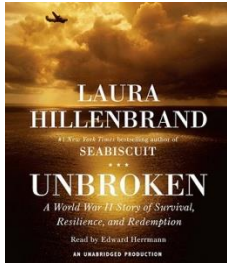


American History
Mrs. Kim Gardner
Summer Reading



Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption
Laura Hillenbrand

Welcome to Honors American History. This summer, I would like you to read *Unbroken*. It is an amazing story and you will learn much about World War II. But it is also a story of resilience, which is a theme we will discuss often in our class. Throughout time, adversity has only made America stronger. The Great Depression, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the attacks of September 11, 2001....each time our nation has survived, and each time it has come back stronger. Louis Zamperini, the subject of *Unbroken*, faced the unimaginable and is alive today because of sheer will, determination, and eventually, a faith in God. At 95, he has managed to forgive and now lives a life filled with joy.

As you read, consider the following questions. Type up your responses and be prepared to turn them in when we first meet. I encourage you to write in your book...make notes, underline or highlight things that make an impression on you. This will be useful in our class discussion and with future assignments.

Please type your responses...(MLA format: Times-New Roman, 12 pt. font. , double spaced). You do not need to retype the questions, but your answers should restate them.

1. How do you explain the page-turning nature of this book given its grim subject matter?
2. What do you admire most about Zamperini? What enables him to survive the plane crash and POW ordeal? Does he possess special strengths—personal or physical? Did his training in track, for instance, make a difference in his resilience?
3. How do the POW captives help one another survive? How are they able to communicate with one another? What devices do Zamperini and others use not only to survive but to maintain sanity?
4. What accounts for mankind's capacity for cruelty—especially on the part of the Japanese, a highly cultured and civilized society? (The same question, of course, has been applied to the Nazis.)
5. Hillenbrand devotes time to the difficulty of veterans' re-entering life after the war. She says, "there was no one right way to peace; each man had to find his own path." What is Zamperini's path? How does his conversion under Billy Graham help him? What role does his wife, Cynthia, play?
6. Why do you think it took the medical profession so long to acknowledge the needs of soldiers after war? This was the mid-20th century, and psychiatry was a fairly established discipline. Plus, the horrors of World War I were only one generation behind. What took so long to recognize post-traumatic stress disorder?