

Guide to Taking Notes in History Class

Throughout the year, I will be asking you to take notes as you read. Here are some guidelines that you should follow in order that you may take notes that will be of most use to you.

✓ **Remember that you should not, at any time, write, highlight, or otherwise mark your textbook.**

1. Read one section of your textbook chapter or the reading at a time.

- Read just enough to keep an understanding of the material; one textbook “section” at a time (like the text under a **bold** heading or an *italicized* sub-heading) is a good rule of thumb for our textbook. Do not take notes at this point, but rather focus on understanding the material.
- It is tempting to take notes when you are reading for the first time, but this technique is not efficient; you are likely to take down too much and to copy without understanding.

2. Review the material.

- Locate the main ideas as well as the important sub-points. Use chapter headings and the titles of sections to clue you in on the significant ideas; locate *italicized* or **bolded** words, as these terms are probably important for you to know.
- Paraphrase the information to yourself in your mind or outloud. See if you can remember the main points without looking at the text.
- Repeat steps **1.** through **2.** until you finish the reading assignment.

3. Write your paraphrased ideas as your notes.

- As a rule, do **not** copy information directly from the textbook, as you are most likely copying without understanding. If you find an important definition or explanation that should be copied from the text because it is precise or technical, make sure you understand what the definition is saying before you take it down.
- Add **only enough detail to understand**. Notes that contain too much information, like notes that contain too little, will not help you later when you look back to them to study.
- Consistency key with note taking strategies- try a few styles, see what you like, and stick with that!
- Writing down a **brief** summary often helps you organize and remember the information, although it is not necessary.

4. Review.

- Compare your notes with the text and ask yourself if you truly understand.