

## BEGINNING OF THE YEAR HANDOUT

This three page document is handed out to Chane Beam's students at the beginning of the year. There are several items worth noting. He includes a section on Unit Study Guides and a detailed explanation of Parallel Assessments. A section on Meeting Standards is important because meeting standards is not typically done in schools and needs to be mentioned. There is a paragraph on the methods of instruction in his class because real engagement is also not typical in most classes. Most teachers pass out their classroom policies on the first day of class. Chane waits until the 3rd or 4th day of class. He does this because he wants his document to stand out to the parents so they will read it. When parents receive six or seven sets of papers on the first day of school, they can get overwhelmed with information. Chane waits a few days to make it more likely the parents will read it carefully and have a better understanding of the policies and procedures of his classroom.

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR AMERICAN HISTORY**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Mr. Beam

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [beamr@pcsb.org](mailto:beamr@pcsb.org)

**OBJECTIVES:** The United States History class at St Petersburg High School is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in United States History. The course will emphasize a general understanding of US History, reading historical documents, a critical approach in analysis, and competent skills in essay writing.

**THE NEW/BIG IDEA:** *Knowledge is more important than grades.* Therefore knowledge standards must be met in this class.

**MATERIALS:** You must bring the following to class on a daily basis: pen, paper, and your US History Notebook. Your first semester Notebook will be given to you in a few days. It contains the majority of the assignments we will need for this semester. It will be given to you in a stack of papers, all three hole punched. You will need to bring in your own two inch three ring binder. Make sure this binder has a plastic cover on the outside that you can slide papers into to create a cover for the binder. You will need a second binder for the second semester study guide. You will also need a manila folder, a large Ziploc bag, a highlighter, colored pens, and 3 x 5 index cards.

**GRADING SYSTEM:** We use the scale mandated by the Florida State Legislature.

A = 90 – 100	These lines are firm
B = 80 – 89	and do not bend. Do
C = 70 – 79	not ask me to bend
D = 60 – 69	them at the end of
F = 0 – 59	the six weeks.

**GRADING:** Grades will be averaged from the following:

Homework/Classwork.....	10-20 points
**Unit Assessments.....	70-100 points
**Document Based Questions (DBQ's).....	50 points

\*\*Standards must be met before grades are entered into the system.  
See the section entitled "Meeting Standards" below.

PAGE 1

**UNIT STUDY GUIDES:** You will be assigned a study guide for every unit in the textbook. Each unit study guide should be completed before you take the first form of the test. You will generally have a little more than a week or so to complete the study guide for homework. **IT IS EXPECTED THAT YOU WILL BE COMPLETING SOME OF THE UNIT STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS EACH AND EVERY NIGHT.**

**UNIT ASSESSMENTS:** Unit assessments are the most important piece of the US History puzzle. You will answer the questions from the unit study guide and then take an assessment over that content. The standard for mastery of all assessments is to be at an “A” or “B” level. If you have not reached the standard after “Form A”, you obviously need more practice. Therefore, to be eligible to take “Form B”, you must first complete an additional assignment that is called a “Qualifier”. To qualify to take the “Form B”, you must have completed your Form A Study Guide *and* Form B qualifier. If you do not reach the standard on “Form B”, then you will have one last opportunity to reach the standard on a “Form C”. (Once you have completed the Form C qualifiers) I will accept a “C” on “Form C”, but if you do not reach a “C” standard at that time, you will receive a “O” on that assessment.

Each assessment has 3-5 sections to it. Here is how a typical assessment might look. Section One is from the current unit, Section Two is review from the previous two units, Section Three is review from any unit we have studied so far this year, and Section Four is a skill to prepare for writing a Document Based Question. Each section is graded separately. Remember that the standard for each section is A or B. There is no penalty for needing more than one opportunity to meet the standards that have been set. ***Knowledge is more important than grades.***

Section One	Section Two	Section Three	Section Four
Content from the current unit	Content from the previous two units	Content from all units we have studied so far	Usually a skill to help prepare for writing a DBQ

As we progress through the school year, you will probably have many pressures for your time. If something important comes up for you like studying for another teachers test, or giving your best effort in a drama or athletic contest, please honor those commitments. In this course we have multiple opportunities to reach our standards, and I expect you to schedule your energies to provide the most productive and beneficial school year possible. ***Knowledge is more important than grades.***

**LATE WORK :** All work is expected to be turned in at the appropriate time. If for some reason, it is not completed, I will expect it the next day. Late work is better than no work. However, repeated episodes of tardiness will result in an informal, but serious conference with me.

**MEETING STANDARDS:** Just as in family obligations and on-the-job assignments, there will be standards established for the successful completion of this course. Unit Assessments, DBQ’s, and traditional essays are to be done to at least a “B” level for completion, and just like in the world of work, if they do not meet the standards when they are submitted, you



will be expected to take another form of a unit assessment, or modify and resubmit an essay. ***Knowledge is more important than grades.***

### CLASSROOM RULES:

- 1) Please be in your assigned seat when the bell rings.
- 2) Please stay in your assigned seat unless directed otherwise,
- 3) Please raise your hand to speak.
- 4) Please do not bring food or drink into the class  
(bottled water is the only exception as data shows water increases student achievement)

**MAKE-UP WORK:** On the day you return to school after being absent, you will come see me and I will tell you what you need to make up. If you missed notes, get them from a classmate. If you missed work in your US History Notebook, I will tell you what pages. If you missed an assignment that is not in your Notebook, I will get a copy for you. **IF YOU ARE ABSENT ON THE DAY OF FORM A, YOU WILL NOT MAKE THAT ASSESSMENT UP. RATHER, YOU WILL MOVE DIRECTLY TO FORM B. BEING ABSENT ON THE DAY BEFORE THE TEST DOES NOT EXCUSE YOU FROM TAKING THE TEST WHEN SCHEDULED.** Longer absences should be discussed with me.

**INSTRUCTION:** Learning occurs best when people have the opportunity to do things themselves and talk about what they are learning. You can expect to be talking with classmates and moving throughout the room. Since your active engagement in lessons will dramatically impact your learning, I expect you to be fully engaged throughout each lesson. I will do all I can to keep the lessons engaging, fast paced, and conducted with effective strategies and techniques to motivate you to be engaged.

**BOTTOM LINE:** I am glad you are in my class. I am honored to be your teacher and when the year is over, I hope you will believe US History has been an important contribution to your education. I believe every one of you can excel in this class. You will have repeated opportunities to meet the standards that will allow you to achieve that goal. Remember ***“Knowledge is more important than grades.”*** Thank you in advance for working with me and the other students in this class to make a difference in your life.