

WHY WE HAD TO CHANGE THE TEXT FOR THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT WORLD HISTORY COURSE

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Action Item: Student beginning with the 2021 – 2022 school year will need to acquire the 4th Edition of Robert Strayer’s *Ways of the World – Since 1200*. While we have some copies to loan, these are reserved for families with sincere need.

The short answer: On 26 August, 2019 College Board dramatically changed the scope of the course. The scope now only references events after the year 1200 CE. While there some of the events prior to 1200 are required such as Confucianism, the emergence of Islam, the founding of democratic ideas and reasoning in the Greek and Roman empires – this amounts to only about two weeks of coursework. The remainder focuses on those developments after 1200. Stayer’s text has been realigned to reflect these changes, and therefore gives students the best possible tool for success on the national exam in May 2022.

Further explanation: For the 2020 – 2021 school year this text was not available, and students and teachers had to scramble to align old texts to the new scope with varying degrees of success. On top of all the other challenges of that school year, teachers were almost literally cutting and pasting reading to coherently present the needed content. World history is a vast field already, we certainly don’t want to hold students accountable for learning that isn’t required.

This text was already the gold standard in AP World History, and that is only more strongly the case now.

In spite of this change, students and parents should be aware that 1). the new course requires a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the post-1200 world, and 2). Skills (developments & process, sourcing, claims & evidence, contextualization, etc.) are more heavily weighted in the new exam. So, while the scope is shorter, the work has not declined.

In the future, College Board promises a new *World History – Ancient* that will address events beginning with the Agricultural Revolution to 1200 CE. This will be a new, year-long course. Much has yet to be determined about how or if this course will be included in a high school curriculum.

As always, feel free to reach out to me on this or other issues in *AP World History – Modern* at wbingham@houstonisd.org