

Ms. Williams's ADVANCED HONORS AMERICAN LITERATURE SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

Greetings, Class of 2028! We will be starting the year with a short unit on rhetoric to establish a basis for our literary exploration of the American ethos. The following **excerpt** from **John Quincy Adams**, sixth president of the United States (and son of Founding Father John Adams), should be **memorized** by the first week of school, August 19, 2026. Look up any words you do not know and make sure you understand the content. If you have any questions, I will check my email every other week during the summer months: dwilliams@cistercian.org. A backup copy of this assignment is available on our Teams page.

An Address Celebrating the Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1821)

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It was the first solemn declaration by a nation of the only legitimate foundation of civil government. It was the corner stone of a new fabric, destined to cover the surface of the globe. It demolished at a stroke the lawfulness of all governments founded upon conquest. It swept away all the rubbish of accumulated centuries of servitude. It announced in practical form to the world the transcendent truth of the unalienable sovereignty of the people. It proved that the social compact was no figment of the imagination; but a real, solid, and sacred bond of the social union. From the day of this Declaration, the people of North America were no longer the fragment of a distant empire, imploring justice and mercy from an inexorable master in another hemisphere. They were no longer children appealing in vain to the sympathies of a heartless mother; no longer subjects leaning upon the shattered columns of royal promises, and invoking the faith of parchment to secure their rights. They were a nation, asserting as of right, and maintaining by war, its own existence. A nation was born in a day—

How many ages hence

Shall this, their lofty scene, be acted o'er

In states unborn, and accents yet unknown?

It will be acted o'er, fellow-citizens, but it can never be repeated. It stands, and must for ever stand, alone, a beacon on the summit of the mountain, to which all the inhabitants of the earth may turn their eyes for a genial and saving light till time shall be lost in eternity, and this globe itself dissolve, nor leave a wreck behind. It stands for ever, a light of admonition to the rulers of men, a light of salvation and redemption to the oppressed. So long as this planet shall be inhabited by human beings, so long as man shall be of social nature, so long as government shall be necessary to the great moral purposes of society, and so long as it shall be abused to the purposes of oppression, so long shall this Declaration hold out to the sovereign and to the subject the extent and the boundaries of their respective rights and duties, founded in the laws of nature, and of nature's God.

Five and forty years have passed away since this Declaration was issued by our fathers; and here are we, fellow-citizens, assembled in the full enjoyment of its fruits, to bless the author of our being for the bounties of his providence, in casting our lot in this favored land; to remember with effusions of gratitude the sages who put forth, and the heroes who bled for the establishment of this Declaration; and, by the communion of soul in the reperusal and hearing of this instrument, to renew the genuine Holy Alliance of its principles, to recognise them as eternal truths, and to pledge ourselves, and bind our posterity, to a faithful and undeviating adherence to them.

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