

How to be successful in this class – AP World History

1. Be as active as possible with all course material.

- a. *Always think actively* as you read, take notes, participate in class, discuss with peers, review your notes, watch videos, etc. Ask yourself WHY this is true, WHAT is causing this phenomenon, HOW this applies to the real world, WHAT connections exist between this and other material, etc. Nurture a healthy sense of curiosity!
- b. *Straight note taking is your enemy.* Simply copying down the text from class or copying definitions from your textbook doesn't make you learn anything. Put definitions in your own words. Write down supplementary information. Fill in the gaps behind the bullet points. Come up with your own examples. Ask questions.
- c. *Use the margins of your textbook* (on sticky notes) to summarize things in your own words, ask questions, make up real-world examples or relate to your own life, write your own exam questions, or just comment on what you're reading.

2. Test yourself frequently, repeatedly, and at a deep level.

- a. *Keep in mind the types of questions that will be on exams.* You must be able to think critically about the concepts and apply the material to be successful. Memorizing definitions? Not so much.
- b. *Use the Read-Recite-Review (3R) method.* Read a short chunk of the textbook (no more than a page or two), recite its major concepts aloud, noticing areas that you missed or were confused about, then go back and review those areas. Try this with chapter study guides and your lecture notes too!
- c. *Quizzes help you learn by showing you what you do and don't know.* Use the quizlets on my website to practice. Use the Khan Academy materials (link on my website). Use these opportunities to check your understanding *before* it's worth points, and then fix what you got wrong.
- d. *Use the study guides provided.* Working your way through these after you read and attend class will help you make sense of what you've read. This will also give you a head start on studying for exams. If you copy from someone, you aren't learning the material.

3. Put in the time and space it out.

- a. *Don't take shortcuts.* If you read a 40-page chapter in 20 minutes, you're not really reading. Use the active learning strategies above, read effectively just once, and you'll never have to reread a textbook again!
- b. *Study in an environment similar to the one in which you will be tested.* Choose a quiet place without distractions such as cell phones, friends, computers, or TV. Make friends with the library.
- c. *Cramming is bad for your health... and your grades.* Avoid the stress of last-minute studying and improve your class performance by reading textbook chapters when they are assigned. Complete study guides as each chapter is assigned. Self-test immediately after reading, and again before exams. Review and reorganize your notes periodically. You are much more likely to use the active learning strategies above if you have the time to use them!

4. Ask for help when you need it.

- a. *Ask for help right away*— after doing more poorly on an exam that you would like, if you don't understand an assignment, if you don't understand my feedback, etc. Be clear about your situation and what help you would like so we can determine together the best course of action. I can't help you if you wait until the end of the semester to ask for help.
- b. *If you need help with your study skills,* see me sooner rather than later.
- c. Take advantage of all opportunities to do test corrections and essay revisions.