

## APUSG Summer Reading Free Response 2019 Part III

Your summer reading assignment is to obtain a copy of *The Thirteen American Arguments* by Howard Fineman (ISBN 978-0-8129-7635-9 at [Barnes and Noble](#) or [Amazon](#)) and read the ENTIRE book. Then answer the following questions as you are assigned. Your work should be typed, double spaced with a 12 point font. You will be turning in this assignment on the FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. All work turned in after that will be docked 5 points a day from the original grade.

The chapter assignments are according to your last name.

A-D Chapters 1,2,3,4

E-P Chapters 5,6,7,8

Q-Z Chapters 9,10,11,12

This is a ten year old book, ending with an account of the 2008 election, and so obviously it has limitations. But we will be returning to these questions and discussing these examples over the course of the entire year. Read the whole book. Who knows, you may enjoy it!!

### Chapter 1 – Who is a Person?

In his book *The Thirteen American Arguments*, Howard Fineman discusses several different groups that have struggled to achieve acceptance and equality in American history. With that in mind, answer the following:

- List three groups that have struggled for acceptance as equals in American history.
- Choose two of the groups that you listed in part (a) and describe what legal protections were put in place to help those groups achieve equality.
- Fineman spends a good portion of the chapter discussing the issue of abortion. Briefly explain the arguments for each side of that debate, focusing on the personhood issue.

### Chapter 2 – Who is an American?

In Chapter 2, Fineman details several policies in U.S. history related to immigration. With that in mind, answer the following:

- Identify three laws and/or policies adopted by either the Federal government or state governments that dealt with immigration.
- For each item listed in party (a), describe the reasons for and impact of that policy.
- Describe your solution to dealing with immigration, both legal and illegal – What should the policy be in the United States?

### Chapter 3 – The Role of Faith

In Chapter 3, Fineman delves into the role of faith in American political life. In this chapter, he speaks of the confusing role that faith often plays in our political system. With that in mind, answer the following:

- Briefly describe each of the following:
  - Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
  - First Amendment Establishment Clause
  - First Amendment Free Exercise Clause
  - Religious Test Clause of the U.S. Constitution
- Given the items you described in part (a), as well as the information in the chapter, choose two incidents in American history that exemplify the difficulty in navigating the role of faith in public life.
- In 2007, Senator John McCain stated that, “The Constitution established the United States as a Christian nation.” Was he right? Explain your answer.

#### Chapter 4 – What Can We Know And Say?

In Chapter 4 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman discusses the struggle in balancing our freedom of speech with public safety and national security. More specifically, he argues that the essence of speech is not just in the actions involved but also in the access to information.

- (a) Fineman specifically writes about three areas of information in which government has tried to limit or suppress. List these three areas.
- (b) For each of the three areas in (a), list at least two examples that Fineman mentions of how these areas are protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- (c) For each of the three areas in (a), describe one instance that Fineman mentions in which the federal government has limited or suppressed it.
- (d) The government often uses “war” to justify their limitation and/or suppression of the three areas listed in (a). Do you agree or disagree? Include only two of the three areas in (a) and provide at least one example that Fineman mentions for each area to back up your opinion. Your example cannot be one used to answer (c).

#### Chapter 5 – The Limits of Individualism

In Chapter 5 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman debates the merit of “community” versus “individualism.”

- (a) Define the idea of “community.”
- (b) Fineman argues that this nation was founded on the idea of “community.” Discuss three of them.
- (c) Define the idea of “individualism.”
- (d) Fineman argues that this nation was founded on the idea of “individualism.” Discuss three of them.
- (e) Fineman discusses both the compatibility and incompatibility of “community” and “individualism.” Make a coherent argument for both.

#### Chapter 6 – Who Judges the Law?

In Chapter 6 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman describes the court as being both above politics and entrenched in politics.

- (a) List and explain one way in which the federal courts described in Article III are designed to be above politics.
- (b) List and explain one way in which the federal courts are structured that enmeshes them square in the middle of politics.
- (c) Explain how your answers for both (a) and (b) affected each of the two cases below.
  - *Dred Scott v. Sanford*
  - *Brown v. Board of Education*

#### Chapter 7 – Debt and the Dollar

In Chapter 7 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman discusses the question on who should control the value of our money. In other words, whose interests should be considered when determining the value of our money.

- (a) Discuss one debate in our history in which two different groups argued over money. How did it end?
- (b) Discuss another debate in our history in which two different groups argued over money. How did it end?
- (c) Some say that the People should control the flow of money, and others that government should have that role. Which argument do you find persuasive and why?

## Chapter 8 – Local vs. National Authority

In Chapter 8 of *Thirteen American Arguments*, Fineman discusses the tensions between local and national authority.

- (a) List five issues that Fineman deals with directly in the book and briefly describe how each of those issues create tension between local and national authority.
- (b) Choose three of the issues you listed in (a) and describe a reasonable solution that honors the principle of federalism while providing equal justice to all Americans under the law.

## Chapter 9 – Presidential Power

In Chapter 9, Fineman presents the argument concerning the fluctuating powers of the president. He questions the amount of power held by the president as well as the president's role in either preserving or destroying our democracy.

- (a) The U.S. Constitution establishes an Executive Branch with limited power. List one of these limits and explain how this limits the power of the president.
- (b) Discuss three historic examples (from three different presidents) of past presidents who diminished the power of the presidency.
- (c) The U.S. Constitution also grants to the Executive Branch enormous powers that, if unchecked, can turn our democracy into a tyranny. List one of these powers and explain its danger.
- (d) Discuss three historic examples (from three different presidents) of past presidents who increased the power of the presidency.

## Chapter 10 – The Terms of Trade

In Chapter 10, Fineman writes about the economic arguments that have occurred throughout this country's history. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Define protection.
- (b) Define free trade.
- (c) Identify NAFTA and the WTO and describe their relationship with the United States.
- (d) Explain the problems with both the protectionist view and the free trade view.

## Chapter 11 – War and Diplomacy

In Chapter 11, Fineman discusses the nuances of war and peace, and describes several different positions that have been taken in arguments about them. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Describe the different roles of the President and the Congress with respect to war and diplomacy.
- (b) Fineman quotes Walter Russel Mead as dividing Americans into four categories regarding foreign policy. Identify and describe those four categories.
- (c) Fineman lists five "elemental forces" that also vie for control of American foreign policy. List them here.
- (d) One of the five you listed in (c), choose two that you think have the most impact and describe why you think that.

## Chapter 12 – The Environment

In Chapter 12, Fineman deals with the difficult issue of environmental protection vs. economic growth. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) Define conservation.

- (b) List three actions taken by the U.S. Government as an attempt to protect the environment.
- (c) Describe the differing positions of environmental protection versus advancing economic interests.
- (d) Given your answer in (c), explain which side you think American policymakers should side with and why.

## **FOR EVERYONE**

### **Chapter 13 – A More Perfect Union**

In Chapter 13 of *The Thirteen American Arguments*, Howard Fineman discusses some of the imbalances in the American political system. With that in mind, answer the following:

- (a) How did money affect the race between John McCain and George W. Bush for the Republican nomination in 2000?
- (b) What phenomenon changed the way campaigns are financed?
- (c) Does money buy elections? Should it?
- (d) What does Fineman mean when he talks about elites? Is their influence on public affairs proper or not?

### **Conclusion**

- a. List the reasons that Fineman gives for the nation's pessimism in 2007. Have things changed in the last 10 years?
- b. What does Fineman see as the solution to the problems he cites?

### **Afterword**

As I noted at the beginning, this book is ten years old, and ends with the election of Barack Obama to his first term in 2008. Look back at the history of the past 10 years and think about what you know about the present day to answer these questions.

- a. Fineman asserts that the election of Barack Obama closed the argument as to whether race is an obstacle to success in America. Do you agree?
- b. Fineman asserts that Obama possessed the cool intellect and judicious character to instruct us on our history and to lead the national arguments in a constructive direction. Did President Obama fulfill these expectations? If so, explain why. If not, then explain why not.
- c. Has President Trump improved the quality and the consensus of the national discourse?