AP US History Pre-Reading Questions

1. The United States has long been considered the “land of opportunity.” What are the expectations of many immigrants? Do you think the reality meets their expectations? What are the similarities and differences between what America offered to immigrants a hundred years ago and what it offers today?

2. Describe your ideal work situation. If you were an employer, how much work would you expect from your employees? What values would you want your employees to have? As an employee, how hard would you be willing to work? What is meant by a living wage? How reasonable is this expectation?

3. Explain how speaking English as your second language can be a communication barrier. How would someone who speaks limited or no English cope with daily life in America? What difficulties would they face daily?

4. To what extent do you agree with this statement? “The United States has a history of corporations taking advantage of individuals.” If yes, what are some current examples of this? How does this phenomenon affect individuals, families, and businesses? On the other hand, many would say that United States corporations have made our high quality of life possible. How has corporate America improved the quality of life in this country?

5. During the late 1800s,  Darwin’s theory of evolution (“survival of the fittest”) began to be used by some as an explanation for why some groups of people prospered while others never got ahead.  (survival of the fittest race) This idea was called Social Darwinism.  Do you agree or disagree? Do you think some groups of people (races, ethnicities or genders) are destined to succeed in life while others fail or do all humans have the same chances Extend this theory to basic human nature and explain how it applies

6. Select an average day (during the school year or the summer) and list the food you eat in an average day.  Where does this food come from?

7. What traits distinguish people of one social class from another in United States society today? Money? Job? Home? Education? Family? Ethnicity? Religion? Can you tell people of different classes apart? What advantages do some classes have over others? Why do most societies have class distinctions?

8. What is workers’ compensation? (If you don’t know, ask someone what it is) Do you think it should exist in all workplaces? When should and should not an individual receive workers’ compensation?

9. Many people cannot afford medical attention or choose not to see a doctor for other reasons. What effect could lack of medical attention have on a person? Should medical services be provided free to those who cannot afford them? What are the advantages/disadvantages of socialized medicine? (making sure all citizens are provided with health care …not insurance…health care – you go to the doctor & never get a bill..the government pays for it through taxes.

10. At what age should a person begin working? What type of work is appropriate for a young person? What should their hours and working conditions be? Why do you think there are minimum age requirements in the US? Do you think there should be a minimum wage or do you think workers should be paid more based on the demand for certain labor? Explain.  If you think there should be a minimum wage, what should it be & why?

11. What is the role of the media in our society? Do you think they ever exaggerate events, give them undue coverage, or report events incorrectly? If so, how does this affect our view of what is happening in the world? What do you believe the role of the media should be? Do you believe the media can be totally objective? Explain.

You can e-mail these answer to me or write them out & turn them in on the first day of class