

ALL SUMMER WORK IS DEPENDENT UPON YOUR FINALIZED SCHEDULE!

Advanced Placement Human Geography
Summer Assignment 2019



In 1932, Edsel Ford—the son of Henry Ford and the President of Ford Motor Company—commissioned the famed Mexican artist Diego Rivera to paint murals for the Garden Court of the *Detroit Institute of Arts*. The only rule for the project was that the work had to relate to the history of Detroit and the development of industries that had transformed the city into an economic powerhouse. Even though the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression, Ford felt that it was necessary to remind the citizens of Detroit of their spirit and vitality.

When Rivera and his wife, the painter Frida Kahlo, arrived in Detroit, they were immediately fascinated by the city. Originally, two murals had been planned for the Garden Court. Rivera's commission was eventually expanded because of his enthusiasm for what he had witnessed in Detroit. Four murals with a total of twenty-seven fresco panels were ultimately painted, resulting in the acclaimed work "Detroit Industry." Edsel Ford believed that Rivera's magnificent murals captured "the spirit of Detroit."

The first task of your Summer Assignment for *AP Human Geography* is to look at Rivera's murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts:

<https://www.bluffton.edu/homepages/facstaff/sullivanm/michigan/detroit/riveramurals/intro.html>.

If you wish, you can secure additional images and videos of "Detroit Industry" via a quick Google search.

Scroll through the sequence of images and reflect on the suggestive power of these murals. What do they say about the city of Detroit as it was represented at that point in American history? How, in the words of Edsel Ford, do these images capture the "spirit" of this American city in the early 1930's? Remember: these paintings were commissioned during the Great Depression. How do these images contrast with your understanding of the life during this troubling period of American history? What do these murals suggest about the economic potential of Detroit at this point in time?

Once you have done so, click on the following YouTube link that features museum curator Joel Stein of the *Detroit Historical Society* in the short video produced by LIFE called "Behind Detroit's Notorious Ruins:"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ii3r4X5Woo&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PL7AA742E3F10F97D
[A](#)

Reflect on Stein's observations on the Detroit and the images that are positioned in the short video. Once you have done so, access the PowerPoint that is posted on Mr. Beatty website: "Detroit: Images of a Collapsed City."

The contrast between the representations of Rivera and the images found in "Behind Detroit's Notorious Ruins" and "Detroit: Images of a Collapsed City" is startling. How could a city like Detroit go from a beacon of economic hope in the dark days of the Great Depression to a near-apocalyptic landscape of urban blight and decay in less than a century? In the 1950's, Detroit was considered one of the most prosperous cities in America with a population of nearly two million people, a city that was the home of the "Big Three" (Chrysler, Ford and General Motors) and produced America's most signifying product (the automobile). Once the fourth largest city in America, it is now the eleventh. Less than 800,000 people live in the city. 10,000 abandoned homes have been slated for demolition in order to help reconfigure the city and make more effective use of the land. Even with this effort, almost 90,000 abandoned homes and vacant lots will remain. Again, what happened?

Your next task is to read Daniel Okrent's "Detroit: The Death—and Possible Life of a Great City" from *Time* (<https://oekmekci.wordpress.com/2009/10/06/detroit-the-death-%E2%80%94-and-possible-life-%E2%80%94-of-a-great-city-by-daniel-okrent-time-magazine-september-24th09/>). This article details some of the troubling complexities that led to the collapse of Detroit and envisions some of the possibilities that could lead to the rejuvenation of this once great American city.

Once you have experienced the various exhibitions and read Okrent's article, you must view the TED Talk (https://www.ted.com/talks/toni_griffin_a_new_vision_for_rebuilding_detroit?language=en) given by Toni Griffin on the future of Detroit. Having read about and analyzed the rise and fall of Detroit as well as its cultural ramifications, you should be prepared to debate the future of the troubled city. In short, is there any hope for reviving this once-great city? What steps can and should be taken to help it along? How confident are you in this potential?

A final task will require you to watch the Chrysler 2011 Super Bowl advertisement that features Eminem (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKL254Y_jtc) and the Chrysler 2012 Super Bowl Advertisement featuring Clint Eastwood (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRtvpMPLQ8o>).

As you watch these videos, you must consider the other representations of Detroit that you have been subject to, juxtaposing these representations with those embedded in the advertisements. You must also consider the overall message that Chrysler is communicating about Detroit through these consecutive Super Bowl advertisements.

We will begin *AP Human Geography* with a quick study of Detroit, making use of all of the texts listed beforehand in a variety of inquiry-based contexts. A timed writing will be administered on the designated testing day for Social Studies Summer Assignments: this assessment will require you to use your knowledge of the various representations of Detroit to answer an essay question regarding the forces and factors that led to the current state of the cityscape. A complementing seminar will also serve to further assess your critical engagement with the texts related to the study of Detroit. In addition, we will do a little "quick and dirty" research on a new phenomenon in Detroit: urban farming.

Questions regarding the Summer Assignment for *AP Human Geography* should be directed to either Mr. Beatty (dbeatty@rumsonfairhaven.org) or Mr. Emmich (memmich@rumsonfairhaven.org). Teacher response time will be influenced by personal obligations, vacation plans, and work responsibilities. Be patient.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Mr. Beatty and Mr. Emmich