

## AP World History Notebook



### WHY?

Keeping a notebook is one of your responsibilities in the AP World History course. Your notebook should be designed as your record of what you are studying and learning, and also a place where you can strengthen your academic and critical thinking skills. Preparing a good notebook encourages systematic study and organization. Notebooks offer an opportunity to display and practice analytical writing, create timelines, diagram concepts and relationships, shows cause and effect and other historical skills. The notebook will enable you to track your progress through the course. Students who have taken other AP history courses consider good notebooks a valuable asset in preparation for the AP exam in the spring.

Becoming a disciplined learner is a key to success in the course. Read about ten pages of history a day, instead of the day before the reading is due. Summarize the material and write your reactions to the readings and class notes. As you become familiar with the material, highlight important content and review regularly. Pay attention to visuals, maps, graphs, and documents in the text. As you review, develop your own study guide for the test. Review the main ideas from previous units, chapters, and historical periods. Analyze the questions you missed after an exam is returned. Did you miss the question because of poor academic skills? Because of unfamiliar content? Because of the lack of effective analysis? Highlight specific material in your notebook that would help you answer the question.

### WHAT?

The AP World course is divided into five historical eras of study as specified in the course syllabus. Design a title page for each historical period and list the objectives for that period. List your own learning objectives. How do the course objectives match your own learning goals? What are your strengths and weaknesses? You may be a great reader but need more practice developing a hypothesis. What weaknesses do you wish to improve upon during each particular unit of study? Evaluate your progress on a regular basis. If you need extra help, consult your teacher.

Write a short description of the overall picture during this period after skimming the text. From a global perspective, what changes and what stays the same? Based on information discovered, what AP World History Themes would you expect to discover in this era? Highlight these themes and continually refer back to them in the unit of study.

### HOW?

You are the author, editor, and illustrator of this notebook. Begin the notebook with a title page that includes your name, your teacher's name, your school address and phone number so that if you lose your notebook, it can be returned to you. Put the AP World History Themes and Habits of Mind near the front of your notebook so that you may refer to them easily. Reserve the next ten or so pages of the notebook for the Table of Contents. As you complete a series of notes or an assignment, enter the title, date, and notebook page in the Table of Contents, which will help you find materials easily.

Organize a small study group to study together and to review notes and summaries for tests periodically. If you are absent, you can borrow class notes from a member of your study group. Compare notes, analyze readings, and review together. Take turns leading the group's discussion. It helps to choose serious students for your study group who can work together.

## DEVELOPING STRONG READING AND NOTETAKING SKILLS



AP World History students should consistently be reading rigorous materials and incorporating it into the study of history. Reading books, magazines, newspapers, and journals should become a daily habit.

Here are a few basic suggestions or questions to guide your reading for any assignment:

- ? What is the purpose of reading this particular material? Look over the material noting headings, terms, graphs, illustrations and captions.
- ? What is the general idea? What is the storyline? Read the first and last paragraphs and the topic sentences of each paragraph to glean this information. If the purpose of the reading is to develop an understanding, reread the material for main ideas, evidence, key vocabulary and details. Highlight important ideas. It is not unusual to read texts twice. Summarize the main ideas in your own words and list supporting evidence.
- ? What world history themes does the material seem to illustrate? Write your reactions, questions, and inferences on the left side of the notebook. Relate the information to previous materials. How significant is this material in terms of what you already know?
- ? What was the author's point of view? Is there an obvious bias? Who was the intended audience?
- ? What was the purpose of this piece?
- ? What other evidence supports the main ideas and arguments? Does other evidence challenge the main thesis?

***Review your content notes frequently. Understanding world history requires accumulated knowledge.***

## BUILDING VOCABULARY



This is a critical skill for you to be working on consistently all year. You will be learning difficult terms and will need to remember new names and places. You should be keeping a list as you do any reading, on top of the list of vocabulary that I give you. When you come across a new term, use the context to develop an understanding of the meaning and/or consult a dictionary to develop your own definition. Enter the new word, the pronunciation, and the meaning in your own words. Reinforce your efforts to learn new words by developing flash cards or a multicolored vocabulary list for your bulletin board. The word is yours when you can use it in conversation. This “World History Dictionary” will be helpful for reviews for the tests and the AP exam.

*A note about reading history texts:* World historians use B.C.E. (before the common era) and C.E. (the common era) rather than B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini) which are specific to western culture. Like most of us, you may find unfamiliar names like Tenochtitlan or caliphate difficult to pronounce. Use words like these frequently to become familiar with them. Because world history is a new field of study and uses terms derived from many languages at different historical periods, spellings may vary from source to source. This is especially true of Chinese. For example, older histories include Romanized spellings of Chinese names using the Wade Giles method but newer texts use the Pinyin method. *Mao Tse-tung* in Wade Giles appears as *Mao Zedong* in Pinyin. Names change. Old colonial names are replaced, for example, Ceylon is now Sri Lanka and Zaire is now Congo.

## “DOING WORLD HISTORY”

(Adapted from David R. Smith, “Doing World History Method in the World History Survey”)



Most fundamentally, world history involves the study of cross cultural events or phenomena. World history is more general than traditional history courses and emphasizes trends that transcend cultural boundaries and interactions between societies world history tends to be more superficial and general than local and national histories. This should not be seen negatively, rather it is a more comprehensive view of history. World history looks at the forest, not necessarily the trees.

The methods below are some of the processes that world historians use. They are meant to help you focus and work through some of the concepts of world history. To begin the process, you would read over the chapter, noting or marking topics that lend themselves to the “Doing World History” methods. Choose one or two of the “Doing World History” methods that you think appropriate for interpreting the chapter or section of reading. As we continue with the course, we may come up with other ways of evaluating and understanding world history and will add onto our list of skills.

- ? **THE BIG PICTURE:** This method offers a broad overview, stressing chronology of major events and an explanation of their significance. This would most probably be a timeline, with only 4 or 5 events, accompanied by a written explanation of significance. Do the chosen events/dates adequately reflect the most important points of the chapter?
- ? **DIFFUSION:** This means the spread of natural elements, people, artifacts, ideas or other cultural creations from one civilization to others. If you choose this method, make sure the idea of something spreading is explicit in your diagram and writing, and connect this spreading process to the major points of the chapter. Explain the causes and methods of the spread as well as the consequences.
- ? **SYNCRETISM:** This is from the Greek root for “mixing” and means the mixing of elements from two or more cultures that results in a new civilization. If you choose this method, you may use diagrams or drawings or give a written explanation of who borrowed what from whom, and the results of the cultural borrowing.
- ? **COMPARISON/CONTRAST:** This method is an integral part of practicing world history and offers an opportunity to point out similarities and differences between two civilizations in terms of their histories, institutions, cultural accomplishments and economies. You need to offer significant comparisons, not just the superficial and obvious ones. Using a venn diagram or chart would be appropriate to help you visually compare and contrast.
- ? **COMMON PHENOMENA:** This refers to natural or historical events that affected more than a one civilization. Climatic change, disease, invasions would all fall into this category. The idea of comparison is also implicit here, because even though events may be shared, responses and results may be different.
- ? **PERSIA (or SPICE or PRIMES):** This acronym refers to **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **R**eligious, **S**ocial, **I**ntellectual, **A**rts/Culture which is an acronym for the thematic basis of the course. Whenever we evaluate a civilization, it would be helpful to use this method to note the various aspects of a civilization or culture in order to see the interactions of each theme.

## **SETTING UP THE NOTEBOOK**

Your notebook should be organized chronology by unit. Within each unit, you should have various entries. Below are the common kinds of entries that may be found within a unit:

- ✍ Outline notes from assigned readings (usually from textbook chapters)
- ✍ Vocabulary from readings
- ✍ Lecture notes from class
- ✍ Notes from videos, documentaries and special presentations
- ✍ Responses through journaling, diagramming, and brainstorming to formulate new questions, possibilities, interpretations, and insights about the history content. Often they will be questions posed and prompted by the teacher.
- ✍ Linking of the content with one or more of the six AP world history themes. You will know you are doing good work when you understand how the content on the right fits into larger, global patterns shaping the present world.
- ✍ Summaries of class discussions and readings. This is a good skill to incorporate into the study of world history, and will help you make connections to global patterns as we move through the course.
- ✍ “Doing World History” entries for each chapter (see p. 3 below)
- ✍ Current Event entries – You will be asked to find a current event that relates to a highlighted AP world history theme for the week, or you may be asked to choose your own theme from amongst the six. Besides including the article/summary you should also analyze the article in terms of the theme.

## **ASSESSMENT OF YOUR NOTEBOOK**

The notebook will mainly be graded on the following criteria:

- Quality and completeness of assignments
- Depth and thoughtfulness of reflective writing
- Quality and completeness of reading and lecture notes
- Organization and neatness

The notebook/homework grade is approximately 30% of your term grade and will be collected and graded at the end of the term. I also plan to collect your notebook occasionally to check and grade for your understanding of the material and to give you further feedback.

## **USING YOUR NOTEBOOK TO REVIEW FOR THE AP EXAM**

Start reviewing your notebook a month before the AP test. The AP test provides you with the opportunity to evaluate your work by collegiate standards. You will be able to compare your results to the work of other students across the country. Develop a daily review schedule with frequent study group meetings. Devise your own review sheets. Take turns with others in your study group to conduct the reviews. It helps to lead reviews of the materials you feel you still need to master. The responsibility requires you to work through the material carefully and determine what is important. If you are teaching others, you learn more. Review your notes, old tests, writing assignments and journaling ideas.