

Little Paper #1: Start the Fire

Due Friday, Jan 22

You’ve been assigned one snippet from the Billy Joel song, “We Didn’t Start the Fire.” Identify and discuss the historical person or event, and use it to reflect on what you hope to learn from this course. Why is this phrase “historical”? Was it new to you or something you already knew about? Why do you think Joel included it in his song as something significant or memorable? What is its importance in 20th century history? What do you think Joel means by “the fire” in this song? What are your goals for learning about American history since 1945 – what will you do to light your own fire?

Paper Checklist – these apply to ALL the Little Papers you will hand in this term, so get used to checking this list before turning in your work.

- ✓ Double-spaced
- ✓ Pages are numbered
- ✓ Name, date, and a title (not “Little Paper #1”)
- ✓ Proofread for spelling, grammar, sentence structure (no run-ons or sentence fragments)
- ✓ All quotations are properly cited using Chicago Style or MLA style
- ✓ All work is original and in your own words. Papers that use text cut&pasted from Wikipedia or from other online or published sources will receive an automatic zero
- ✓ Paper is clearly organized, with a strong introduction, a well-constructed middle, and a conclusion. Does the first paragraph tell the reader what the paper is about, what question it answers, or what main point it will make?

Grading Rubric:

5	A good title. A clear introduction. Offers your own original argument, rather than just rehashing someone else’s. Demonstrates that you conducted research, by using specific references from high-quality sources. Has a vivid and thoughtful conclusion. Fulfills all the stated requirements of the assignment. Sources are clearly and correctly listed.
4	Fulfills almost all the stated requirements of the assignment, but may contain some minor writing errors, unclear passages, or structural problems. Generally sticks to a single argument. Uses questionable or non-scholarly sources, or gets all the information from one source.
3	Argument is not original, writing is convoluted or hard to follow or doesn’t use complete sentences; or wanders from point to point. Sources are incomplete or few in number, or are unreliable. Partially fulfills the stated requirements of the assignment.
2	Paper is submitted on time, but is poorly written, incomplete, or lacks sources, or contains abbreviations used in texting rather than complete words. Fulfills only one or two of the stated requirements of the assignment.
0-1	Paper is submitted on time but fulfills none of the stated requirements, or paper simply cuts and pastes text from the internet.

No late work accepted for Little Papers. Must be handed in during class, or (in case you are not in class) emailed by the start of class time.