

**SUMMER ASSIGNMENT for BOTH:
WORLD CULTURES HONORS WORLD HISTORY
and HONORS WORLD HISTORY**

The first project of the year involves you researching your own family heritage. This is a long-term project turned in over several days. Over the summer, please at least read through this whole page so you understand what the project entails, and **START GATHERING RESEARCH MATERIALS** (save all citations!). By the **THIRD** day of class (Thursday/Friday of the first week), items 1, 2, and 3 will be due.

DUE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (SECOND DAY FOR MRS. WOLF'S CLASS):

Please bring one item that represents your ancestry / culture / heritage and TYPE at least one paragraph, explaining the cultural item that you chose. You will have to RESEARCH the item and provide citations for that research. In the writing tell what it is and explain, in detail, why this item is depictive of the culture that you chose to research. Your information should give a complete history of this cultural item and show some evidence that you have researched it. (You will need to cite your sources in the citation page – we'll talk about that the first week of class but **SAVE YOUR SOURCE INFORMATION NOW**). Please choose your cultural item wisely, making certain that it is a respectful representation of the culture and that it is a **school-appropriate** item or topic (**NO BEER STEINS**). Showing your cultural item in class will be your teacher's first impression of you, so make that impression a positive one that shows **HONORS-LEVEL** effort and thinking. (See Parts 5 and 6 below).

Check out the whole project (READ THIS):

WHO AM I AND WHERE DID I COME FROM?

Ancestry Research Assignment

Write an essay (with eight specific, required parts explained below) in which you discuss as much as you know about your ancestry then do some further research on one country of your ancestry **using three or more research sources**. If one of your sources is a person then it must be a person who is recognized as an expert. Writing this assignment will require in-depth discussion with your parents and other family members. This will also require some research on your part into the history, geography, and other background aspects of your culture. Sorry but you may NOT choose any American (including Native American, Alaskan, or Hawaiian) or Canadian ancestry – you get one full year to explore these topics next year. If you are adopted or do not know one or more of your parents, then you may choose to do your adopted parents and/or the parents that you do know and then make your best guess at the parent/parents that you do not know. Researching the derivation of last names, looking at physical characteristics, and other clues may give you an indication of what countries may be in your ancestral past.

This assignment will help us to begin exploring some of the different cultures that we will be studying this year and will also help you to get in touch with your own roots. Also, this will give me a chance to see what kind of a writer you are, so try your best to impress me with your writing skills.

This essay should contain the following **seven parts written in your best storytelling English (plus citations)** (example is provided on the Galena website under **SUMMER HOMEWORK**):

DUE THE THIRD DAY OF CLASS [ask questions in class!] (Thurs/Fri): PARTS 1, 2, and 3:

Part #1 Mother's ancestry (countries of origin) Write a paragraph or more.

Part #2 Father's ancestry (countries of origin) Write a paragraph or more.

Part #3: Please choose one country from your ancestry (German, English, etc.). Next, research that ancestry (**Culturegrams** at the main desk of the library are ideal for this) then write about what a typical person of that culture would be like today. Please refer to recognized research sources for this information. This part **MUST INCLUDE SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF EACH** of the following:- **any rituals, fully explained** (dances, holidays, etc.)- **activities** (everyday-type like sports, games, etc.)- **likes and dislikes** (foods, traits, habit, other country, etc.)- **traits** (physical and psychological)

Remember: there should be several examples of each.

Second half of the project will be due the **SECOND** week of class:

Part #4: You will need to research the geography of the country that you chose and fully discuss **at least three** examples of how that geography has influenced the culture and/or appearance of the people who live there (appearance, lifestyle, etc.); do not forget to explain the “**why**” for each of your examples. This part is worth quite a bit, so put some real thought and effort into it.

Part #5: In this paragraph, please prepare for the next part by looking up some definitions of culture (be sure to cite these in your citation page). Summarize at least three different definitions into one definition that is in your own words. Then, discuss what culture means to you given what you have learned from the definitions and what you already knew. This paragraph will help you to have a better idea of what to look for in a cultural item.

Part #6: Please bring one cultural item and this writing the FIRST day of class (Monday). The write-up goes into your paper also.

In this paragraph, please discuss the cultural item that you chose. Tell what it is and explain, in detail, why this item is depictive of the culture that you chose to research. Your information should give a complete history of this cultural item and should show some evidence that you have researched it (cite your sources in the citation page).

Part #7: Conclusion - It is the aim of this assignment to link yourself as much as possible with your ancestral past, so please conclude the assignment by saying how you are, indeed, linked to your ancestors and ancestry. Conclude with personal commentary on how you feel about this link.

Part #8: Citation Page – on this page you should cite your research sources, including the three or more sources you used for your research as well as the sources that you used to look up your definitions of culture and cultural item. **Use the MLA style for this. Examples of this style are easily available on the Internet, and you will also be taught this style within the first few days of class.** Gather all citation information! We can teach you the required format before final draft is due but need to have info ready.

The completed assignment should:

- **be typed**
- **be in your own words**
- **have a cover page (with the name of the assignment, your name, the date, and history period)**
- **have all eight required parts, including the research on your cultural item (Part 6, again)**

There is an example of what a finished essay should look like which you may be able to access on the school website under “SUMMER HOMEWORK.” If you have any other questions during the summer, please e-mail Mrs. Vielle at lvielle@washoe.k12.nv.us. Mrs. Vielle will be checking her e-mail *occasionally* over the summer. Good luck, enjoy, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

REVIEW OF DUE DATES:

First Day of School, Mon. (Aug. 30th) **Have** your CULTURAL ITEM (#6 above) including the typed paragraph, summarizing the research about it with the sources cited.
REMEMBER: on the first day we have all six of the classes, so ALL STUDENTS should bring item and paragraph this day.

Second Day of Class, T/W: (Aug. 31/Sept 1): We will go over aspects of this research paper. Have your questions ready so you can get them answered. Citation format will be given.

Third Class Day, Th/F: (Sept. 2/3) Typed Parts 1, 2, and 3 are DUE with citations.

Second week of school: The remaining parts of the project (#4-8) will be due TYPED.

Please ensure you have ink in your printer, paper, and access to a good, reliable computer.
Also, please SAVE ALL YOUR WORK; you WILL need to do revisions!

Here is a sample done by Mrs. Vielle to show what is expected of the future World Cultures Honors World History (Mrs. Vielle) and Honors World History (Mrs. Wolf) students on the summer assignment.

WHO AM I AND WHERE DID I COME FROM?

Like many Americans, I am a mix of many different countries. I know some of the countries of my ancestry, but some of the countries I am not sure about. For the most part, the countries are all European, but the only one that really has influence on me now is my mother's ancestry. My mother is one hundred percent Norwegian. She is a second generation Norwegian since both sets of her grandparents came directly from Norway, although some were Norwegians from Iceland. Her paternal grandfather, Charles Amundsen, came from Norway with his family in the late 1800's and, like many immigrants, would change their last name in order to be more "American" (in other words, English). Amundsen would become Emerson. They would settle in Wisconsin. Charles would then marry Mary, who was Icelandic Norwegian, and they would have six children, including my grandfather, Olaf Otto Emerson. My mother's maternal grandparents, the Lodahls, emigrated directly from Norway on both sides and they would settle in Minnesota and later move to Wisconsin. Descendants of both grandparents are well-traced to the extent that grandma even knows the cities in Norway in which they currently live. Ben Lodahl would marry Clenora and they also would have six children, one of which was my grandmother, Goldie (Lodahl) Emerson. Otto and Goldie Emerson would later marry and have four children, one of which was my mother, Barbara (Emerson)(Winchell) Allain.

Like many families who have been in America for a few generations, my father's ancestry has become a bit convoluted, and he is not completely certain what his mixed heritage contains. He is fairly certain that his father, Dee Winchell, was mostly English and German, possibly some Irish and Welsh as well. The name "Winchell" is typically German. His father's family moved to Nevada and then his paternal grandfather deserted his family so that part of the family tree was understandably cut off. His mother is even more of a mystery. There is probably some English and other British Isle ancestries. Grandma claimed at one time to have Cherokee blood, as well, but then she later said there was no Native American blood, only English royalty. Grandma had a small case of "delusions of grandeur" and had a tendency to (how do I say this nicely?) prevaricate. Grandma came from Oklahoma, which is reservation location as it was the ultimate destination of the infamous Cherokee "Trail of Tears" when the Indian people were moved off of their land and forced into the less-desirable reservations created for them in Oklahoma. Add to this my grandmother's previous claim to Cherokee ancestry and the fact that she looked very much like a Native American, both in coloring and in facial features, and I would say that the chances of there being Cherokee blood in our veins is great.

The ancestry on which I choose to focus is my American. [**I am choosing this one because it is not one that students may choose so I can illustrate what I want with this assignment** without taking any ideas away from my hard-working (and hard-researching) students.] Some rituals from America are the religion of its population, about 80-85 percent of which is Christian. Of these, most tend to follow one of the Protestant branches of Christianity thus contributing to the term "WASP" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) in reference to the dominant culture. The main reason for this is that many of the earlier European immigrants to what would become the United States came from the British Isles which was, by law, Protestant at the time. Given that the United States practices religious freedom, however, you will see representations of every religion known to man somewhere in the country.

As for holiday rituals, each state, and many cities, will have their own celebrations. National public holidays include New Year's Day which is celebrated on January 1st. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday is celebrated on the third Monday in January. He was famous for being one of the greatest leaders of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's and 1970's and was greatly loved for his inspirational speeches and for his effective use of nonviolent methods to bring about great legal gains for African Americans. Presidents' Day, the third Monday in February, commemorates the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, two great American presidents. Washington was the first president and is considered the "father of our country". Lincoln was the president during the Civil War, loved for freeing the slaves, thereby ending slavery, and for keeping our nation successfully together through the Civil War. Memorial Day, the last Monday in May, is when Americans remember those who have died defending their country; to look at the sacrifices they made and for what. This day is celebrated with parades, laying flowers on the graves of veterans, etc. Independence Day, the 4th of July,

commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence in which the colonies made their official break from mother England. It is celebrated with parades, fireworks, picnics, and family fun. Labor Day, first Monday in September, celebrates the importance of business and the labor movement in America. Columbus Day, second Monday in October, celebrates Christopher Columbus, the first European discoverer of the Americas (though this is debatable, as you will see this year). Veterans' Day, on November 11th, is similar to Memorial Day but it focuses more on the veterans that are still alive. These last three holidays are not highly celebrated anymore; mainly, it just means a day off for some. Thanksgiving, fourth Thursday in November, is a time to give thanks for all of one's bounty and is based on the first dinner of peace that the pilgrims (early Puritan settlers) had with their Native American neighbors. It is celebrated with family get-togethers and the famous turkey dinner. Also, Christmas, the birth of the Christian messiah Jesus, is celebrated on December 25th. This is the most highly celebrated holiday in America, thereby showing the heavy Christian influence. There are many religious celebrations with the churches but much of Christmas has become very commercialized with rampant card exchanges, gift-giving, and commercialized programming. There has become a prevalence of non-religious focus on the characters surrounding Santa Clause. Although Santa's origins can be traced to Sinter Klaus, or St. Nicholas, who was a legendary gift-giving Christian from the German culture but the version followed in America, with the ruddy cheeks, round belly, and flying reindeer is from the famous 1882 *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* poem by Clement Clarke Moore. The visual for Santa was created by the Coca-Cola company during an ad campaign in the early 20th century. A similar thing has happened to the Christian holiday of Easter (see below) which is mainly celebrated now with the Easter Bunny leaving candy, colored eggs, and gifts for children. Other non-holiday special days are Groundhog Day (2 February) when legend has it that the groundhog will emerge and his shadow, or lack thereof, will determine whether or not winter is over; Valentine's Day (14 February) when lovers exchange cards and gifts based on the St. Valentine legend from Roman times; St. Patrick's Day (17 March) is a day to celebrate Irish ancestry and is named for the saint who brought Christianity to Ireland and supposedly eradicated it of snakes; Easter (first Sunday of the Spring Equinox) the holiest Christian holiday celebrating Jesus' return from the dead after his Roman crucifixion; Mother's Day (second Sunday in May); Father's Day (third Sunday in June); Flag Day (14 June); and Halloween (31 October), or the pagan holiday All Hallows Eve, which is the one day of the year that the demons could all come out before the next day which was All Saints Day.

Everyday activities in America usually are very socially centered; Americans will use any excuse to get together. They enjoy talking, watching a movie or television, eating, and relaxing together. Other leisure activities include surfing the Internet, picnicking, attending music concerts, and traveling. In sports, baseball, basketball, and American football are the most popular to watch and to play. They also enjoy soccer, cycling, racquetball, hockey, tennis, swimming, golf, bowling, jogging, aerobic exercising, and virtually any other sport known to mankind due to the great mix of ethnicities in the United States.

Some things that Americans like are people who are not afraid to speak out. Also, they value ingenuity, hard work, and integrity. Americans love a good laugh, at their expense or others, so a good sense of humor, including a heavy dose of sarcasm, is very important to them. Most Americans love their country, believing it to be the best in the world. They strongly value both personal and national freedom and independence. Cleanliness and their appearance are generally also very important to most Americans. In food, Americans favor the convenience of fast foods such as hamburgers, french fries, pizza, and chicken. Most "American" dishes have been adopted from some of their immigrant population such as Mexican, Italian, Chinese, etc. Most Americans are readily open to new foods, and the culture easily adapts new tastes. Americans also consume a lot of candy, ice cream, and other sweets. In fact, the junk food craze is often blamed for the increasing amount of obesity among Americans.

Some things that Americans dislike are, at times, those who speak too much on religion due to the separation of church and state that exists in this country. Resting elbows on the table while eating is generally considered impolite. Americans also dislike anything that infringes on their freedoms and rights guaranteed to them by their Constitution (freedom of press, freedom of religion, right to bear arms, etc.) and will vehemently oppose these restrictions. They dislike anyone invading their personal space (generally two feet around) without invitation. Americans still hold a grudge against and a general distaste of communism as a remnant of the Cold War problems with the former Soviet Union and its allies. There is also currently great tension with most predominantly Muslim nations due to our ongoing involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Some typical traits of Americans are that they are often very blatant and outspoken, freely voicing and sharing opinions and views. Americans frequently display individuality; conformity is definitely not the norm. In appearance, Americans are typically what would be considered lighter skinned as 83 percent of the population derives from either European, Middle Eastern, or Latin American countries. Their choice of fashion tends to vary widely although casual attire tends to be the choice of most. Americans are generally quite informal. Eye contact is common during at least some part of a conversation and poor posture is not uncommon. Americans also tend to

be very friendly and outgoing which in some nations can be construed as sexual invitation when practiced by females. Americans also tend to be louder and more straight forward than other peoples which most other nations view as overly aggressive, thus offensive, behavior (a.k.a. the “Ugly American”). Americans are very ambitious and very success-oriented. They are very focused on acquiring bigger and better making them by far the best consumers of any other country in existence today. Most Americans are quite status-conscious and materialistic due to the great success of commercial advertising in all of the readily available media sources (billboards, printed materials, television, radio, internet, etc.).

Geographical effects upon Americans are not as obvious as they perhaps are in other countries due to the newness of America as a nation, the fact that it continues to be a nation of immigrants, and in particular the large size and varied climates of the nation. One effect is that when the latest fashions, trends, and changes hit, they will hit the coastal areas first due to the greater amount of people traveling through those areas. The eastern seaboard, mainly the busiest city of New York City, is usually first to start a fashion trend, then it will hit the west coast, and finally it will move inward from there with the middle areas being the last. For this reason, life is still very traditional and old-fashioned in the Midwest and Old South areas of America.

Dress will also be affected by the geography. The people who live in southern California, Florida, and particularly in Hawaii tend to dress in skimpier clothing and brighter colors to deflect the sun due to the hotter climate. People living in the northern regions, particularly in Alaska, dress far warmer and in the darker colors that will attract the sun's rays rather than deflect them. The native Hawaiians will also have very dark skin, hair, and eyes caused by the increased pigmentation necessary to protect them from generations of tropical sun. In sports, the snow sports such as hockey and skiing tend to be more popular in the north while the water sports such as surfing and sailing are more popular in the south. Historically, the contrasting climate between the north and the south has affected the economies of the regions. When America was still very young, the warmer southern part of the nation relied heavily on agriculture while the colder northern region turned, instead, to industry because they could not grow as much and because they had a higher prevalence of good harbors where ships could easily dock to load and unload goods. The differences between the regions eventually escalated to violence which culminated in the Civil War in the mid-1800's, the North against the South. Because the North won, the Southern states are still feeling the after-effects of the devastation wrought from this war as is evidenced in the lower literacy rate and socio-economic status in general in these southern states when compared against the northern states.

The proximity of a region to another culture will also affect the people, especially if there were events in a nation's history that caused its people to leave that nation. The people of Florida, especially in Miami, have a heavy Cuban influence due to the huge amount of Cuban refugees that ended up there after the communist takeover of Fidel Castro. Areas in cities known as “Little Havana” abound and some say there are more Cubans in Florida than in Cuba. The states that border Mexico have a heavy Latino influence as evidenced from the food, dress, customs, architecture, and even the Spanish names of the areas – New Mexico, San Antonio, Los Angeles, San Diego, etc. This is due to the poor economic situation in Mexico and many of the other Latin American nations which forces a huge amount of mainly Mexican immigrants to come into these areas in search of jobs.

Part 5 – [students should research then summarize three definitions of culture into their own definition and then state what culture means to them – I would not want to color the students' definitions or what culture means to them by stating my own here as this must be an individual activity].

The cultural item that I chose to bring and that I think greatly symbolizes America is a baseball. The game of baseball is unique to America but it is based on the game of cricket and the children's game of rounders, both of which the British brought to America in the 1700's. The game was changed and made unique in the mid-1850's mainly by a bank teller named Alexander Cartwright. He created a standard set of rules that would make the game accessible to both young and old. He introduced other innovations as well. He then created the first baseball team, the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club. From that point on, baseball progressed and evolved, gaining a permanent place in the hearts of the American public. This shows the great creativity and ingenuity of the American people. They take pieces of other cultures then tweak them and change them into something that has broad appeal, is very marketable, and in many ways works better than the original version ever did. Baseball then went on to become a cultural icon in America. Whatever was going on in our country or in the world, people could always forget their problems and get away from things for a while by rooting for their favorite teams. It was considered so important that during the world war when all of the men were away fighting, there were baseball teams created entirely of women so that Americans could still have their game. Baseball was always there. It became a way of bringing

people together in their love for the sport; young, old, black, white, north, south, etc. America is baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie. Although the sport has been tarnished in recent years by the phenomenal rise in ticket prices (due to outrageous salaries for the players), the increasing violence of the spectators, the performance-enhancing drug scandal, and the shameful behavior of some of the players, I think that most would agree that baseball is still a unique symbol of true Americana and the sport still elicits feelings of great affection and nostalgia from most Americans.

As to how my heritage has affected the person I am today, I am without question very American. I am “white”, Protestant, and celebrate all American holidays. I am outspoken and hardworking, and I love a good laugh, even if it is at my own expense. I enjoy all American foods and pastimes, and I highly prize the freedoms that come with being an American. I firmly believe that I live in the greatest nation in the world but sometimes exercise my freedom to criticize those in charge and American institutions as I think this is an essential element of a healthy democratic process. I also work hard, play hard, and am one of the best consumers there is. My credit card companies love me. I take great pride in my heritage as a Norwegian American and often participate in Norwegian cultural activities but my true heart and mind are firmly entrenched right here in America and there is nowhere else that I would rather be. As I would like to think that most others in the United States feel I am proud to be an American.

Part 8: Citations Page is Required

I hope that this has been helpful to all of my future students in displaying what I want in your summer assignments. I look forward to seeing you all in the fall. Rest assured, you will love your World Cultures/Honors World history class. We will work hard but we will also have a lot of fun. I promise.