What to do BEFORE your history class opens 8AM Monday 8/27 (This is a Graded Task.)

Hi to all of you from your History instructor,

I sent this earlier but I am sending it again today. It has some additions that are highlighted in yellow case you read the earlier one but did not yet reply for points.

Reply to this email saying “I will do **each** of these things” and I will record 10 points for this graded assignment.  ***Tip 1:*** When you will see the words “Graded Task” or “This is a Graded Task” at the end of a Subject line or a heading or something like that, it means the task is part of the required work and earns points. ***Tip 2:*** There are also a list of things you are required to do—BUT you also earn points--in Getting Started. ***Tip 3:*** **Leave this email open until you finish all the tasks.**

If you **cannot** log in to your class on 8/27 on its start date or cannot complete the Getting Started tasks listed at the end of Course Orientation by end of day on 8/28, email your instructor a proposed date **immediately**

* **either** as a Reply to this email
* **or** as a New message in Course Messages (the email in the Blackboard course).

If it is a reasonable date, there is no penalty—but **I** feel **safer for you** if I know you are aware of the due dates. **Why my concern**? I have seen some students slide by week after week until there was no way to pass an 8-week class.

I only use your WCJC student email address for communication**before** Blackboard is available (like this email) or for alerts of some kind. Once the course opens, you must use the email IN Blackboard (called Messages). Check it regularly for email **from** me and use it to send emails **to** me.

1. Copy the URL [https://wcjc.blackboard.com](https://wcjc.blackboard.com/)  into a browser window. It takes you directly to Blackboard without going through WCJC’s access. Your course will **not**be open until Monday 8/27 usually about 8 AM, but you can use part of Blackboard now.

When you use that URL, there are 2 areas listed at the top:

* **My Blackboard** -This is where Blackboard opens, and it is your login screen with some basic information. You **can begin to login on 8/27** after the Distance Education does their tasks on Monday morning. ***Tips:***
  + You must have your Banner ID to log in both for the user ID and the password.
  + Once you log in, then do **change** your password.
* **Help & Resources** -This is the screen with things you need **now**so you are ready for the first day.)

2. Before you do anything else, make the URL a favorite or bookmark it or just put its URL some place safe so you can do always your work.

**Why do you have to do this?** WCJC’s website and portal have been down in prior terms, but Blackboard has been **always up and running**. If the only way you know to get to Blackboard is the WCJC website, you can get far behind.

3. On the upper RIGHT, click on the words **Help & Resources**. ***Caution:*** **Not** doing these things **below** can zap your grade—and your joy!

 FYI: I care about you guys, but I am **not** a tech person, but a historian. All I can do is tell you common workarounds that I learned in distance education classes, but they may or may not be enough for the solution. **IT**canhelp you: a link to make an IT request is in Contact IT right above Resources).

4. Look in the box Technical Support on the left. The box contains what you need to do for a), b), c) and d).

a) In that box, look for the heading Resources and then click on the link Computer Requirements and make sure that your computer/device will work with Blackboard. This is a long link; look at it carefully. ***Tip:*** Because the link is long, use Ctrl-F to help you find all the information applicable to what you need.

b) Click on the link Browser Check. The browser check there seems not to offer directions if you fail the check on some issue. If you fail a check, try updating your current browser or try another browser (see item d below) and see if it passes. If not, email me and I will check with Distance Learning to see if they can provide the version of Browser Check that offers directions. My understanding in an open lab was that that was possible.

c) Click on the link Frequently Asked Questions. Scroll down or use Ctrl-F to see if the information applies to you.

d) If you do not already have **2 different browsers** on your machine, do it now. Check  Downloadable Resources. Two browsers—Chrome and Firefox—are available there. **Why?**Blackboard and our Distance Education Department, and certainly not this non-techy teacher have no control over browsers. With the upgrades to these browsers, one day they work; one day they do not. Trying another browser does seem to help.

***Caution:*** Safari has had problems in students not seeing links and pdfs so get IT guidance if you are not seeing things that the instructions say you should see.

d) Also under Downloadable Resources, notice Adobe Reader. Some people do not have Adobe Reader—**FREE**—and some computers do **not** supply it automatically. If you do not have it, download it. You **must**have Adobe Reader to use essential documents in this course and other courses.   
Examples of why Adobe Reader is essential:

* Read Me 1st.
* The Syllabus that provides details about the course so you can not only succeed, but also prevent misery is a **PDF.**
* The List of Due Dates that tells you **when**and **what** is due and **where you find it** is a **PDF**

**Concern:** I have 3 browsers on my home machine. When I ran Browser Check on each one to see how it worked, I had the check for 2 of the 3 browsers say I would be able to see PDFs. The third said no. As I said above, I am **not** a tech person, but you **must** be able to see Adobe PDFs so use a browser that will let you do that. One quick test is to see if you can see the PDFs listed above.

5. You do need a historically reliable source for facts for our **written work**. The required textbook you purchase and the primaries provided in the course serve as the **only** source of facts for your **written** work. You may **not** use your memory or Google as a source of facts.   
***Tip:*** If you are used to grabbing words from the Internet, it will not work in this course because of the method used for grading. The syllabus tells you the consequences.

The Department choose this textbook:  David M. Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen, and Mel Piehl, *The Brief American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, 9th edition. It is the one-volume edition containing 41 chapters and is used for both History 1301 and History 1302. The ISBN is 9781337124645; however, that ISBN is a “bundle” and includes both the textbook and an online program called Mindtap. In this course, we will not use Mindtap.

***Tips:*** My checking in prior terms showed that the WCJC bookstore was cheaper than online sources. You can buy the book anywhere you please, but I would check the WCJC bookstores for the price first.

**6. Before you become concerned, read this**: Textbooks are useful for looking up things you don't know because they are a form of encyclopedia. You would not expect profs to test you on everything in an encyclopedia—and I promise you I do not test you on everything in the textbook. Instead, this course provides in **each** Unit:

* A Study Guide to help you recognize what you have to learn for the Exam (**70%**of the questions on the Unit Exam). START with the Study Guide.  
  ***Tip:*** and ***Caution:*** If you think you ought to sit down and turn every page of your textbook, don't. Contact me. I am glad to meet people face to face or talk to them by phone.
* Learning Quizzes (**30%**of the questions) to help find out what concepts and map locations you do not know and a quick way to teach yourself. START with these so you master basics.
* My Lessons (think of them as a textbook but with bullets and optional information) and maps –**In this course**, the Lessons **are** the **textbook for the exam.**
* A Learning Discussion where you can earn points for asking for help or helping other students with concepts, etymologies, and questions about the Study Guide.

7. This course is a little different (but people make high grades if they follow the directions) so do pay attention in Getting Started so you can figure out how the course can help **different kinds of students--including you**.

Always glad to help you,

Dr. Bibus (with some students just writing or saying Dr. B because Dr. B is shorter to type and easier to pronounce.)