**2018 AP U.S. History Summer Assignment**

**Empire of the Summer Moon by S.C. Gwynne**

****

* **ISBN-10:** 1416591060
* **ISBN-13:** 978-1416591061

ASSIGNMENT:

1.) You need to email me (dwhite@kaufman-isd.net). In the email, you need to introduce yourself, including your background in history (personal likes, whether you’ve taken AP before, and what you hope to learn about in my class).

2.) Answer questions fully in **your own handwriting**.

3.) Use **complete** sentences.

4.) Use **quotations** from the book to support your answers.

5.) **Write** your answers **on this** assignment.

This assignment will be due the **FIRST** day of school…No exceptions. You will not be allowed to enroll in the class if you do not have this assignment on the first day of school. It will count as a test grade for the first quarter. Although study groups are encouraged all answers must be in your own words. Any cheating will result in dismissal from the AP program.

**1.** Most Americans know the names of few women who lived on the frontier except perhaps for [Laura Ingalls Wilder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Ingalls_Wilder). What did you learn about those women from reading about [Cynthia Ann Parker](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpa18) and her contemporaries?

**2.** A Comanche male was “gloriously, astoundingly free,” but a Comanche woman was “a second-class citizen,” S.C. Gwynne says. [Page 52] Do you agree?

**3.** Gwynne says it’s hard to avoid making “moral judgments about the Comanches” when you read the memoir of [Rachel Parker Plummer](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpl09), who was captured along with her cousin Cynthia Ann but soon separated from her. [Page 43] Rachel’s story involves gang rape, the torture and murder of her 7-week-old baby, and other horrific acts. What moral judgments, if any, did you make about the [Comanches](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/bmc72)?

**4.** The stereotype of the “noble savage” has existed since the time of James Fennimore Cooper, and stereotypes may contain a germ of truth. [Page 51] Was there anything noble about the Comanches?

**5.** Gen. George Armstrong [Custer](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/custer.htm) became world-famous after his defeat by several tribes at Little Big Horn, and [Ranald Mackenzie](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fma07) became obscure after his victory over the Comanches. [Page 2] Why do you think the two generals had different fates?

**6.** The U.S. government failed to end Comanche raids sooner partly because many Easterners believed that “the Indian wars were principally the fault of white men” and that “the Comanches and other troublesome tribes would live in peace if only they were treated properly.” [Page 223] Gwynne says they were wrong: No one who knew about the horrors of Comanche attacks “could possibly have believed that the tribe was either peaceable or blameless.” [Page 224] Did he persuade you of that?

**7.** Gwynne also argues that the U.S. “had betrayed and lied to Native American tribes more times than anyone could possibly count” [Page 230] and that the Office of Indian affairs was “one of the most corrupt, venal, and incompetent government agencies in American history.” [Page 230] To what degree, if at all, were Comanche attacks justified by how the government treated them?

**8.** Empire of the Summer Moon cuts back and forth between the stories of its major figures (Cynthia Parker and others captured in the 1836 raid on her family’s fort; her son, [Quanah](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpa18), and her husband, [Peta Nocona](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpefn); the Indian fighter Ranald Mackenzie; and others). How well does the cross-cutting work? Could follow the threads of the story easily or did you sometimes have to reread parts of the book?

**9.** Especially after the Civil War, the extreme violence of the Comanche attacks “amounted to what we would today consider to be political terrorism,” Gwynne says. Is it fair to compare the tribe to today’s terrorists?

**10.** Empire of the Summer Moon gives many example of Comanche brutality. The first pages of the book note, for example, after the Salt Creek Massacre, an Army captain reported seeing evidence of beheadings and victims whose “fingers, toes, and private parts had been cut off and stuck in their mouths.” [Page 4] Did Gwynne ever go too far or describe violence that seemed unnecessary to the story? Why or why not?

**11.** In chapter four, Gwynne compares the Comanche warriors to the Celts, and later, in chapter five, to the Spartans. Both were war-driven cultures that prided themselves on being more fearless than their opponents. Can you think of any other historical cultures that remind you of the Comanche? Do you think it is fair to identify this tribe solely based on their ability to wage and win wars?

**12.** A journalist by trade, Gwynne maintains impartiality throughout the book. Although it is difficult not to sympathize with the Comanche and their ultimate fate, they were notorious for their extreme violence toward all who stood in their way. How are you able to reconcile the savagery of the tribe with their nobility? Does this moral dichotomy even need to be reconciled, or is it wrong to apply modern standards of ethics to the Comanche?

**13.** John Coffee Hays, nicknamed “Capitan Yack,” was one of the first military officers to successfully adopt the Indian style of warfare and briefly managed to level the battlefield against the Comanche. Hays and the Texas Rangers of the 1830s and 1840s created a blueprint for success that was then forgotten for decades until Ranald Mackenzie and others relearned it. Do you think if the Hays style of fighting had been adopted immediately, the struggle would have lasted as long as it did? Why or why not?

**14.** The story of Quanah and his second wife, Weckeah, is a wonderful anecdote that displays the courage and determination for which Quanah would later be famous. What other qualities do you think made Quanah such a great leader? Was he at a disadvantage for being from a mixed heritage? Or did this quality play a role in his rise through the Comanche ranks?

**15.** Cynthia Ann Parker’s story is a fascinating case study in cultural assimilation. The true tragedy of her life was her second stint in captivity following her “escape” from the Comanche (p. 181). Why do you think Cynthia Ann Parker had so much trouble reassimilating into “white” culture? Do you think Sul Ross would have brought her back as a captive had he known the final outcome?

**16.** Ranald Mackenzie is presented as a counterpoint to the infamous George Custer in chapter sixteen. Mackenzie proved himself at West Point, then in the Civil War, and he won more than his fair share of battles against the Comanche. Considering this, why do you think history remembers Custer rather than Mackenzie?

**17.** Consider how history would have changed if the Spanish and French had been more successful in fighting the Comanche. If the Comanches hadn’t repelled the Spanish and French advancement, would America have become the country it is today?

**18.** Isa-tai—a medicine man, a magician, and a con man according to Gwynne (p. 264)—was both a blessing and a curse to the Comanche. Together, he and Quanah rallied the warriors necessary to spring a revenge raid on the Texans. Although Quanah is remembered as the last great Comanche chief, how much do you think Isa-tai contributed to Quanah’s status? Would Quanah have been able to rally as many warriors into battles without Isa-tai? Do you think Quanah and the Comanche would have ultimately been better off without Isa-tai?

**19.** Surprisingly enough, Quanah was able to adapt to reservation life. Still, he lived as only a Comanche would be allowed to, with eight wives and twenty-four children. As Gwynne writes, Quanah “existed . . . in the weird half-world of the reservation” (p. 302). What do you make of Quanah’s peaceful surrender and his “second life” on the reservation? Were you surprised by his ability to balance both his captivity and his role as an assertive Comanche leader?

**20.** The scene toward the end of the book when Quanah and his fellow Comanche are allowed off the reservation for a buffalo hunt is heartbreaking. There are no buffalo to be found, and they are reduced, instead, to hunting cattle. This poignant failed attempt to recapture a vital piece of Comanche identity just a few years after surrender begs the following questions: Would the Comanche have been forced to give up their way of life even if they had not engaged in war? Would they eventually have been rendered obsolete because of their inability and unwillingness to adapt to the ever-modernizing world around them?

**21.** Did you know the true origin of the phrase Comanche Moon before reading *Empire of the Summer Moon*? What other misconceptions about the Comanche or the history of the West did Gwynne help to dispel with this book?

**22.** In the final chapter of the book, Gwynne writes about Quanah’s legacy: “The contrast could not be greater with his more famous neighbor, Geronimo” (p. 314). He goes on to explain that while Geronimo was not well liked by Indians on the reservation and died a drunk and a gambler, Quanah is remembered as one of the last great Indian chiefs. Do you think we will still remember Quanah one hundred years from now? What do you think his lasting legacy will be?