

AP Human Geography Summer Assignment – Book Synopsis (For Writing Assignment, Part I)

Non-Fiction Books	
A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail	Bryson, Bill
A laugh-out-loud account of an outrageously rugged hike—by the beloved comic author of <i>Lost Continent</i> and <i>Notes from a Small Island</i> . Published on the 75th anniversary year of the Appalachian Trail.	
1421: the Year China Discovered America	Menzies, Gavin
The incredible true story of the discovery of America before Columbus was even born. Gavin Menzies's extraordinary findings rewrite history.	
Iron and Silk	Salzman, Mark
Salzman captures post-cultural revolution China through his adventures as a young American English teacher in China and his shifu-tudi (master-student) relationship with China's foremost martial arts teacher.	
Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal	Schlosser, Eric
Journalist Schlosser argues that the fast food industry has triggered the growth of malls in America's landscape, widened the gap between rich and poor, fueled an epidemic of obesity, and propelled American cultural imperialism abroad. He discusses facts about food production and preparation, the ingredients and taste-enhancers in the food, the chains' efforts to reel in young, susceptible consumers, and other unsettling facts. Annotation © Book News, Inc., Portland, OR	
Isaac's Storm	Larson, Erik
Using Isaac Cline's (resident meteorologist for the US Weather Bureau) own telegrams, letters, and reports, the testimony of scores of survivors, and our latest understanding of the science of hurricanes, Erik Larson builds a chronicle of one man's heroic struggle and fatal miscalculation in the face of a storm of unimaginable magnitude. Riveting, powerful, and unbearably suspenseful, <i>Isaac's Storm</i> is the story of what can happen when human arrogance meets the great uncontrollable force of nature.	
Enrique's Journey	Nazario, Sonia
In this astonishing true story, award-winning journalist Sonia Nazario recounts the unforgettable odyssey of a Honduran boy who braves unimaginable hardship and peril to reach his mother in the United States. Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, <i>Enrique's Journey</i> is the timeless story of families torn apart, the yearning to be together again, and a boy who will risk his life to find the mother he loves.	
The Post American World	Zakaria, Fareed
"This is not a book about the decline of America, but rather about the rise of everyone else." So begins Fareed Zakaria's blockbuster bestseller on the United States in the twenty-first century. How can Americans understand this rapidly changing international climate, and how might the nation continue to thrive in a truly global era? Zakaria answers these questions with his customary lucidity, insight, and imagination.	
The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About It	Collier, Paul
Collier reveals that fifty failed states—home to the poorest one billion people on Earth—pose the central challenge of the developing world in the twenty-first century. The book shines much-needed light on this group of small nations, largely unnoticed by the industrialized West, that are dropping further and further behind the majority of the world's people, often falling into an absolute decline in living standards. A struggle rages within each of these nations between reformers and corrupt leaders—and the corrupt are winning. Collier analyzes the causes of failure, pointing to a set of traps that ensnare these countries, including civil war, a dependence on the extraction and export of natural resources, and bad governance. Standard solutions do not work, he writes; aid is often ineffective, and globalization can actually make matters worse, driving development to more stable nations. What the bottom billion need, Collier argues, is a bold new plan supported by the Group of Eight industrialized nations.	

Fiction Books	
In the Time of the Butterflies	Alvarez, Julia
An ALA Notable Book. Julia Alvarez's eagerly awaited second novel is a powerful story of courage, innocence, and political martyrdom in the Hispanic Caribbean. Based on actual events—the death of three sisters on November 25, 1960—the novel immerses us in an epoch in the life of the Dominican Republic. The "Butterflies," as they were known, lived daringly and dangerously under a regime that imprisoned, tortured, and killed with impunity. "Brimming with warmth and vitality . . . Mesmerizing."--Kirkus Reviews, starred; "Potent and luminous."--Philadelphia Inquirer. A BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB and QUALITY PAPERBACK BOOK CLUB SELECTION.	
Death Comes For The Archbishop	Cather, Willa
In 1851 Bishop Latour and his friend Father Valliant are dispatched to New Mexico to reawaken its slumbering Catholicism. Moving along the endless prairies, Latour spreads his faith the only way he knows—gently, although he must contend with the	

unforgiving landscape, derelict and sometimes openly rebellious priests, and his own loneliness. Over nearly 40 years, they leave converts and enemies, crosses, and occasionally ecstasy in their wake. But it takes a death for them to make their mark on the landscape forever.

Skinwalkers

Hillerman, Tony

Navajo Tribal Police Officer Jim Chee and Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn investigate murders that lead them into spine-tingling and mystical world of Navajo witchcraft. Three unsolved homicides and an attempt on Chee's life have left the Navajo Tribal Police baffled. Are the murders somehow connected, although they occurred 120 miles apart?? Or are they random acts of violence?? Chee and Leaphorn's efforts to solve the seemingly unrelated individual crimes leave them with clues that point toward one suspect, in this suspenseful mystery.

Ishmael

Quinn, Daniel

The narrator of this extraordinary tale is a man in search for truth. He answers an ad in a local newspaper from a teacher looking for serious pupils, only to find himself alone in an abandoned office with a full-grown gorilla who is nibbling delicately on a slender branch. "You are the teacher?" he asks incredulously. "I am the teacher," the gorilla replies. Ishmael is a creature of immense wisdom and he has a story to tell, one that no other human being has ever heard. It is a story that extends backward and forward over the lifespan of the earth from the birth of time to a future there is still time saved. Like all great teachers, Ishmael refuses to make the lesson easy; he demands the final illumination to come from within ourselves. Is it man's destiny to rule the world? Or is it a higher destiny possible for him-- one more wonderful than he has ever imagined?

Devil in the White City

Larson, Erik

Two men, each handsome and unusually adept at his chosen work, embodied an element of the great dynamic that characterized America's rush toward the twentieth century. The architect was Daniel Hudson Burnham, the fair's brilliant director of works and the builder of many of the country's most important structures, including the Flatiron Building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C. The murderer was Henry H. Holmes, a young doctor who, in a malign parody of the White City, built his "World's Fair Hotel" just west of the fairgrounds—a torture palace complete with dissection table, gas chamber, and 3,000-degree crematorium. Burnham overcame tremendous obstacles and tragedies as he organized the talents of Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles McKim, Louis Sullivan, and others to transform swampy Jackson Park into the White City, while Holmes used the attraction of the great fair and his own satanic charms to lure scores of young women to their deaths. What makes the story all the more chilling is that Holmes really lived, walking the grounds of that dream city by the lake.

All reviews taken from www.BarnesandNoble.com