**U.S. HISTORY**

**2020-2021 SUMMER ASSIGNMENT**

In US History this year, we will explore the central question, “What does it mean to be an American?” We will look at how the country was founded and the ideals that the United States attempted to espouse in its founding documents. We will explore whether the country has lived up to these ideals and its treatment of the American people. Your task over the summer is to listen and read about the country’s founding to prepare to answer this question in U.S. History this year.

1619 Project (from the website):

*“The truth is that as much democracy as this nation has today, it has been born on the backs of black resistance...Black people have seen the worst of America, yet, somehow, we still believe in its best.”*

*—Nikole Hannah-Jones*

*The 1619 Project, inaugurated with a special issue of The New York Times Magazine, challenges us to reframe U.S. history by marking the year when the first enslaved Africans arrived on Virginia soil as its foundational date.*

*Award-winning investigative journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones provides an expansive essay on why “black Americans, as much as those men cast in alabaster in the nation’s capital, are this nation’s true ‘founding fathers.’” Her essay chronicles a history of policies enacted to profit from and disenfranchise black Americans, and the fight not only to claim black liberation, but also to make liberation possible for all Americans.*

Read an [excerpt](https://pulitzercenter.org/sites/default/files/excerpt_from_the_idea_of_america_by_nikole_hannah-jones.pdf) from “The Idea of America” by Nikole Hannah-Jones and answer the questions:

* What is the central thesis/claim in the excerpt?
* What do you know about slavery, and where does that information come from?
* What do you know about the contributions of Black Americans to U.S. society, and where does that information come from?
* What are the consequences of slavery in contemporary U.S. life?
* What is national memory? How do we create it? How can we change it?

Listen to [Episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/23/podcasts/1619-slavery-anniversary.html) from the 1619 Podcast.

* Summarize the main idea of the podcast.
* What did you find interesting or surprising after listening to this podcast?

Watch two videos from Crash Course: U.S. History on Edpuzzle and answer guiding questions:

* [The Black Legend, Native Americans, and Spaniards: Crash Course US History #1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E9WU9TGrec)
* [When is Thanksgiving? Colonizing America: Crash Course US History #2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o69TvQqyGdg)