

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. You should take notes in your spiral notebook. If you prefer to take your notes on loose-leaf paper, you should store your reading notes in a separate section in your class binder.**

1. Read through your textbook chapter or handout one time before taking notes.

- Read just enough to keep an understanding of the material. Do not take notes, but rather focus on understanding the material.
- It is tempting to take notes as you are reading 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 **bold** words, as these terms are probably important for you to know.
- Paraphrase the information to yourself. See if you can remember the main points without looking at the text.

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.
- Keep your reading notes separate from your class notes.
- 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.