11 APUSH

Mr. Bedar

**Reading Questions**

**Richard Hofstadter, *The Founding Fathers: An Age of Realism***

Directions: Read (actively) the Hofstadter article and on a separate sheet of paper (preferably typed), identify his overall thesis and take bullet point notes on the questions below:

1. What did the Founding Fathers (FF) think about the nature of mankind? What led them to think this?
2. Did the FF support democracy? Why or why not?
3. Describe common characteristics of the FF. How might their background and occupations have influenced their priorities in drafting the Constitution?
4. Given the FF’s fears of establishing a democracy, why didn’t they return to monarchy or something closer to it?
5. Based on their assumptions about the nature of mankind, what was the Founders’ philosophy of government?
6. List and briefly explain the **three** constitutional “devices” the FF created to deal with competing interests.
7. What did “liberty” mean for the FF? What did it NOT mean?
8. Explain the importance of property/property rights to the FF, as described by Hofstadter. Why did the FF believe only property owners should be able to participate in politics?
9. What is the historiography of the Constitutional period? How have historians viewed the FF and the Constitution?
10. Why did Hofstadter call his chapter on the Constitution “An Age of Realism”?
11. What do you make of the FF, now that you’ve read Hofstadter? How would you characterize them? How should we think about them today?