

Beacon Summer Reading: History 2009: 11th Grade

The Thirteen American Arguments

Please read The Thirteen American Arguments, Random House Trade Paperbacks: New York 2009, by Howard Fineman. ISBN 978-0-8129-7635-9 (\$15.00) The book is readily available at Barnes & Noble, Borders, Amazon.com, and at the NYPL.

The summer reading will prepare you for themes in 11th grade history next year. There will be a writing assignment on the reading at the beginning of the school year.

There are 16 sections to this book: an Introduction; 13 chapters, each of which is about an issue in American history, which Fineman calls an "argument"; a Conclusion; and an Afterword. Please do the following:

- A) For the INTRODUCTION, explain what the point of this book is, according to Fineman. In other words, explain the thesis and "argument" he is making in the Introduction, in your own words.
- B) For each of the 13 chapters ("arguments"), explain:
- 1) How does Fineman explain the evolution of this issue over the course of American history? Give specific historical events that he uses, being sure to cite them with page numbers (in-text citations).
 - 2) Give one current example of a significant issue that relates to this argument, explaining how it relates and why it is important.
- C) What is the main point Fineman makes in the "Conclusion"?
- D) Why did he write the "Afterword"?
- E) Rank the 13 "arguments" in terms of their importance - with a brief explanation for why you put them in that order.
- F) Come to class on the first day in September with the book (if you buy it); this assignment; and any additional notes you take. Good luck!

When you are done you should have:

- A paragraph or so for the Introduction, Conclusion, and Afterword.
- A paragraph or so for each chapter/argument, with evidence and citations AND a current example.
- A list of the 13 arguments, ranked in order of significance, with a brief explanation of why you put them where you did.