

# HOW TO STUDY HISTORY

1. **Keep a good notebook.** Download the course outline and use it as the skeleton for taking lecture notes. Use the facing page to make notes from text readings, jot questions you want to ask, or diagram information about major topics.
2. **Study in manageable units** of time and material. After each class period, review class notes to **identify** important terms, making sure you **know who or what it was, when and where it occurred, and why it was significant**—the information you need to write complete “Identification” items on the exams. **Index** the terms; you may include a printed index in class notes used in an exam. Before the next class, review your own notes.
3. **Outline or diagram** information for clarity of relationships or development of themes: cause-effect, compare-contrast, development and change over a time period.
4. **Identify changes.** Know why changes occurred (or did not occur) and why they happened in a particular place or time.
5. **Organize material in a recognizable, easily-recalled format for analyzing and synthesizing information.**
  - **Five themes** are recommended: **Political, Economic, Diplomatic/military, Social/cultural, and Religious/scientific/intellectual**
  - The **five-theme** scheme is very helpful for **writing identifications**. To determine why the item is “significant”, consider whether it was for political reasons, economic reasons, etc.
  - Another helpful framework is to consider the **causes, conduct**, (the course it followed), and **consequences** of events or developments. This is especially useful for discussing/comparing wars, political developments, religious or intellectual movements, etc.
  - The thematic approach is also used in writing compare-contrast type essays (see example in “Writing an Effective History Essay”).
6. **Microsoft “Excel” an excellent tool for organizing material, especially identifications.**
  - Set up a file with columns for “Term”, “who/what”, “when”, “where” and “significance”.
  - Enter the required information from your notes and text –compile a complete profile, showing all pages on which information about that topic occurs.
  - This information will help you with short answer items and essays as well as the IDs.
7. **Make an index of key terms** to locate material in your notes easily and to spell terms correctly. Review lecture notes each day and compile the key terms & page numbers.
8. **Make a time-line or other chronological chart.**