

Summer Reading 2009

Assigned text: *1776* by David McCullough

Assignment: In his review of *1776*, Dr. Phillip Thomas Tucker of the Air Force Historical Studies Office muses that over the course of the last two centuries, “American historians glorified the Revolution and its leaders, especially George Washington - an inevitable consequence in the process of national myth-building”. He goes on to note, “in truth, the revolutionary war effort was a complete fiasco throughout almost all of 1776 . . . McCulloch (he states) emphasizes, the struggle for independence was far from glorious, (rather it was) a colossal near-disaster on every level”.

Your assignment is to draw on examples from *1776* that illustrate the validity of Tucker’s assessment. In a word, you are to write an essay that shows, contrary to popular belief, the American Revolution was in fact not the glorious event it has been built up to be. You must develop three reasons based on your reading of *1776* to support this analysis. Your paper then will be structured around the three reasons you have developed.

Structure: You should use the format outlined below when writing your paper:

- I. **Introductory paragraph** – This should consist of four to five sentences introducing your paper. The last sentence of your introduction should be a thesis statement. It should explicitly state the three reasons you will be discussing that illustrate that the American Revolution was in fact not the glorious event it has been built up to be. Your thesis statement then should read something like: Clearly author David McCulloch’s *1776* reveals to the reader that the American Revolution was a far cry from the glorious event historians have built it up to be as evidenced by . . . (reason one), (reason two), (reason three).
- II. **Body paragraphs** – You should develop each of your three reasons over the course of one to two paragraphs. Therefore, you will write between three and six body paragraphs total.
 - A. **Topic sentences** – Each of your three reasons should be clearly introduced in the first sentence of the corresponding body paragraph. For example, your first body paragraph may begin with a statement like: The first indicator that the American Revolution was in near ruin during the year 1776 was . . . (reason one).
 - B. **Supporting details** – Each body paragraph should include specific supporting details from the text. Students may directly quote or paraphrase information from the text. All information drawn from the text must be cited using MLA format. Students should have a minimum of two citations per paragraph.
- III. **Conclusion paragraph** – This should consist of four to five sentences in which you conclude your paper by restating your thesis, and offer some final thoughts on the topic.

Length: This paper should be between four and six pages in length. It must be typed using times roman font, double spacing, and one-inch margins.

Evaluation: This assignment is worth 100 points and will be evaluated on the following criteria:

I. Organization – 10 points

- A. Your paper followed the outlined format – introduction, three to six body paragraphs, conclusion
- B. A thesis was clearly stated
- C. Topic sentences were used to introduce your reasons

II. Format – 5 points

- A. Proper font, spacing and margins were used.
- B. Paper was the appropriate length

III. Content – 75 points

- A. Three reasons to support your thesis were clearly stated
- B. Specific details from the text were used and properly cited using MLA format
- C. A minimum of two citations from the text were present in every body paragraph

IV. Style – 10 points

- A. Language appropriate for a formal writing assignment was used
- B. Significant grammatical errors were not present
- C. Sentences were well structured

Due Date: This paper will be due the first day of school regardless of which semester you are taking the class. First semester students will turn in the assignments in class. Second semester students will turn their paper into Mrs. Jordan or Fr. Hall in the social studies office.