**Taking Notes from the Textbook:**

Taking notes from a textbook can be challenging. The key is to find the thesis of each section of the text and then find the crucial supporting details. Fortunately, textbook authors generally try to make it easy to find their theses. Look at the title of the chapter, then look at the introduction. From there, go and read the conclusion of the chapter. Next, read all the section titles (in large, bold font). After that, look at all the graphics (pictures, maps, charts). After looking at all those, you should have some idea of what the chapter is about. The rest is just supporting detail. Don't get me wrong, the supporting detail is very important in a history class. But look for details that show up multiple times (for example, in the text and in an illustration).   
  
One reading method is called SQ3R.

* Survey=skim the text for clues. In other words, do what I described above
* Question=ask yourself "what is this chapter about"?
* Read=read the chapter
* (w)Rite=take notes
* Review=close the book and your notes and ask yourself what the chapter is about and how it uses details to support its assertions. If you are fuzzy on any of that information, then review your notes. Studies show that you are more likely to remember information if you review it (study) within a day or so of learning it!

I have listed four different methods of taking notes below. Check them out and see what works for you!

METHOD 1

**Outline Format**  
  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
Reading (source, page #, descriptive title):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
I.    Chapter subheading or first main topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
A.    Key fact or idea: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
1.    Detail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
2.    Detail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
3.    (Continue pattern)  
B.    Second key fact or concept: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
(Continue pattern)  
  
II.    Chapter subheading or second main idea: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
A.    Key fact or idea: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
1.    Detail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
2.    Detail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
III.    (Continue pattern above with a separate Roman Numeral for each main idea)  
IV.    Conclusion/Summary: Is this reading about social, political, religious, intellectual, technological, or economic history (or all of the above). What time period does it cover? What geographic area? Does the reading describe, analyze, compare, contrast, etc.? Does it describe change or stagnation? What are causes and effects that you can identify from the reading? If you had to write a thesis statement summarizing the chapter, what would it be?

**\*\*\*as an alternative method, try using bullet points instead of Roman Numeral format.. that way you can easily reorder or adjust your notes if need be\*\*\***

METHOD 2:

**Notecards**Put each individual fact on a notecard. Write the chapter and the page number in case you need to look it up later. Color code the notecard according to what type of information is recorded. For example, take a green marker and make a stripe across the top of any terms related to economics, red for warfare, blue for politics, etc.

METHOD 3

**Assisted Note Taking**  
Chapter Title:

What does the chapter title mean (is it trying to pose a question, summarize a historical trend, etc)?

List the sub-headings within the chapter:  
  
List the illustrations and what you think each illustration is trying to communicate (include maps and charts as well as pictures):  
  
Key vocabulary (list the important people, places, events, dates,etc):  
  
The big picture: does this chapter deal mostly with political, economic, religious, social, intellectual, or art history? What is it trying to say about it?

METHOD 4

**Cornell Notes**This is a system of organizing your page into three blocks. Across the top, write the subject of the notes, the page numbers that you are reading, and the date you took the notes. Block out the bottom few inches of the paper and label that questions and connections. Divide the middle part of the paper vertically. The middle left block is the big ideas section and the middle right is the supporting details section of the paper. See my website for an example of this type of note-taking system.