



Assignment - Thinking about Why We Study History

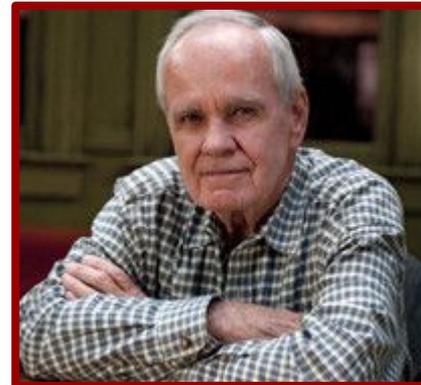
- Read the four quotes that each address the study of history.
- Try to figure out what each person is saying.
- Be able to back up your version of what each quote means by referring to specific parts of the quote that speak to your interpretation.
- Next week, in class, you will be asked to write a short paragraph that summarizes the views expressed by these quotes and relates and thoughts of your own on the topic.



“When I was in school I studied biology. I learned that in making their experiments scientists will take some group--bacteria, mice, people--and subject that group to certain conditions. They compare the results with a second group which has not been disturbed. This second group is called the control group. It is the control group which enables the scientist gauge the effect of his experiment. To judge the significance of what has occurred. In history there are no control groups. There is no one to tell us what might have been. We weep over the might have been, but there is no might have been. There never was. It is supposed to be true that those who o not know history are condemned to repeat it. I don't believe knowing can save us. What is constant in history is greed and foolishness and a love of blood and this is a thing that even God--who knows all that can be known--seems powerless to change.”

— Cormac McCarthy,

Pulitzer prize-winning Author



“Instruction in world history in the so-called high schools is even today in a very sorry condition. Few teachers understand that the study of history can never be to learn historical dates and events by heart and recite them by rote; that what matters is not whether the child knows exactly when this battle or that was fought, when a general was born, or even when a monarch (usually a very insignificant one) came into the crown of his forefathers. No, by the living God, this is very unimportant. To 'learn' history means to seek and find the forces which are the causes leading to those effects which we subsequently perceive as historical events.”

— Adolf Hitler,

Quote from *Mein Kampf*



“The science of government it is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of legislation and administration and negotiation ought to take the place of, indeed exclude, in a manner, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.”

— John Adams, in a letter to his wife

Second President of the United States 1797 - 1801



“We believe the one who has power. He is the one who gets to write the story.

So when you study history, you must ask yourself, Whose story am I missing? Whose voice was suppressed so that this voice could come forth?

Once you have figured that out, you must find that story too. From there you get a clearer, yet still imperfect, picture.”

— Yaa Gyasi,

born in Ghana and raised in Alabama. graduate of the University of Iowa where she currently holds the holds Dean’s Graduate Research Fellowship, her debut novel *Homegoing* won the American Book Award last year, she is 26 years old

