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AP Euro
Period C
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Historical Essay Analysis

Title: History's Hidden Turning Points

Author: Daniel J. Boorstin

Author's thesis: The true turning points in human affairs are rarely spotted among the rapid amount of news we are exposed to each day.

Author's evidence:

- a) Today, we are ready to believe that everything on the evening news marks a new turn in human history.
- b) The rapid availability of news has caused a desire to believe we Americans live in world-transforming times.
- c) The meaning of past news remains fixed, though we may come to understand the currents of history more clearly.
- d) We must distinguish true turning points from mistaken ones.
- e) Often, the major turning points go overlooked when they occur.
- f) We cannot easily tell the implications that current events will have.

Author's conclusion of the topic's significance:

The author concludes that the revolutions that truly impact history are rarely, if ever, noticed as they occur. The true revolutions of our time will not appear as bullets in the evening news, but will gradually impact our lives as times moves on.

What questions you have about the reading:

1. Is it possible to understand and watch a revolution as it is occurring?
2. Why are most revolutions overlooked as they occur?
3. Is there any way to determine the ephemeral from the truly impacting?

To what extent does your knowledge of the period support or conflict the author's thesis?

My knowledge of human history supports the author's thesis that the great revolutions and turning points of human history have often been overlooked as they occurred. Those that were not often had long histories to support them, social movements that were inevitable. It is rare that we can see the implications immediately.

Explain the gist of the article, the nature of the evidence, and the significance of the topic:

The turning points of history are not the ones that we find on the evening news, despite how sensationalist the media may become. The true turning points are the ones that will have lasting implications on humankind, and are often ones that become overlooked at the time they occur. From Paul's ministry to the Black Plague, or even the conflicting discoverers of America, it would have been impossible for contemporary people to understand the implications these events would have on the rest of human history, even if they were revolutionary in their own right. We must be able to determine what is truly meaningful from what is merely sensationalist daily news, and not try to rely on every event as a new watershed in human history, simply because we have access to the news.