Helpful Reading Tips:
A skill that we will develop throughout APUSH is the ability to evaluate an author’s argument. In order to do so, follow the steps below as you read. Doing so will be the best way to prepare for our summer reading discussion and will put you in the best place to be successful on our first writing assignment.

Step One: Decipher the Author’s Thesis
When you write an essay, where do you put your thesis? In the introduction, of course! Authors of books are the same way. When historians write a book, they are not trying to fool you; they will usually very clearly lay out what their argument is in the introduction of the book (sometimes the book will even read: “In this book, I will argue…”). Do not skip the intro (sometimes called a “preface”) make sure to read it carefully and attempt to figure out the author’s thesis.

Step Two: Identify Strengths and Weaknesses of the Text
Which pieces of the text are effective? Which are not effective? What could the author have done differently to be effective? In order to answer these questions, you must build your content knowledge of the text. You do this by carefully reading the book. Not passive reading, but reading each chapter with a focus on the author’s thesis statement. During this step, it is important to keep notes in some way, shape, or form. Do what you are most comfortable with: underline the text, dog-ear the pages, use post-its, write notes in a notebook, etc. Keep an eye out for good quotes by the author or historical figures.

Step Three: Form an Opinion & Gather Evidence
Once you have completed the text, you can begin to make a determination about whether or not the author adequately supported his or her argument. Go back through your notes and find the evidence that best supports your assessment of the text. Focus on finding specific stories, anecdotes, context, etc. from the book.

Step Four: Draw Conclusions
Having done steps one through three, you are ready to ask yourself: How should I evaluate this text? The answer will serve as your starting point for the discussion. Your notes from steps one through three will give you the evidence you need to be a participant in our discussion, and will eventually be the information you need to write a successful paper.
**Book Background:**
It is autumn 1780, and the American War of Independence has dragged on for five frustrating years.

After the Battle of Saratoga in October 1777, the tides of the war seemed to change when the French pledged to help America achieve independence and sent its navy to join the fighting. However, coordinating with the French fleet proved to be more difficult than expected; for two years, General George Washington tried unsuccessfully to synchronize his troop movements with a naval power based thousands of miles away.

As the war entered a grueling sixth year, there seemed to be no end in sight. Action was spread across the American continent; Washington’s headquarters remained in the Hudson River Valley, and the Continental Army engaged the British in the wooded hillside of North Carolina and the Tidewater region of Virginia.

In the fall of 1871, the epic war finally came to a conclusion. In a year of dramatic twists and turns, the fate of the American Revolutionary War would prove to depend on George Washington & the sea.

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**The Assignment:**
Welcome to AP United States History! This summer, you will be reading one of the more popular history books published in the last year: *In the Hurricane’s Eye: The Genius of George Washington & the Victory at Yorktown*. This book is in addition to the book that you will select to read for the school-wide summer reading assignment.

One of the most common misconceptions about historical writing is that it should be factual and unbiased. Nothing is further from the truth. All historians have their views and opinions on historical characters, events, and subjects, and when they write books, it is their job to convince the reader of their point of view. As students of history, it is our job to figure out what argument an author is trying to make, and then evaluate how successful the author’s text is in supporting the argument. This is a skill that we will be refining all throughout our time together in APUSH, and we will get a head start on this during the summer while reading *In the Hurricane’s Eye*.

In the first classes of the 2019-2020 school year, we will have a summer reading discussion in class. During this conversation, we will discuss how successful Nathaniel Philbrick was in supporting his thesis throughout the book.

After the discussion, we will begin our first writing assignment of the year: an evaluation paper on *In the Hurricane’s Eye*. But more on that next school year!

**REPEAT:** You are NOT writing a paper over the summer, we will do that once the school year begins.

For how best to approach reading this book, see the reverse side of this pamphlet.

**This assignment is not optional, it is mandatory for all APUSH students**

Contact Mr. Reinhardt at treinhardt@hudson.k12.ma.us or in F207 (during the school year) if you have any questions about this assignment. I will check email periodically over the summer, so hang tight if you don’t get an immediate response. Have a great summer!