

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Rhetoric of the Future Book Choices

For Unit 4, *The Pen's Power to Affect the Future*, you will read a non-fiction book that you will use for your second major paper and for your first group project. Read the following descriptions and rank your interest in reading each book 1-6 (1 = top choice, 6 = last choice). Then complete the questionnaires on the back to help me determine the groups.

Some political pundits, futurists, and even realists claim that America's role as the only superpower and capitalistic and democratic leader is declining. This book's thesis proclaims that America is not declining; rather, other countries are *rising*. Reassuring us that this shift actually takes some pressure off the USA because it no longer must take the central role in economic and political power, this author wants America to become "an honest broker." It must "seek to share power, create coalitions, build legitimacy, and define the global agenda."

Due to global warming, population growing, and the world's middle classes expanding, America needs a new approach to the future. This book's author promotes American nation-building. He "summon[s] the intelligence, creativity, boldness, and concern for the common good that are our nation's greatest natural resources." The book encourages us to create "the tools, systems, energy sources, and ethics" that return America to its role as the "beacon of hope and the country that can always be counted on to lead the world in response to whatever is the most important challenge of the day."

What role does basic human goodness hold in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Is it possible for every individual to achieve happiness and to live a moral life? This author argues that optimism, courage, and goodness will continue to steer our survival. When discussing options upon encountering a problem, he recommends facing "up to the situation directly. This involves examining it, analyzing it, determining its causes, and finding out how to deal with them."

Not only are we globalizing communication, technology, economies, and ecology, we are also globalizing women, especially women from impoverished countries. The editors of this essay collection explain that "the lifestyles of the First World are made possible by a global transfer of the services associated with a wife's traditional role – child care, home-making, and sex – from poor countries to rich ones." Because of this transfer of females, poor countries, especially the families of these migrants, suffer. Are these women victims? Entrepreneurs? Slaves? Opportunists?

How can people not just survive but thrive in a world rocked by outsourced jobs, crises after crises, rapid technological changes, and economic upheavals? This book's author claims that while number crunchers, contract negotiators, linear programmers, and the like dominated the recent past during the Information Age, creators, empathizers, "pattern recognizers, meaning makers, and big picture thinkers" will reap rewards in the rising Conceptual Age. Clearly expressing his intention to explain his vision of future needs and to describe six essential aptitudes, he states, "These are fundamentally human abilities that everyone can master – and helping you do that is my goal."

Proclaiming the future "will demand capacities that, until now, have been mere options," this book describes five new ways of learning and thinking (the author calls these his "quintet") to equip people "to deal with what is expected in the future." The author intends to help people avoid falling to the "mercy of forces they can't understand – overwhelmed by information, unable to succeed in the workplace, and incapable of making judicious decisions about personal and professional matters." This author presents why each quintet member is vital and how to develop each.

# Side Two:

## Rhetoric of the Future Questionnaire

Complete these questionnaires to help me determine your assigned book and your groups. Follow each set of directions. Did you rank your book choices on Side One?

**You on reading** — Check one (1) description that best fits you.

- I love to read. I read anything in front of me from the cereal box to my parents' insurance policy. Of course, I prefer to pick my own reading. I read quickly and skillfully.
- I hate to read. Period. I don't even know what I am doing in an Advanced Placement English course of all classes! I guess the "English" part of the course title didn't register in my teen brain.
- I love to read but only what I choose to read. When assigned reading, I either don't do it or procrastinate.
- I am ambivalent toward reading. I do it when I must, but rarely do I choose to do it for pleasure or self-improvement.
- I read for school only, yet I read skillfully. I am even becoming a critical reader.
- While I enjoy reading and read on my own as well as for school, I read rather slowly and am still working on both my comprehension and critical reading skills.
- I read for school only, and I am still developing all my reading skills.

**You on leadership** — Check one (1) description that best fits you.

- Sometimes I take on a leadership role. It depends on the group, the context, and my mood.
- I am always the leader, and everyone in the group recognizes that fact right away.
- I prefer that my groups vote to decide who will lead. When it is my turn or when people vote for me, I will lead.
- I am never the leader. I don't care to lead. I'll do whatever else I need to do.
- I am too shy to lead.
- I am working on my leadership skills and am willing to take on that role for this first project.
- Despite not having led much in the past, I would like to be the leader for this project.
- While I have led in the past, I can take on another role for this project.

**You on group projects** — Check ALL that apply to you.

- I hate group projects because I end up doing all the work.
- I love working in groups!
- I have experienced some negative group projects, so I dread projects.
- Because I am a perfectionist and rarely trust others when it comes to my grade, I prefer to do all the work even if it means more homework.
- Despite some poor group project experiences, I still enjoy group projects.
- I like working with only people I know.
- I like meeting new people or becoming more acquainted with people I barely know, and group projects allow me this opportunity.
- I just prefer working alone. [Teacher's note: While I want to know if you feel this way, sorry, you will still work in a group for this unit.]
- I like group projects because sometimes past projects have helped me (or rather, my grade).
- Whatever. I'll work in a group if I must. No preference to me.