

AP History Reading Guide

The following is provided as a general guide on how to read text at the college level. Remember that the point of reading is not to finish, but to understand what you have read.

I. Underlining/Notetaking

If you own the book you should underline, if not, then take notes. You should be attempting to identify all the key points and evidence of the author. If you end up underlining everything, you've probably gone too far. If you go an entire paragraph and don't underline anything, you've missed the point.

II. Highlight

Go over what you just finished underlining. What are the points of emphasis? These should be highlighted to provide emphasis.

III. Star

You should put a special symbol, such as a star, next to the author's essential points. These are rare. If you have more than one or two per page, you are most likely not being selective enough.

IV. Sequencing

Once you have finished marking the text, it's time to organize it. Based on your essential points, create an outline of the key points of the text. This is not necessarily in the same order as the author presented the material. Use your own judgement to provide the structure that makes the most sense for the material.

V. Page Numbers

At every step of the process, make sure you right down the page number in the text that your notes are coming from. This will make it much easier to reference the material when working with it in the future.

VI. Questions

Have a separate piece of paper with you while working with the material. Right down questions as they occur to you. Don't forget to reference page numbers. Questions could be questions of understanding or more complex questions that occur to you while reading. These should be brought to class for discussion and/or clarification.

VII. Reorganize

As you prepare for any exam, you should work with the material in a fresh way. This could be rewriting your outlines. It is an excellent opportunity to create your own graphic organizers or organize a study group.