

HistoryAtOurHouse
Jr/Sr High - Homework Writing Assignment
Due Date: Monday, March 2 (2015)

READ ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.
NOTE THE FINAL CHECKLIST.

The Goal and the Challenge

An extended in-class discussion of anchor facts based on the most recent homework assignment has helped the students to see the need for the addition of new anchor facts to their growing body of structured knowledge in American history.

In particular, events associated with the *Reformation and Religious Wars* have stood out as being persistently important, due to their connection to the theme of religious toleration in American colonization and religious freedom as a core value of the founding fathers. By virtue of this progression, the *Reformation and Religious Wars* retain a great deal of present-centric significance in American history. **The challenge** is how best to retain knowledge of specific events without resorting to rote memorization, and thus generate an awareness that is meaningful and useful in the long term.

The answer is integration. In isolation, any particular fact about the *Reformation and Religious Wars* has only a limited present-centric value, as we have discussed in class. By integrating the component facts of the period into a new more abstract awareness—a period—we can understand their fundamental importance in history and retain them as a single unit of thought.

The Component Facts

- 1517 - Martin Luther issues the *Ninety-Five Theses*, initiating a break with the pope, and leading to the rise of Lutheranism
- 1534 - Henry VIII breaks with the pope and becomes the head of the Church of England by the “Acts of Supremacy,” leading to the rise of Anglicanism
- 1536 - John Calvin publishes the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* establishing Calvinism
- 1555 - The Peace of Augsburg brings the Schmalkaldic War between Catholics and Lutherans to an end, enshrining the principle “*cuius regio, eius religio*” (*the ruler chooses the religion*)
- 1648 - The Thirty Years’ War comes to an end, with “*cuius regio, eius religio*” extended to include Calvinism

The students are assigned a **paragraph-length** exposition of these events in which the purpose is to integrate them into a single story.

The theme of this story is provided in the following periodization statement, which is based on our in-class discussions.

The Reformation and Religious Wars is a period in European history from 1517 to 1648 that is important to American history because Christendom broke into multiple warring sects.

Students may use this exact sentence as the first sentence of their paragraph, or re-write it using their own words, however the dates must be retained in their formulation, and the paragraph must include all five of the dated component facts, including the dates.

Paragraph Length

The paragraph assignment has a sentence limit. It must be 9-13 sentences long. No fewer; and no more. The sentence limit is designed to help students focus their writing. Paragraphs longer than 13 sentences will inevitably contain extraneous content. But a paragraph less than 9 sentences will be very unlikely to have sufficient logical/narrative connections between the events.

Final Checklist before Submission (Parent Sign-Off Required)

Parents are not required to proof-read the assignment as such, however, assignments must be submitted via e-mail, *with some explicit parental acknowledgement of having performed the following checklist.*

- *The paragraph contains the dates 1517,1534,1536,1555,1648.*
- *The paragraph has an introduction that states the essence of the period (either copied from the assignment, or rephrased) — and that contains the date range 1517-1648.*
- *The paragraph has been completely spellchecked using a computer.*
- *The sentence count is between 9 and 13 (inclusive).*

As always, I welcome questions & comments at: mrpowell@historyatourhouse.com.

Assignments should be submitted typed and in a standard electronic format such as DOC, PAGES, or TXT.

—Mr. Powell