out the plague?
5. How did the increases in man-made textiles change the disease patterns of Hansen's Disease, yaws, and typhus?

Chapter 5

1. Population grew wherever the New World crops were planted. Explain this and why these crops had an advantage over the crops of the Old World.
2. Explain why the New World was relatively free of diseases that Europe and Africa seem to have always known.
3. Why is it that the more diseased a community is, the less destructive its epidemics become?
4. What were the major transoceanic disease exchanges that McNeill discusses in this chapter?

Chapter 6

1. Why were the physicians of the West more open to innovation than their counterparts in the Orient?
2. Microparasites have used modern means of transportation to spread over the entire globe. What does this mean to the delicate balance between micro- and macroparasites?
3. Discuss the rival theories of miasma and contagion of diseases and the advantages in public health that each theory propagated.